



under THE COVER



V.1

Book reviews by teens. For teens. Pass it on.

N.1

You're looking at the first edition of **UNDER the COVER**. This issue features book reviews written by 7th graders at Old Orchard Junior High School. These students were chosen by their teachers to read and write about new books that are hot off the press. Some of the books haven't even been published yet! This special "sneak peek" was provided by Skokie Public Library and several book publishers. Why? So that students could give their peers a heads-up about what's new in fiction for junior high and young adult readers. If the books aren't on the shelf at school or Skokie Public Library, be on the lookout... they'll probably show up soon!

UNDER the COVER is also available on the Web at www.skokielibRARY.info/direct/underthecover.asp.



The Black Tattoo

by Sam Enthoven

Reviewed by Connie C.

Readers who like action-packed stories mixed with a little drama and tragedy should definitely read Sam Enthoven's *The Black Tattoo*. There are so many extraordinary details that make readers feel that they're actually seeing visuals of the story. It is quite a page-turner.

It starts out with a staff to choose a new leader, the person who will lead the path to defeat a strong, evil demon, the Scourge. Whoever holds onto the staff longer would become that leader. Little did anyone know that the person who held onto the staff longer would become the host, or vessel, for the Scourge. Charlie and Esme are up for the challenge. They both are tough matches for each other, but Charlie holds onto the staff a little longer than



Esme and becomes the "leader." Charlie soon betrays his team and joins the Scourge's side. Everyone has to work together to defeat and seal the Scourge back into the staff from whence it came.

The powerful writing made me feel like I was actually a part of the story. The well-described characters seemed very real. Even though the book was fantastic, there were some plots with a lot of detail and little action. Personally, I loved *The Black Tattoo* and couldn't put it down. (Youth Jr. High Fiction ENT)



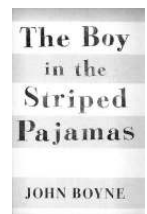
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas

by John Boyne

Reviewed by Mahak L.

Bruno is a little 9-year-old boy. His father is in the military and he gets a new assignment, so the family has to move to a new place. Bruno didn't like this at all because there was nothing in the area. It was all deserted. He was being home-schooled by a teacher who didn't care about others. He had no friends because there weren't any kids around. He hated it, until one day he saw a fence. This was no ordinary fence. What was on the other side?

This is an historical book that occurs during the Holocaust. I thought *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* was very interesting. There was not much suspense, except that they barely said anything about the father. Later on, they did give more information but I had to infer a lot of the things from the clues they gave me. It gave enough detail for each character so I could picture the character in my mind. At first I did not know what the book was about, but towards the middle it became clear. The book was a bit confusing at the end, but I thought it was good overall. This is a good book for people who like historical mysteries. (Youth Jr. High Fiction BOY)





Bread and Roses, Too

by Katherine Paterson

Reviewed by Erica M.

Have you read the fascinating book called *Bread and Roses, Too*? If you haven't, you're missing out on a fantastic book written by Katherine Paterson based on a 1912 strike. This book is an historical fiction and dramatic-based book. It is great for 11 to 14 year olds and young adults.

After Rosa's dad dies in a mill fire, her family has to live in a cramped house because they have no money to afford a better one. Since Rosa's mom is only making \$6.25 a week, she has to pay the man who fixed papers to change her sister's age. This way she can be old enough to work, but even with Rosa's sister working they still don't have enough money to support themselves and a new baby! This causes her mom and sister to join a strike against mill owners. Rosa gets put into a tight situation because she knows her mom's and sister's lives are on the line, but she doesn't know how to stop them from going on strike and risking their lives.



People were getting brutally beaten and were sleeping in tiny houses. If the author was a little more descriptive during these parts the story would have been even better, but the book is excellent regardless of this! The strongest part of the book is how well-described Jake and Rosa are. The author even describes their face expressions and body language beautifully. This is definitely a book worth reading! (Youth Fiction PAT)



Diva

by Alex Flinn

Reviewed by Clara W.

Caitlin McCourt knows a lot of girls who call themselves divas. In fact, she wants to be an opera singer diva. To make her dream come true, she auditions for a musical program at the Miami High School of the Arts. With her amazing voice she gets in like that. At the school, she doesn't feel like she fits in and doesn't believe in herself. Before she went to this school she was overweight, but now is thin for the first time. Her abusive boyfriend and perfect mother make it harder for her to live her dream. When she gets into the school she realizes she has to be herself, and her friends and voice teacher help her. Will Caitlin make her dream come true and succeed?



I really liked this book. Alex Flinn has a great style of writing! *Diva* was funny, romantic, and just great. This

book was a page-turner! I never wanted to put it down because I always wanted to see what would happen next. This book also made me realize that I should follow my dreams and go for them no matter what anyone says. The only weakness in this book was that the ending was very abrupt. This is more of a girl's book for sure, so I suggest all girls read *Diva*. (Adult Fiction-Teen FLL)



The Foundling

by D.M. Cornish

Reviewed by Victoria L.

The Foundling by D.M. Cornish is a story about a little boy named Rossamund, who wanted an adventure. He was a foundling who had no respect from the other kids. One day, he discovered that he was going to be a lamplighter, a soldier that works for the Empire to light street lanterns in the night. On his way to become a lamplighter, he met a lot of new people, bad and good. There is just one problem, everyone was getting into his way and he couldn't reach West Vestling in time to be accepted as a lamplighter.

This was a really good book! This book was filled with fantasy and had clues and secrets to be discovered. The best part was the characters had no idea of what would happen to them on their journey.



It was a creative story that plunged me into it right away. This book was very descriptive and had the true feeling of how to be a kid with no parents. Also, it showed me that not everyone can be trusted during a journey. This book made me wonder which character could survive on their own and who couldn't. *The Foundling* is the first book of the *Monster Blood Tattoo* series. I hope that the other books are as great as this one. (Youth Jr. High Fiction COR)



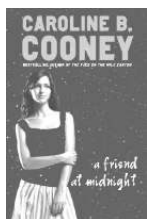
A Friend at Midnight

by Caroline B. Cooney

Reviewed by Kaitlin W.

A Friend at Midnight is a fantastic book! Caroline Cooney puts so much drama into one family that she made the book addicting. I did not want to put it down.

Lily starts out as a happy and cheerful person who loves and misses her dad. Then she tends to become a sad and unhappy girl who not only hates her dad but is also mad at her brother Michael. The way Lily handled her brothers in the situation that she was in was very adult like. Imagine a lot of things adults have to deal with, and Lily has to deal with them at the age of 15. I think that I could never keep



such a big and important secret away from my friends or my family like Lily does.

The book is confusing at first, but once you really get into it, it is easy to follow. *A Friend at Midnight* might even be one of my favorite books, and I'm very glad that I read it because, if I didn't read it, I would not know how good a family I have. I would recommend this book for people who like to read, instead of people who read because someone else tells them to. (Youth Jr. High Fiction CLO)



Hell Phone

by William Sleator

Reviewed by Gabriel D.

Hell Phone is a very good book that would appeal mostly to middle school boys because it is very gruesome at times. Boys generally like that more than girls do. I also think that any book that has to do with Hell and describes it so vividly would appeal more to boys than girls.

One of my favorite things about this book, and every William Sleator book that I have read, is that the ending is very unpredictable. This book is definitely science fiction because it is about people going back and forth from Hell to Earth using cell phones. I also loved the character Rusty. He made the story more interesting because he was so incredibly ignorant that it was comical.

However, there were a couple things that could have improved this book. I never really felt that I got into any of the characters, I never really knew how they felt, and I did not know a lot about them. The author did not give us information about their background. The book dragged during certain parts, and some of the characters were not that interesting. I wish that the author had shortened the book so that the reader did not lose interest in the plot. I also wish that the author would have changed the story a little bit and made the plot more exciting by making the characters more interesting. Regardless, I think this book is well written, and I would recommend it to all middle school students.

(Youth Jr. High Fiction SLE, Adult Fiction-Teen SLE)



In the Break

by Jack Lopez

Reviewed by Amanda G.

In the Break is a story about friendship, love, and the search for the perfect wave. People who love a story filled with romance, action, and surfing will not be able to put this book down. It also has some strong language and violent scenes. Jack Lopez is the genius author of this wonderful book. His beautiful writing captures you right at the beginning. Teens will absolutely

love it because, in some ways, the characters and teens today are very alike. I know people that have gone through similar situations.

Juan's best friend Jamie gets into a violent fight with his abusive stepdad. When Amber, Jamie's beautiful sister, comes to tell Juan the bad news, they decide to run away. All three of them head south to Mexico while things back at Jamie's house settle down. On their dangerous and exciting trip, they learn about love, loss, and each other.

Jack Lopez is a wonderful author. My favorite part about his writing is that it makes you feel like you're in the scene and he has you excited to turn to the next page. In this book, he puts in a lot of description and uses very strong words which is why this book is so great. It is personally one of my favorite books. I really enjoyed it, and I'm sure that many young teens will love this book as much as I do. This is Jack Lopez's first young adult novel and it was great. I really think he should write another one.

(Youth Jr. High Fiction LOP)



Into the Firestorm

by Deborah Hopkinson

Reviewed by Daniel P.

Into the Firestorm by Deborah Hopkinson is amazing. It is fiction, but the background of the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire were real events that happened in 1906. The main character, Nick, was a cotton picker. However, as his grandmother, Gran, died, he moved from the field to a big city, San Francisco. As he moved from the field to the city, he thought a lot of things were similar somehow. He met people, who had similar personalities, and found a bunch of mistakes he made when he was at the field.

The descriptions in the book made me feel as if I was really there with Nick. Every sentence is clear, but with some strong, and complicated words, it becomes powerful. As I read through the sentences, I felt like I was doing the action, I was feeling sad or happy, or I was touching or feeling things. It explains the hardships of those people who had to leave their house to avoid the fire, how they felt, and a lot more, but, it lacks the actions when fighting against the fire. It was the only thing I was disappointed with in this book.

However, this little, tiny disappointment didn't affect my feelings about this book. It has too many great points that will cover one disappointment. *Into the Firestorm* is a great choice and it will make your reading time exciting and fun. (Youth Fiction HOP)





Kung Fu Princess: Daughter of Light

by Pamela Walker

Reviewed by Danielle M.

Kung Fu Princess: Daughter of Light by Pamela Walker is a very mysterious action book. Right from the beginning it gets very interesting! In the book the author is very descriptive but doesn't include long descriptions. There are no boring parts. Most of the parts have action to them, but there is some mystery, too. For instance, Cassidy, the main character, has five coins and knows nothing about them, so she goes on a search to find out what they are. Also, there is a tiny bit of romance, since Cassidy has a crush on someone. Going through all this is not a good time for Cassidy. You may think it would be cool to have these things happen to you but Cassidy just wants to live a normal life.



The book is more for people who like action with a little bit of violence. Also, people who are fascinated with Kung Fu or other types of martial arts may like this book, too. This book isn't super hard to read, so it would be for kids in junior high. In my opinion this book was great! I could never put it down. It is a great book and I think you should give it a try. (Youth Jr. High Series Paperback KUNG FU PRINCESS)



London Calling

by Edward Bloor

Reviewed by Danielle K.

"Johnny will you help me?" Martin looked over and saw a small skinny boy sitting in the corner of the room talking to him. Suddenly, in a whole different world, Martin actually feels like he has a purpose. But how far had he traveled from home this time? Martin lived a perfectly normal life but when his grandma dies little does he know that this bad happening will eventually lead to good. And how an old Philco 20 Deluxe radio left for him in his grandmother's will could change his life forever.

London Calling is a book filled with adventure, love, history, friendship, and mystery. It is a fictional book but does mention historical artifacts, paintings, and events. It even mentions the great cathedrals in London and Yorktown.

I personally enjoyed this book, for it never was at any point boring for me, and it made me look forward to reading every day after school. *London Calling* is a book for all ages and genders. Anyone will simply fall deeply into this book, no matter what their interests may be. (Youth Fiction BLO)



The Looking Glass Wars

by Frank Beddor

Reviewed by Courtney S.

If you like an action-adventure book with some comedy and romance, then have I found the book for you. You would really like *The Looking Glass Wars* by Frank Beddor, who produced the movie, *There's Something About Mary*. You can get hooked on this book very easily.

It is supposedly, the real story about Alyss (Alice) in Wonderland. What I mean by that is, you know the story about Alice, the adventurous blond girl who fell down a rabbit hole? She meets all these characters that helped her try to get home. Well, that is all a lie! What really happened, was that the girl who was actually named "Alyss" had black hair and was to become Queen of Wonderland. If you want to know more, you have to read *The Looking Glass Wars*.

I could easily picture every little description. I even reacted emotionally to events that happened. *The Looking Glass Wars* was one of the best books I have ever read. I suggest that this book be at the top of your list for a birthday or holiday present. Even if you don't like to read action-filled books or about fictional wars, this awesome book would be great for someone who does. *The Looking Glass Wars* is a totally must-read!!! (Youth Jr. High Fiction BED)



Miracle on 49th Street

by Mike Lupica

Reviewed by Jeffrey F.

This is a great book! *Miracle on 49th Street* is like no other book that I have ever read. Usually when I start a book, the beginning might be boring and the ending would be great or vice versa, but this book is not like that. It has a great beginning that really gets into the characters, like Molly, a girl whose mom died. She now lives with her mom's best friend. The problem is that Molly thinks that Josh Cameron, the best NBA player, is her dad. Molly's mom would leave her letters before she died and one of them



UNDER the COVER: BOOK REVIEWS by TEENS

Old Orchard Junior High School project leadership...

Sylvia Accardi, Librarian/Media Center Director; Clif Dahlgren, 7th grade Reading teacher; Judy Martin, 7th Grade Reading teacher

Skokie Public Library project leadership...

Linda Sawyer, Assistant Head of Youth Services; Ruth Sinker, Youth Services Technology Coordinator

talked about how Josh was her boyfriend while she was pregnant with Molly. Josh doesn't believe her when Molly tells him she's his daughter. Whether he is or isn't remains a question until the very last sentence.

I think *Miracle on 49th Street* is great and would be enjoyed by any kid over the age of 10.

(Youth Fiction LUP)



Out of Focus

by Margaret Buffie

Reviewed by Mona M.

Out of Focus by Margaret Buffie has definitely been put onto my favorites list! Margaret Buffie has a way of writing that pulled me into the story before I knew it. The book was heart-warming, and inspiring, and will be great for anyone from 12 to 100! The descriptions of emotions were beautiful, but some of the arguments ended a bit too abruptly. There should have been some time in between, before the characters made up and the argument was over. Also, some of the wording was a bit confusing.

Teenager Bernice Dodd has to struggle with an alcoholic mother, who is always on a man hunt, and has to take care of her two younger siblings. After living in horrible conditions for most of her life, she isn't going to take it any longer. When an opportunity to start a new life comes her way she knows she has to take it faster than the click of her camera. Even with her new life at her great aunt Charlotte's lodge, she faces a new set of problems. She battles to believe her mother will stay sober long enough to stay for the summer and make a somewhat regular life for her odd brother and smiley sister. Also, she has to try to manage her feelings about her two very different crushes, gather enough money to keep the lodge open, and most of all, figure out how to pull herself together and look at things through her own eyes. (Youth Jr. High Fiction BUF)



Skate

by Michael Harmon

Reviewed by Jocelyn W.

Ian McDermott is a punk boy who is having problems at home and at school. He and his younger brother Sammy are two misunderstood brothers who live in Spokane with their drug-addicted mother. When she disappears again, Ian and Sammy go on a search to find the one person who might be able to help turn their lives around: their dad.

Skate is shocking, tragic, but funny, and is about the strong bond that two brothers share. If you're looking for a book that ends happily ever after this is probably not the book you should read. It's not a fairy tale, it is realistic fiction.

I never thought this book was boring. In the beginning, though, it goes sort of slowly, and I was just waiting for something exciting to happen. Other than that, this book is great! It's so well written that I could imagine what was going on in the main characters' heads and what was happening in the book. I think this book is for both boys and girls from 12 to 17. All kids can relate to Ian, because they all probably know someone like him.

(Youth Jr. High Fiction HAR)



The Snow Spider

by Jenny Nimmo

Reviewed by Shiji V.

The Snow Spider is Book One of the *Magician Trilogy* written by Jenny Nimmo. It is a fantasy about Gwyn Griffiths and how he tries to find out if he is a magician or not. Gwyn's grandmother Nain told him that every century a magician is chosen and that he might be the next one. His father wasn't one, and his great-great-grandfather wasn't either, so there's a good chance that Gwyn is a magician. To test him, she gave him five gifts for his birthday: a piece of seaweed, a yellow scarf, a tin whistle, a twisted metal brooch, and a small, broken horse. Nain also told him that if he was a magician, he could get his heart's greatest desire. Later Gwyn received a glow-in-the-dark, white, snow spider. This spider had the ability to spin webs of magic which showed scenes of people from magical, faraway places. Can his five gifts help solve the riddle of the webs of magic?

The book is only 128 pages long. That's why I'd recommend it to readers under 12 or 13 who are into adventure, magic, and fantasy. *The Snow Spider* is similar to the Harry Potter books, but it's just shorter and easier. The book gets a little dull, then exciting, then dull, and then exciting again. It's the kind of book that you have to stick with and wait for the good parts, not like those books that you can't put down. I think the story line is pretty good though. Since it's only Book One, there's a lot more to come in the *Magician Trilogy*. (Youth Fiction NIM)





The Somebodies

by N.E. Bode

Reviewed by Bobby P.

Under New York City is a whole different city that is inhabited by Anybodies. They are people who can transform themselves and other objects.

The Blue Queen has come back from her defeat by Fern's grandmother in a previous book and is now stealing the souls from books to gain power.

Anybodies Fern and her half-twin Howard go on an exciting, adventure to stop the soul-eating, evil Blue Queen from taking over the city beneath the city, the world, and all of civilization. *The Somebodies* has very unique and interesting pencil drawn illustrations created by Peter Ferguson. This is a thrilling book for 6th, 7th, or 8th graders interested in it.

N.E. Bode wrote the books *The Nobodies*, *The Anybodies*, and to complete the trilogy he has written *The Somebodies*. *The Somebodies* is an exciting book which combines adventure and mystery into a 288-page book. The cover would grab the attention of anyone but it misleads readers in the first 30 pages. N.E. Bode is a great writer who has unexpected twists around every corner in his book. It grabbed me at page one and wouldn't let go until I finished. (Youth Fiction BOD)



Tiger Magic

by Laurence Yep

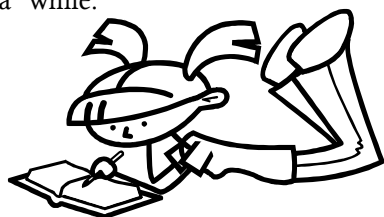
Reviewed by David N.

Tiger Magic is the last book in the thrilling trilogy of *The Tiger's Apprentice* by Laurence Yep. It follows *The Tiger's Apprentice* and *The Tiger's Blood*.

In this book, Mr. Hu and the Alliance fight their last big battle against the evil Lord Vatten. While at the same time, Tom and the Alliance are trying to protect the prematurely hatched phoenix. Tom is the apprentice of Mr. Hu and the "mama" of the phoenix. They have to save the phoenix and the Imperfect Mountain in order for them to help the world become and stay peaceful.

This book is filled with action, suspense, and love. Laurence Yep, the author of two Newbery Honor books, has made a superb book which would be good for people of all ages. Be sure to read the first books before reading *Tiger Magic*, or it will be confusing for a while.

(Youth Fiction YEP)



Virus on Orbis 1

by P.J. Haarsma

Reviewed by Saud A.

Virus on Orbis 1 is about when large amounts of human orphans are on a mission to a planet called Orbis. The main character, who also narrates the story, is Johnny Turnbull. When Theylor, leader of Orbis, is testing all the humans because they need to have the program of their language inserted in their minds, they discover that Johnny is a "Softwire." He can access files in computers with his mind. The Guarantors, owners of humans, find something wrong with the central computer, and they blame Johnny. The consequence of committing this crime is very severe because it can get the person banned from Orbis and destroyed forever.

The book is very good, but it's somewhat confusing in the beginning. Later it gets easier to understand. Something mysterious and interesting is always happening. I would recommend this science fiction book to people ages 11 to 15. (Youth Science Fiction HAA)



What Happened to Cass McBride?

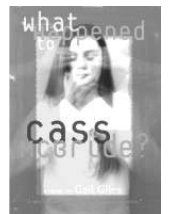
by Gail Giles

Reviewed by Alicia F.

Cass McBride was a freshman who everyone wanted to be friends with. She was categorized as a "popular, stuck up, rich girl." All of the girls wanted to be her, and all of the guys wanted to date her, but not as much as David Kirby. David Kirby was a guy that no one knew, and a guy no one cared about. He dared to ask Cass out and got a harsh reply, so mean that his life ended. David had a brother named Kyle who sought a cruel revenge. He kidnapped Cass and buried her underground, alive!

This was an outstanding book filled with heart-wrenching suspense. This was an edge-of-your-seat, page-turning mystery. I recommend this book for anyone who likes mysteries and suspense-filled books. When I stopped my reading for the day, I felt the need to keep going to see what is going to happen next. Gail Giles, the author of *Shattering Glass*, did an excellent job on this novel. I could feel the skin of Cass McBride getting shredded against the wooden grave she was in. I could hear her screams echoing off the walls in the tight space of her underground pit. I felt sorry for the characters and what they were going through. Gail Giles gets two thumbs up for *What Happened to Cass McBride?*

(Adult Fiction-Teen GIL)





Wolfcry

by Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

Reviewed by Aphrodite L.

If you like a book that has fantasy mixed with fiction, *Wolfcry* by Amelia Atwater-Rhodes is definitely your kind of book.

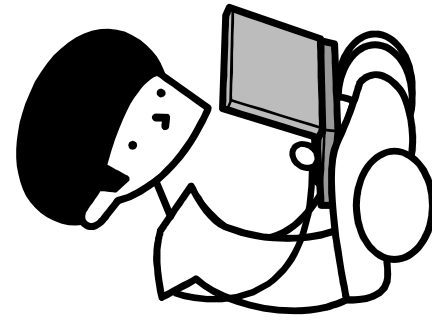


Oliza Shardae Cobriana is about to take the throne of Wyvern's Court, which is home to both the Avians and the Serpientes. The war between the Avians and the Serpientes had just ended before she was born, but hatred is all around them. How is Oliza supposed to rule her people if they only want to hold a dagger in front of each others' throat?

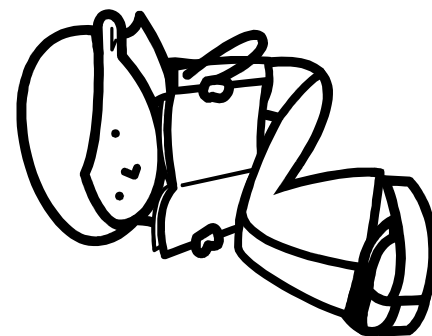
The story begins when Urban was found beaten in Avian land. When Oliza was trying to cover it all up before the rumors started, mercenaries that brought her deep into the wolves' territory kidnapped her. But when she finds out who attacked her all her plans change completely. Along the way, Oliza finds a wolf that will save her life, but now the future of her people lies in her hands.

I really liked the book a lot. The author explains emotions and places so well that I was actually feeling and doing what the character was doing. In some parts, however, new people pop up that the author doesn't tell much about, and in some conflicts the author doesn't explain enough for the reader to understand. The book is very fast-moving and is fun to read. Something always is happening, which makes the story so exciting. The author must have really taken her time to make a book as enjoyable as this is! If you like a book that is fast-moving and thrilling, *Wolfcry* is definitely a must for you!

(Youth Jr. High Fiction ATW)



UNDER THE COVER



N.1

Book reviews by teens. For teens. Pass it on.

V.1

Old Orchard Junior High School

9310 Kenton Avenue
Skokie, Illinois 60076
847.676.9010 / 847.676.3827 fax
www.sd68.k12.il.us/schools/orchard/orchard.html



Skokie Public Library

5215 Oakton Street
Skokie, Illinois 60077
847.673.7774 / 847.673.7797 fax
www.skokielineary.info

Skokie Public Library Trustees: John Graham, President; Diana Hunter, Vice President/President Emerita; Dayle Zelenka, Secretary; Susan Greer; Zeldia Rich; Eva Weiner; John M. Wozniak
Director: Carolyn A. Anthony D0207