Christian Library Journal

Outstanding Books Reviewed in This Issue

The Silent Songbird by Melanie Dickerson.

Never Forget by Jody Hedlund.


Special Feature: Author Interview with Joni Eareckson Tada

Plus: 2016 Christy Award titles
A Letter from the Publisher

Dear CLJ Readers:

We are excited to embark upon another year of learning and enjoyment through the wonderful world of books. This year we at CLJ aim to include ever more content for your pleasure and edification—more reviews, more award coverage, more author interviews.

In this issue, we are honored to present an interview with Joni Eareckson Tada, beloved author and radio host, who has inspired so many through her personal testimony and her insights into how to live with suffering through the grace of God. She graciously agreed to chat with CLJ about a project dear to her heart—a new, special edition of the Bible filled with study helps and inspiration for those who are suffering or caring for someone with a disability or chronic condition.

We are also pleased to feature the 2016 Christy Award winners and finalists—the best of Christian fiction from a range of genres, with something to please every reader.

So enjoy, and thank you for allowing CLJ to enrich your reading life!

In Christ,
Angela Walsh
Publisher and Editor
editor@christianlibraryj.org.
The purpose of the *Christian Library Journal* is to provide reviews from a Christian point of view, of both Christian and secular titles for the Christian reader. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of *Christian Library Journal*.

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Review Rating System

*5 Outstanding — a book which impacts someone’s life or thinking

5 Excellent — well written, among the best

4 Very good — definitely worth reading

3 Good — may be a good source for relaxation or to meet needs for information

2 Fair — poor writing or editing; read only if very interested

1 Poor — not much going for this title.

Recommended with caution (may be used with any of the above ratings) — Note reservations within the review.

Not recommended (may be used with any of the above ratings) — Note problems within the review.

Value of the book:

With fiction, the rating includes the quality of plot development/pacing, characterization, sense of time and place, mood, and atmosphere, dialogue, depth of perception, sensitivity of writing, use of humor. Be aware that some books are character driven, so character development is extremely important. Others are plot driven, so character development isn’t as critical; plot is.

With nonfiction, the rating includes quality of the information, accuracy, up to date, stimulates further inquiry, adds to the understanding of the topic, illustrations which are informative and appropriate.

With picture books, first be aware that these are written today for various age groups, so don’t assume little children. The rating includes those above for fiction and nonfiction, and also emphasizes the illustrations.

Commonly used abbreviations in CLJ reviews

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CLJ was honored recently to talk with author Joni Eareckson Tada about her life and her most recent project, a new study Bible called the Beyond Suffering Bible. After suffering a traumatic accident at a young age, Joni has taken the best of her situation to inspire millions through television interviews, radio shows, books, and a movie. Fulfilling Joni’s desire to reach more people struggling with disabilities or families struggling to care for suffering people, the Beyond Suffering Bible hit the shelves in August 2016. Following are the highlights of our conversation:

Q: I wanted to start off and get just a little bit of background before we begin. Most people know your story but a few people don’t, and I just wanted to give them some information before we discuss the book. You were in a diving accident when you were very young, right?

A: Back in 1967, I was a teenager getting ready to head off to college and had just graduated from high school. With my sister on a fling, we went to the beach just to spend some sisterly time together before we both went off to college on our separate ways. I took a reckless dive into some shallow water. I didn’t realize it was as shallow as it was. I hit the sandbar, snapped my head back, crunched the vertebrae in my neck, and severed my spinal column. There I was, lying face-down in the water, hoping that my sister Kathy would notice that I had not surfaced from my dive.

It’s curious because Kathy had her back turned to me. She didn’t even see me take that dive, but right before she was ready to wade up into the shallow end and walk up on the sand to our towels on the beach, a crab bit her toe. And it startled her. So she quickly turned around in the water to scream to me, to tell me to look out for crabs. When she turned around, she saw my hair floating on the surface of the water, and I wasn’t bringing my head up. She knew something awful had happened and came quickly swimming after me and, thankfully, just as I was starting to drown, she pulled me up.

Hardly a day goes by that I don’t thank God for the fact that He’s in the little details of our lives—tiny details, incidental details. What are the odds of a crab biting somebody’s toe at the exact instant that person has to be alerted that somebody’s in trouble. It’s just amazing to me. So I never forget that we not only serve a God who’s into big-picture things, but He’s into incredibly minor, tiny-detail things. That’s an encouragement to me.

Q: So you were 17 or 18 when this happened?

A: I was 17 years old. When I learned that my quadriplegia was permanent, I sank into this deep depression. After I went home from the hospital my depression evolved into suicidal despair. I would wrench my hair back and forth on my pillow hoping to break my neck up at some higher level and thereby end my life.

Every morning for two or three weeks I would tell my sister JK, who invited me to live with her on the farm, to just let me stay in bed. Just close the drapes, turn out the lights, shut the bedroom door, and leave me alone. When you’re in the dark for that long, you can only relive so many memories of what it was like to be on your feet and then those memories start to wear thin like an old reel on a 38-millimeter movie camera. It just starts to splinter. I just started hating the fact that I was living in the dark, and I was suffocating with so much self-pity. I realized that I could not, that none of us can, live with that kind of hopelessness. I think the one thing
that human beings thrive on the most is hope. Finally, in that dark bedroom, I cried out. I said, “God, if I can’t die then You’re going to have to show me how to live. I don’t know how to live as a quadriplegic.” It was really a sincere prayer. It was short. It was sweet. But the Holy Spirit heard me, and the next morning I got out of bed and decided to face life.

My sister pushed me in a wheelchair to a music stand in the living room, just a black music stand where she’d set my Bible. Clenching a mouth-stick between my teeth, I began turning the pages of God’s Word. I knew, in a vague kind of way, that it contained answers for my plight. I just had no idea where to look. Thankfully, God brought wise Christian friends and specifically one friend—his name was Steve Estes, a young man who really had a good handle on the Word of God. And God brought that young man Steve along to help me discover some incredible life-transforming precepts. I found bread for my hungry soul. I’ve never been the same since.

Q: Wow, that’s a great story. I’m glad that I can include those details as I review this book because people need to understand where you’re coming from. You know suffering, and you’ve been through it for decades now. So you know what’s important to people and how to guide them through as they’re reading the Bible.

A: This is exactly why this Beyond Suffering Bible means so much to me. What I just described to you happened almost 50 years ago, and it’s always been my heart’s desire to help people who struggle as I once did. And I want this Bible to be that wise Christian friend—I want this Bible to be that Steve Estes, who comes alongside the hurting person and provides hope and guidance and encouragement. This Bible to me is a lifetime of work. It is what I want to give the 17-year-old Joni, who is struggling with depression and sitting in front of a music stand with her Bible, flipping the pages with a mouth stick and not knowing where to go. This is the Bible I want to give Joni. This will help her.

This pretty much describes my passion behind this special edition of the Word of God. I do not pretend to add anything to the Bible. I’m its general editor, and the people we chose to contribute to the Bible—whether they wrote book introductions or profiles or connection points or resources or whatever—none of us pretend to add to the Bible, but we just wanted to make it easier for depressed, hurting, hopeless people who don’t know where to look. We just want to make it easier for them to find the help they need in God’s Word.

Q: I think you’ve done an excellent job of that. I’ve been looking at the Bible since I received it earlier this week. It’s a study Bible, and you’ve got all the information on the first page of every new book of the Bible. You tell us who wrote it and when, the writer’s purpose, and the main message of the book. I like all of your connection points that are scattered throughout, that they go deeper into explaining the verses and the points. The profiles and the essays at the back that go even deeper are by people who also know suffering. It just speaks to my heart. I know you created it specifically for people who are dealing with disabilities or illnesses, but I think it would also be good for anyone who has ever suffered—which is everyone.

A: Absolutely. This is a Bible for anyone who has suffered—yes, a life-altering injury or illness, a parent who gives birth to a child with special needs—but it could touch the life of someone going through bankruptcy, an unexpected divorce, an unexpected death in the family.
You’re a mother and you find out your son’s on drugs. You turn to the back of this Bible and you read Steve Arterburn’s article on accidental drug addiction—and wow, there’s salt here. There are resources. I love it that people care for those who suffer, for those who hurt—family members, nurses, professional people, caregivers. I love the fact that in the profiles you see that Epaphroditus is a caregiver. We don’t think of Epaphroditus as a caregiver to the apostle Paul, but he was. He took care of Paul, and there are some principles in Epaphroditus’s life that really resonate with caregivers. I love that, and even in the book introductions, I’m sure you’ve noticed that from Genesis to Revelation the introductions go beyond what’s traditional to reveal things about suffering, things about disability. I believe that all those introductions were written either by people who have a significant disability or who are a family member of someone with a disability, and that’s pretty special.

To go back to your original point—yes, it’s for anybody who hurts; it’s for anybody that’s struggling with hopelessness. It’s for anybody that’s so depressed, yet they know God’s Word is where to turn to. They just need help, and this Bible can be that help.

Q: Would you like to tell us anything about the particular way the inspiration for this Bible came about and how the team of contributors came together? I’m sure the germ of the idea started long ago, or maybe it came overnight. I was hoping you could share a little bit about that.

A: For a long time—decades—I’d wanted to be a part of creating a Bible like the Beyond Suffering Bible. There are all kinds of Bibles—Bibles for single women, study Bibles for students, Bibles for people who are in recovery—all kinds of special editions of the Word of God. When I saw how popular these various special editions were, I thought, wow, that is something I want to do. I want to help create a Bible that will bless people like these other unique editions of God’s Word are blessing.

So I asked my team here at the Christian Institute of Disability: is there any way that we can connect with a good publisher who would be interested in working with us? We put out some feelers and before we knew it, our friends at Tyndale took the bait. We met together about five years ago, and it was a great collaboration. It didn’t take long for us to sketch out the outline to assign the various contributors to several of the topics, and what special articles we wanted to include in the back. I did the article on accidental addiction, and it is just stellar. So many people are addicted accidentally to painkillers nowadays. These are the things that really resonate with our contemporary culture. That’s how it all came together, with a lot of prayer. I must confess that we had a group of people who were committed to pray for this Bible as it was being written and edited. I’m so grateful that praise, worship, and intercession covered this project from beginning to end.

Q: I think it’s a great guide and a great resource. I have several other Bibles in my home, but this one can help you in a very specific way. You can open up almost any page and find something that will help you to understand what’s written in that book of the Bible and to help you highlight the points of the Bible that are written for people who are hurting. I admire your work. I can tell that so much time went into this. How much time did you spend working on this?

A: This was a combined effort, a collaboration between not only myself but all the contributors who are listed in the front of the Bible. Our Christian Institute of Disability began this project six years ago, and we were so excited. We were, first, very thrilled to have a good
partner in Tyndale, and secondly, it was just a joy to gather around us experts, expositors of God’s Word who were acquainted with disability.

It’s so needed today because most people hate suffering. They wish they could erase it out of the dictionary. Ours is a culture of comfort and instant gratification. We have no patience for suffering. Most people want to drug it or escape it or divorce it or do anything but live with it. We’re told in God’s Word suffering may be His choices toward shaping the character of Christ in us. As I often say, God permits what He hates to accomplish that which He loves. That’s something my friend Steve Estes once said to me years ago. God permits what He hates to accomplish that which He loves. That’s kind of a theme in my life, and I want the reader of this particular edition of God’s Word to walk away understanding that—that God permits what He hates. He allows all sorts of things He does not approve of and He hates them.

I’m thinking of the crucifixion of His own Son. When we think about what was involved—torture, murder, treason, injustice—we wonder how can any of that be God’s will. But we’re told in Acts 4:28 that these men—that is, Judas Iscariot and Pontius Pilate and the mob in the streets and the drunken Roman soldiers—did what God’s power and will decided beforehand should happen. So the world’s worst murder becomes the world’s only salvation. That same exchange that happened at the cross happens in our lives.

God permitted what He hated in my life, this spinal cord injury. He takes no delight in diseases and multiple sclerosis and cancer and the like, but He permits these things to accomplish Christ in us, the hope of glory. That’s wonderful.

Q: I agree with you wholeheartedly. I wanted to go back and ask you: you’ve made it your life’s work to encourage other people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. How long have you been working like this? What year did you start Joni and Friends?

A: When I got out of the hospital I was a mouth artist, and the Today Show saw me on some local Good Morning Baltimore television piece. They saw my story and asked if I would want to come to New York and be interviewed by Barbara Walters. A publisher of Harper-Collins Zondervan saw this interview and asked if I’d like to write my book. Then, Bill and Ruth Graham read the book, and they made a movie of the book. I began receiving so many letters, and I realized: Oh my goodness, God has placed me in an extraordinary position of influence. I’d better steward this well.

That’s why I started Joni and Friends in 1979. I wanted to be a good steward of the opportunities that God had just placed in my lap. It’s not like I went banging on anybody else’s door and asked will you please write my book, will you please do a story or movie on my life, would you let me speak on Mr. Graham’s crusade? These things just happened to me, so I knew they were from the Lord. Because of that, I really wanted to be a good steward, which is why I started Joni and Friends. That was in 1979. So we’ve been serving special needs families for about 37 years. But, again, it’s not just people with disabilities and their families. For instance, I do a daily radio program called Joni and Friends. It’s aired on 1100 radio outlets across the country, and mainly the messages are for the average hearers who go through their own kind of suffering, their own struggles. The insights that I learn in a wheelchair are just as applicable to anybody who wants to rise above their circumstances. Over these 37 years that we’ve been working at Joni and Friends, we’ve gained a lot of skill, gathered around us a lot of experts, and become an authoritative voice on a biblical worldview on disability.
It’s a privilege.

Q: You give hope and inspiration to so many people. Your name is known and equated with someone who knows suffering and encourages others in such a good way. So I appreciate you, and I appreciate this copy of the Beyond Suffering Bible. I’m glad to have it. It’s a wonderful resource.

A: There’s a great article in the back of the Bible written by my friend Dr. Michael Easley. He was president emeritus of Moody Bible Institute, and he suffers with chronic pain. And I deal daily with chronic pain. Pain is at epidemic proportions right now in the United States. So many people are struggling with chronic pain, and this is the Bible that speaks to them. Disabilities come out in all shapes and sizes.

Q: They surely do. As you pointed out earlier, it’s not always just physical. Sometimes things happen in life that are just devastating. It can be physical or it can be emotional or spiritual, and I think your Bible does provide a pathway straight into the passages that speak directly to hope for people who are feeling hopeless in the moment.

Is there anything else you’d like to share specifically about this Bible that you’d like me to include?

A: It covers the topics that people wrestle with when they’re hurting—whether it’s miraculous healing; end-of-life issues; death with dignity; help for caregivers; the parenting challenges of children with special needs—when is it a disability and when is it dysfunction (that’s a question that a lot of these parents struggle with); how is the church going to embrace more families like these. I see this Bible as a real change agent. People aren’t going to find a better, more comprehensive resource for understanding affliction and how God uses it. I’m very, very grateful to you and our friends at the Christian Library Journal who are spreading the word.

Q: You’re welcome. I think this will be a great resource for many, many people, and I’m so happy to write the review and let people know about this great resource that’s available now.

Thank you so much, Joni.

Valorie Cooper, CLJ Special Features Writer
In this issue, CLJ is pleased to present 2016 Christy Award winners, along with reviews of most of the titles (many were reviewed in previous issues, with a couple to be featured in a future issue).

According to www.ChristyAwards.com “the Christy Award is designed to:

* Nurture and encourage creativity and quality in the writing and publishing of fiction written from a Christian worldview.
* Showcase the diversity of the genres.”

Enjoy!

BOOK OF THE YEAR 2016 WINNER

The five times I met myself / James L. Rubart.
388 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Brock knows life isn’t perfect but hopes that his rut is just a phase. He’s lost the effort behind his relationship with his wife, Karissa; he holds a flame for his high school sweetheart; and he struggles for power against his brother in their father’s coffee company. After dreaming about his late father, Brock digs into his past. Brock takes control of his dreams and talks to his younger self to remember who he was. When Brock wakes, however, his conversations with his past-self changes his present. Brock sees an opportunity to rekindle the flame with his wife and reconnect with his family, but everything goes horribly wrong.

Young Brock is wary of the older man claiming to be him. But everything the man shares is true. He knows too much to not be Brock. But the more he follows Future Brock’s advice, the more Future Brock says goes wrong. How could his life, that’s going so well, suddenly change for the worst?

Journey with Brock as he relives the pivotal moments in his past and tries to create a brighter future—without destroying his life.

The Christy Awards’ Book of the Year and Visionary 2016 winner, The Five Times I Met Myself, is an addictive read. James L. Rubart’s use of sensory detail is impeccable and will weave readers into the book’s pages. While this story begins slowly, readers will be eating up this well-written story by the end. This story adds a new twist on Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol as Brock goes back and forth between the past and the present to see how his actions shape his future.

While this book toys with the fantastic, it realistically depicts how the real struggles of marriage, kinship, crime, and separation destroy a person. It also shows how finding yourself starts with forgiveness and getting right with God.

While some may consider this book preachy, the use of biblical examples and Christian language packs a punch for this book’s message: prayer and surrendering all to God will lead Christians to God’s perfect plan—not always a perfect life.

Rebecca Schriner, CLJ
CONTEMPORARY 2016 WINNER

The sea keeper's daughters / Lisa Wingate.
xii, 432 p.; 22 cm. Adult Fic Rating: 5


CONTEMPORARY 2016 FINALISTS

The art of losing yourself : a novel / Katie Ganshert.
306 p.; 21 cm. Grades 10 and up Fic Rating: 4
Katie Ganshert’s The Art of Losing Yourself tells a story of heartache and redemption through the eyes of Carmen and her half-sister Gracie. Carmen, seemingly well-off and settled in an ideal career, struggles to find hope and meaning in the midst of multiple miscarriages and a failing marriage. Into this emotionally confusing and painful context walks Gracie, a high schooler with her own battles and baggage to carry. Through the course of this story, the reader sees how the lives of these women are transformed through their relationships.

Carmen’s relationship with Gracie shifts from something of duty or guilt to that of a proud mother-figure. Through her relationship with Carmen and the steady friendship of one of her classmates, Gracie is transformed from a bitter, closed-off teenager to a trusting and committed friend. Both sisters have deep and heart-felt struggles, yet it is ultimately through their difficult relationship with each other that each turns to God. Some things remain unresolved at the end of the story; one is left with a recognition that life is not supposed to be perfect, that it is sometimes messy. However, Ganshert does not leave it at that. This narrative reminds us that there is beauty in the difficult times, that God works through our trials, that people are worth loving, and that some things are worth fighting for.

The use of first-person throughout the book allows the reader to engage with the thoughts and emotions of the two main characters while frequent flashbacks provide insight into their motivations and responses. Alternating between the perspectives of Carmen and Gracie can sometimes be confusing, but overall provides a richer understanding of the characters’ experiences.

Recommended for older teens and adults. The content is in no way inappropriate, simply more relatable to adults with respect to Carmen and her struggles, and older students with respect to Gracie and the battles she faces. There are references to drugs, alcohol and premarital sex (not graphic) in the context of a character’s troubled past. The Art of Losing Yourself provides a quality Christian narrative without coming across as preachy or cliché.

Elisabeth A. Orr, CLJ
As waters gone by / Cynthia Ruchti.
320 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: Prisoners' spouses--Fiction. Madeline Island (Wis.)--Fiction
To be reviewed in a future issue of CLJ.

CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE/SUSPENSE 2016 WINNER

The wedding chapel / Rachel Hauck.
375 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Rachel Hauck, who serves on the Executive Board for American Christian Fiction Writers and is a conference speaker, provides another work that endears her to many. Contributing to an enjoyable reading of The Wedding Chapel is the dual timeline which prompts readers to keep turning the page. This timeline offers a current-day narrative about Taylor and Jack as well as the history of Jimmy and Colette from the 1940-50s. In The Wedding Chapel she enables the reader to see the story from various perspectives as the story alternates between the four main characters. Readers who enjoyed Hauck's earlier The Wedding Dress will again note her ability to portray strong characters that relate to real life. The fact that a variety of relationship journeys are explored—e.g., Jimmy and Collette in their teen years and Taylor and Jack's development from their first meeting—adds interest to the story's progression. Hauck's ability to have the complex characters of Taylor and Jack deal with very real issues conveys a message of forgiveness and hope with ease. Some readers will feel like they are on a sort of time-travel because the story moves back and forth from Heart's Bend, Tennessee in 1948 in the story of Jimmy and Colette's lost love and then flashes to today where one encounters the contemporary love story of Jack and Taylor's troubled marriage in New York. The image of the chapel—built as a monument to true love and ultimately an instrument of reconciliation—as holding the heartbeat of God complements the romance of the story.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE/SUSPENSE 2016 FINALISTS

Falling like snowflakes : a Summer Harbor novel / Denise Hunter. (A Summer Harbor novel; 1)
x, 339 p.; ill.; 22 cm. Adult

Award-winning author Denise Hunter kicks off a new series set in Summer Harbor, Maine and revolving around the relationships of the Callahan brothers.
In *Falling Like Snowflakes*, widowed Eden Martelli is on the run with her five-year-old son. Part of the Witness Protection program, they saw the murder of the U.S. marshal who was in charge of their security. When Eden arrives in Summer Harbor with a broken-down car, an expensive repair, and no money, she has no choice but to stay in Summer Harbor for the time being.

Meanwhile Beau Callahan left his sheriff’s job to take over the operations of the family Christmas tree farm after his parents’ death. Beau is facing his first Christmas without them. When Beau’s aunt needs someone to help her while she recuperates after a hospital stay, Beau thinks Eden is the answer to prayer—and Eden needs the job, even if he can’t check her references. When he starts to investigate her background, Eden’s past catches up to her, putting them in danger.

As they get to know one another, they find themselves attracted to one another. Can Beau protect Eden and her son? Will they find a future together as they rebuild trust and let go of their fears?

Hunter is known for her adult inspirational contemporary romances. *Falling Like Snowflakes* is different from her earlier works with its danger and suspense, while still having romantic tension. The faith element is light but evident.

*Falling Like Snowflakes* is the first in Hunter’s new series and a Christy 2016 finalist (Contemporary Romance/Suspense). The book includes discussion questions for book clubs.

Recommended for church and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ
The Christy Awards - 2016

Fic Rating: 5

A tornado rips through Cody’s Creek, Oklahoma and changes Anna Schwartz’s life forever. Left partially paralyzed in a wheelchair, Anna has to rely on her friends Chloe Roberts and Jacob Graber and her grandmother Ruth to be the anchors that keep her tethered to her faith and sanity as she comes to grips with her disability.

But it seems that just as she has accepted her situation, Anna is inexplicably and totally healed. Just as she had questions when she was confined to her wheelchair, Anna is now asking why? how? how long will it last? And the notoriety and attention she and her community are receiving is so unwanted, so counter to the teachings of her people, the Amish.

Whether the reader’s believes in miraculous healings or not, Anna’s healing will cause one to consider their beliefs and reflect on this miracle. Was it truly from God? Some wonder if Anna was ever actually paralyzed. The book is very thought-provoking and insightful.

Fans of Amish fiction will be eager to read this first title in Chapman’s new series but will find it is deeper and contains more meat than some Amish fare.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

Come rain or come shine / Jan Karon. (A Mitford novel; 13)  
LCCN 2015017803 ISBN 9780399167454, hardcover, $27.95.
287 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4
Kavanagh, Timothy (Fictitious character)--Fiction.


FIRST NOVEL 2016 FINALISTS

The choosing / Rachelle Dekker. (A Seer novel; 1)  
xii, 434 p. : ill. ; 22 cm. Grades 8-12
Fic Rating: 4
Young women -- Fiction. Social classes -- Fiction. Dystopias -- Fiction.


Irish Meadows / Susan Anne Mason. (Courage to dream; 1)  
375 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating:
Horse farms--New York--Fiction. Sisters--Fiction.

To be reviewed in a future issue of CLJ.
**A noble masquerade / Kristi Ann Hunter. (Hawthorne House; 1)**

365 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

An elegant façade / Kristi Ann Hunter. (Hawthorne House; 2)

359 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

In *A Noble Masquerade*, Miranda Hawthorne is the epitome of a lady—calm and reserved, showing little emotion. Inwardly, Miranda’s passionate nature threatens to shatter her outward mask, as she struggles with the insecurities of entering her fourth season and jealousy over her younger, spoiled sister. However, she has a secret coping method that would be a complete scandal if ever revealed. Since she was a child, she has been expressing her deepest feelings in letters addressed to the Duke of Marshington, an old friend of her brother’s and someone she has never met. The letters, of course, are never sent, until her brother’s mysterious new valet Marlow finds one and mails it. Miranda panics, certain of her ruination, but much to her shock, the duke writes back. As Miranda and the duke’s correspondence continues, a sinister plot that Marlow seems to be caught up in is unfolding on her brother’s estate and Miranda finds her own life and those she loves in danger.

To high society and her older sister Miranda, Lady Georgina Hawthorne appears confident and perfect, with an air of superiority bordering on snobbery. However, this flawless façade is really a shield, one she has spent years crafting to conceal her disgraceful secret and ensure she makes the match of the year. In *An Elegant Façade*, the wealthy and begrudgingly handsome but untitled Colin McCrae is a real threat to Georgina’s plans, her secret, and possibly her heart. Will Georgina achieve her lofty ambitions or discover that what she needs is far greater than what she wants?

The “Hawthorne House” series by Kristi Ann Hunter is full of Regency romance, charm, and animated discourse. The first book in the series rightfully earns its honor as a finalist in the 2016 Christy Awards for First Novel by introducing and developing a host of uniquely memorable characters, romantic intrigue, and thrilling mysteries. The main character will instantly charm and endear herself with her inward battles, dry humor, and passion for life. The second book naturally builds upon the first by advancing the plot of two of the formerly supporting characters, revealing a surprising insight that turns a spoiled, unlikeable younger sister into a heroine that readers will grow to love and sympathize with. Each romance holds its own sweetness and heartache. The underlying theme of learning to be oneself is woven throughout both novels, yet in its own unique way.

*Justina McBride, CLJ*

*Award Finalist*
HISTORICAL 2016 WINNER

Secrets she kept / Cathy Gohlke ; Edited by Sarah Mason.
405 p. ; 21 cm.     Adult
Fic     Rating: 5

Award-winning historical fiction author Cathy Gohlke pens a novel with two parallel stories: one set in Hitler’s Germany (1943-1945), the other in more contemporary times (1973).

In Secrets She Kept, a young woman wants to find out about her estranged mother’s mysterious past after her mother’s death. Hannah Sterling takes a leave from her teaching job to sort through her mother’s house and finds letters that connect her to a grandfather still living in Germany. When Hannah travels to Germany and gets to know her grandfather, she discovers he is hiding secrets of his own.

During the war, Hannah’s grandfather (Lieselotte’s father) planned on marrying his daughter off to advance his career in the Nazi party. But Lieselotte loves another (Lukas), of whom her father disapproves—and she doesn’t know to what extent her father will go to in order to prevent her marriage to Lukas.

The stories are told from Hannah’s and her mother’s viewpoints. The secrets of their past are intertwined. The book is well-researched and rich in historical detail, realistically depicting life in Nazi Germany. Hannah’s grandfather resists disclosing his secrets until he is on his deathbed. The discovery of his secret explains her mother’s past and threatens Hannah’s future. The overall theme of the book is forgiveness, even in the midst of evil. The focus is on family secrets that shape the destiny of future generations.

Secrets She Kept is the 2016 Christy Award Winner and the 2016 Carol Award Winner. A hidden gem in Secrets She Kept is the lesson on forgiveness Hannah learns from a Dutch Christian whose identity is revealed in the final chapter.

Highly recommended for adult collections in public library collections and World War II historical fiction fans.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ

HISTORICAL 2016 FINALISTS

The girl from the train / Irma Joubert ; translation by Elsa Silke.
x, 370 p. ; 22 cm.     Adult
Fic     Rating: 5

Little Gretl must never cry or tell the truth. That’s what her sister and Oma said. Gretl isn’t allowed to tell anyone that she’s a German Jew, especially not in Catholic Poland. With her entire family taken from her, Gretl’s only hope lies with a young Polish rebel named Jakob.

Jakob planted the bomb that killed most of Gretl’s family. How could he have known that an unscheduled train would take those tracks before the Germans? Jakob takes the orphan in, and he
knows one thing for sure: she’s not Polish. With the rebellion going on, he has little time to think of his orphan until a serious injury sends him home. He becomes dependent on her, but his family can’t afford another mouth to feed. To give Gretl her best chance, Jakob must send her away with even more lies. Will he ever see Gretl again or will time and war take their reunion from him too?

Beginning with a girl falling off a train, readers are immediately thrown into the action. Even in the slowest moments of the novel, Irma Joubert gives energy and motion to the scenes. All her characters feel real. Each new character introduces new lessons, is chased by their pasts, and begins viewing God in new ways.

This Christy Award Historic Finalist allows readers to walk in the shoes of a curious young refugee and a guilty soldier post-WWII. Gretl and Jakob mature in their narrative and develop new perspectives throughout the story. Readers will love watching these broken humans’ stories intertwine. Experience the heartbreak of a little girl as she tries to force away all the nightmares of her past. Share in her love for language and learning as she begins to heal and embrace her identity as an Afrikaner- and Polish-speaking Jewish-Christian German.

Readers will experience a range of emotions as they delve into the many themes of The Girl from the Train: love, war, learning, deception, family, mourning, and death. This piece of historic fiction focuses on the tensions between religious groups and ethnicities, including stories of the Jewish concentration camps.

Rebecca Schriner, CLJ

The wood's edge : a novel / Lori Benton. (The Path Finders ; 1)
386 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

HISTORICAL ROMANCE 2016 WINNER

Luther and Katharina : a novel of love and rebellion / Jody Hedlund.
x, 386 p.; 21 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Award-winning author Jody Hedlund pens another award-winner with this story of the relationship between Martin Luther and his wife, Katharina von Bora.

In Luther and Katharina, Martin Luther is leading the reformation of the Catholic Church and promoting the value of marriage over celibate life. As nuns and monks leave their cloistered life, it awakens in them a desire for marriage and family, even as they are persecuted for leaving their former lives. Noblewoman Katharina von Bora is one of those. She is attracted to Luther who is determined to remain single, despite his growing...
feelings for Katharina. Both are strong-willed individuals. Could it be God’s will that they support and love one another as husband and wife?

Hedlund showcases their relationship against the backdrop of 16th century Germany, weaving in carefully-researched historical detail with fiction. Katharina is proud and strong-willed, while Luther is plagued by physical ailments and a strong sense of his mission. They become unlikely allies who support one another. Their relationship is clean, even in their expression of physical affection as a married couple.

Their love story is filled with faith and courage in the midst of a turbulent time in church history. Together they face several attempts on Luther’s life, a kidnapping, and spies in their midst. So Luther and Katharina has romance, adventure, history, and more—a little something for everyone!

Recommended for adult readers in public and school libraries due to the torture and violence pervasive in the 16th century. Luther and Katharina won the 2016 Christy Award, and was the 2016 Carol award finalist.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ

**HISTORICAL ROMANCE 2016 FINALISTS**

**Beyond all dreams / Elizabeth Camden.**

320 p.; 22 cm.  Adult  
Fic Rating: 5  
Women librarians--Fiction.  Legislators--United States--Fiction.

See review previously published in *Christian Library Journal* (Jan/Feb/Mar/Apr 2015).

*The lost heiress / Roseanna M. White. (Ladies of the manor; 1)*

439 p.; 22 cm.  Adult  
Fic Rating: 5  

The reluctant duchess / Roseanna M. White. (Ladies of the manor; 2)

393 p.; 22 cm.  Adult  
Fic Rating: 5  

A lady unrivaled / Roseanna M. White. (Ladies of the manor; 3)

408 p.; 22 cm.  Adult  
Fic Rating: 5  


In *The Lost Heiress*, Brook Eden grew up in Monaco with the royal family, though not really a family member. Her friend Justin discovers Brook might be the long-lost heiress from Yorkshire. She
travels to Whitby Park, the family estate where her father quickly accepts her. But the rest of the family does not. When Brook’s life is threatened and she is kidnapped because of rare diamonds in her possession, can Justin save her in time? And is there really a curse on the Fire Eyes diamonds?

In *The Reluctant Duchess*, a Highland clansman tries to force Lady Rowena Kinnaird into marriage by attacking her. Her family schemes to trap the visiting Brice Myerston, Duke of Nottingham, into offering marriage to Rowena. Brice resists until he meets Rowena’s “betrothed” and decides to protect her. When Brice took the rare red diamonds from Brook and Justin to protect them, he was single. Now that he is married, will their curse extend to his wife? Can he protect her while trying to bring Brook’s kidnapper to justice?

In *A Lady Unrivaled*, Lady Ella Myerston decides she will take action to protect her friends from further danger of the Fire Eyes diamonds. Lord James Cayton broke two ladies’ hearts, and now he wants to mend his ways. But old acquaintances try to lure him into stealing the diamonds. Lady Ella intrigues him and he tries to protect her, but she won’t stay out of danger. What happens when they discover their true feelings for one another, in the midst of a desperate attempt to steal the jewels?

White’s exciting series is more than a group of novels about relationships between the main characters. Elements of mystery, faith, lore, and danger permeate the series. More character than plot development (although the plots are well-developed with a number of twists), each book is rich in historical detail, family history, as well as romance and adventure. The relationships are wholesome, making these books “clean reads.”

Highly recommended to public libraries and school libraries. Fans of the TV series, *Downton Abbey* will love this series with its interaction between the upper crust and downstairs staff. Julie Klassen, Sarah Ladd, and Carrie Turansky fans will also enjoy this series.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*

**Award Finalist**

*To win her favor / Tamera Alexander. (A Belle Meade plantation novel; 2)*


368 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5


In *To Win Her Favor*, Tamera Alexander exposes the ugliness of the bigotry and prejudice prevalent in the post-Civil War South, especially toward freedmen and immigrants. She counters with the unfailing love of God that gently reprimands, lovingly restores, and gives extravagant gifts.

The two main characters are beautifully introduced in the first pages. Maggie is a daughter of the South, living in Nashville in 1869. Her family has suffered the loss of her four brothers and mother, their land is at risk of foreclosure, and her father ill—but Maggie has a plan. She will continue to race the mare she has raised and trained and use the winnings to stave off their creditors. Maggie is naïve and brash, but a good friend and good-hearted, with a rare talent for teaching riding and training horses. Cullen McGrath is an Irish immigrant. He left England to travel to America with his wife and small daughter, both of whom died of pestilence on the journey. He is determined not to repeat the
mistakes of his past, and to follow through with his family's dream. Cullen's first transaction, to buy a horse, culminates in a fistfight, as a bystander challenges his character. In his search for land, the Lord leads him to Linden Downs, Maggie's farm. Her father has trusted the Lord throughout his long life, and he uses that confidence in the Lord’s leading to make a deal with Cullen: win Maggie's favor, take her hand in marriage, and Linden Downs is his.

Alexander's writing carries the story effortlessly, creating a landscape rich in the scents and sights of the Reconstruction era and a cast that includes a villainous banker, a wealthy patriarch, and a noble freedman, among others. Through the difficulties overcome and the refining of their characters, Cullen and Maggie learn to trust the Lord with their future, as the Lord redeems their pasts through their struggles. The story's complexity provides abundant storylines for future books with these characters.

Diane Carver Sekeres, CLJ

SUSPENSE 2016 WINNER

Twisted innocence / Terri Blackstock. (Moonlighters; 3)
313 p.; 22 cm.    Adult
Fic    Rating: 5


SUSPENSE 2016 FINALISTS

The bones will speak : a Gwen Marcey novel / Carrie Stuart Parks.
327 p.; 22 cm.    Adult
Fic    Rating: 4

The Bones Will Speak is the second book in the series about forensic artist Gwen Marcey, written by fine artist/forensic artist Carrie Stuart Parks. When Gwen’s dog comes home with a human skull and then leads her to a nearby cabin in the woods where a young girl is close to death, she realizes there is a serial killer on the loose. As Gwen unearths clues, she discovers the case is personal, and the suspect has her in his sights.

Author Carrie Stuart Parks uses her extensive experience to imbue The Bones Will Speak with accuracy and drama. Vivid description immerses readers into the world of police procedures and crime scene investigation. Ms. Parks's writing is tight and punchy, creating a fast-paced story. Unfamiliar terms are explained through dialogue without talking down to readers. Because of the subject matter, there are regular episodes of violence; however, they are not gratuitous.

Recommended for church and public libraries.

Linda Matchett, CLJ
Vendetta: a novel / Lisa Harris. (The Nikki Boyd files; 1)

301 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4


VISIONARY 2016 WINNER

See BOOK OF THE YEAR 2016 WINNER

VISIONARY 2016 FINALISTS

A time to speak / Nadine Brandes. (Out of time series; 2)

458 p. : map ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4


Waking beauty / Sarah E. Morin.

467 p. ; 23 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic Rating: 5
Sleeping Beauty (Tale) Fairy tales. Fantasy fiction.

Seventeen-year-old Prince Arpien has devoted his life to training for this moment, his dramatic rescue of the Sleeping Beauty. Bending to place his waking kiss, he pauses at the 100-year-old layer of dust covering the beauty's lips. This was definitely not accounted for in his rescuing plan; however, a quick dust with his sleeve rights the much-anticipated moment, or so he thinks.

One thing after another continues to infringe upon Arpien's grandiose plans, not least of which is his fair maiden's less than enthusiastic response to his spell-breaking kiss. How can Arpien rescue a sleeping princess afraid to wake up, afraid to hope, afraid to believe? What will it take to break the spell of Voracity's evil curse? The prophecies of the old tales speak of the return of the Prince of Here and There, but who can depend on a prince no one has seen or heard from in over a century?

A Christy Award finalist for 2016, Waking Beauty by Sarah E. Morin is a beautifully unique allegorical spin on the traditional fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty. The novel starts off slow and on a slightly silly tone; however, as the plot develops, a rich and rewarding tale unfolds, weaving its gentle spell until the final page. The characters and insightful Christian parallelism make this book a gem in its fantasy genre.

The story is told from the alternating perspective of the three main characters, each of whom possesses their own unique appeal. Pretentious Arpien with his flourishing speeches and bows grows to be an example of self-sacrifice and unconditional love. Brierly's cold indifference and
refusal to wake up will initially frustrate but her vulnerability will incite compassion. Nissa, daughter of the present ruling family, is the black velvet that makes the diamond shine more brilliantly, with her unwavering faith and servant heart. Without direct Christian references, the author carefully constructs a fresh picture of the spiritually fallen state of humanity and the redemptive work of Christ. Overall, as the characters discover, the task of waking beauty will slowly reveal a different kind of beauty, one tried by fire and gloriously refined.

Justina McBride, CLJ

**YOUNG ADULT 2016 WINNER**

The choosing / Rachelle Dekker. (A Seer novel; 1)

xii, 434 p. : ill. ; 22 cm. Grades 8-12
Fic Rating: 4
Young women -- Fiction. Social classes -- Fiction. Dystopias -- Fiction.


**YOUNG ADULT 2016 FINALISTS**

Knife / R.J. Anderson. (No ordinary fairy tale; 1)

268 p.; 22 cm. Grades 7-10
Fic Rating: 4

*Rebel / R.J. Anderson. (No ordinary fairy tale; 2)*

246 p.; 22 cm. Grades 7-10
Fic Rating: 5

Arrow / R.J. Anderson. (No ordinary fairy tale; 3)

300 p.; 22 cm. Grades 7-10
Fic Rating: 4

Author R. J. Anderson pens an unusual fairy tale series, one that was previously published in the United Kingdom and is now available for American readers.

In Knife, a young fairy--Knife--is determined to discover why the fairy realm Oakenwyld has lost its magic and how they can get it back. Their numbers are dwindling and only female fairies are left. Fiercely independent Knife is unafraid of the crows, the humans, or even the Fairy Queen herself. She befriends Paul, a human, who joins in her quest to save her dying fairy realm. How will her friendship with Paul change all their lives?

In Rebel, fifteen-year-old Linden, Knife’s foster daughter, is the youngest and smallest fairy, yet
the dying queen asks her to go out into the human world and find other fairies to save Oakenwyld. Fifteen-year-old Timothy is staying with his cousin Paul and his wife who are friends of the fairies. Disillusioned by his missionary parents’ faith, Timothy also doesn’t believe in fairies. When Linden begs him for help, Timothy gets caught up in the struggle against evil threatening both their worlds. Will they find the legendary white stone that could save her fairy realm?

In Arrow, fairy Rhosmari is one of the Children of Rhys who live on the magical Green Isles, with limited contact with the outside world and its evils. Sworn never to use violence against others, the Children of Rhys refuse to help when an evil fairy empress gathers an army to destroy the fairies at Oakenwyld and other locations in Britain.

Rhosmari leaves the Green Isles in search of her former betrothed Garan who took the Stone of Naming to Oakenwyld. Having lived all her life in a secluded community, she experiences culture shock when she meets the other fairies. The empress wants Rhosmari because of her access to the Children of Rhys. She is torn—if she fights the empress, she can never return home; if she refuses, she puts the others in jeopardy.

The writings of C. S. Lewis and Tolkien inspired Anderson to write fantasy stories from a Christian worldview for a general audience. Anderson does a good job creating the fairy world. Just like the human world, there are good and bad fairies, loyal and rebellious ones. These fairies are not like the fairies from Sleeping Beauty or Peter Pan; they are a community unto themselves with their own rules and roles (hunter, gatherer, healer, leader). Set in the United Kingdom, the fairies tie in with the Celtic legends in the area. Her No Ordinary Fairy Tale series has a light faith element in Knife and a stronger presence in Rebel and Arrow.

Knife received critical acclaim in the UK and was nominated for the 2009 Carnegie Award. Rebel was a 2016 Christy award nominee (Young Adult category). Arrow is a worthy conclusion to the series and potential future award winner.

Recommended for teen readers in public libraries and school libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ

*Award Finalist


Fathers and sons--Fiction. Surfers--Fiction. Life change events--Fiction.

Eighteen-year-old Riley Kane is desperate to get to the girl who holds his heart and whose family is depending on his arrival during a time of crisis. When his source of transportation fails him and he has no other alternative, Riley must reach out to the last man he wants to see or ever need. To the world, Jake Kane is one of the greatest pro surfers of his time, but to Riley, he is the world’s worst dad, the man who walked away from him and his mom years ago.

Swallowing his hurt and anger for the sake of the girl he loves, Riley accepts his father’s offer to drive him from California to New Mexico. Will they be able to survive the week-long trip or will the roadblocks of hurt, bitterness, and regret be too great to maneuver through?

Worthy of its honor as a 2016 Christy Award finalist, To Get to You by Joanne Bischof is a poignant tale of a father and son who discover second chances and forgiveness on the Pacific
Coast Highway in an old Volkswagen van. The story is written from Riley’s perspective, revealing his honest struggles and vulnerability while endearing himself to readers in the process. Riley is a new Christian, complete with mohawk, piercings, skull t-shirt, and a less than perfect past, while Becca, the girl he loves, is a home school graduate with a purity that Riley desires to honor. The contrast in their lives is a beautiful picture of how God looks at the heart rather than the exterior and how His perfect grace is making all things new. The romance between Riley and Becca, which is a secondary focus of the plot, is full of purity, sweetness, and sacrificial love. Holding center stage is Riley and his father’s journey, which is full of painful remorse and lost time that will bring tears but also, in the end, renewed hope for God’s ability to bring healing and restoration.

The overarching theme of this story is surrendered brokenness, held together and made more perfect by the beautiful mystery of grace.

*Justina McBride, CLJ*
PRIMARY FICTION

At night / by Helga Bansch.


1 v. (unpaged) ; 19 cm. PS-Grade 1
E Rating: 4

Late at night, animals and little boys and girls alike are asleep in their own special beds. The bats are hanging upside down in their caves, the birds are hunkered down in their nests, and the leopards are stretched out in the trees, while boys and girls are tucked snuggly under the covers of their beds. All seems to be in order, but what would happen if the night were suddenly turned upside down? Would rabbits hang in caves, while dogs snore in trees?

At Night by Helga Bansch is an amusing tale of a normal night turned upside down with wild imaginings, a perfect bedtime read. The book is divided in half, portraying two alternative nights; the first with everyone in their rightful beds and the second with silly mix-ups, like an elephant in a bird nest and a polar bear in a dog house. To read the second half, the book must be flipped over to the back cover and turned upside down, providing a clever and literal mirroring of the chaotic mix-ups in the alternative night scene. Children will enjoy the absurdity in this book, as well as the charming illustrations of animals wearing pajamas. Overall, this book is a lighthearted bedtime story that will help chase away nightmares, and hopefully encourage sweet and wildly imaginative dreaming.

Justina McBride, CLJ

Lucy & company / Marianne Dubuc.

ISBN 9781771386623, hardcover, $16.95.
58 unnumbered p.: col. ill. ; 21 x 27 cm. PS-K
E Rating: 4

Lucy & Company presents a young girl and four animal friends enjoying the outdoors in three short stories. Marianne Dubuc is both author and illustrator of this primary-level picture book.

“The Shack”, “The Treasure Hunt,” and “The Hatchlings” feature themes about friendship, sharing, and adventure, as carefree Lucy picnics and explores with Marcel (a mouse), Henry (a rabbit), Dot (a turtle), and Adrian (a snail) in a charming woodsy setting. Brown bear Anton has a brief surprising role.

On every page, the smiling characters show that friends come in all sizes and that it is important to care for one another. The simple dialog and brevity of each kindly tale are well-suited to preschoolers, but the most endearing feature of Lucy & Company is Dubuc’s sweet and cleverly humorous watercolor and pencil artwork. The details in the softly-hued scenes are unique (a rosy-cheeked rabbit sitting cross-legged and playing cards), silly (Lucy carrying the snail on her head), and heartwarming (a surprise birthday treasure).

Lucy & Company is a fun picture book for young children, with a soothing conclusion that makes it perfect for a last read before bedtime. A two-page map shows the setting of the stories and furthers the imaginative appeal.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ
Why am I here? / Constance Ørbeck-Nilssen ; illustrated by Akin Duzakin.

LCCN 2015046684 ISBN 9780802854773, hardcover, $16.
1 vol. (unpaged) ; 22 x 31 cm. K-Grade 3
E Rating: 4

In Why Am I Here? by Ørbeck-Nilssen & Akin Duzakin, a young girl ponders why and how a person is born in the exact place he or she exists rather than a number of other places that could have been possible in this great big world. The child wonders how she might have been different or the same if born in, for example, a bustling city or a dry desert, or if she had grown up in a country constantly at war. What would life be like and would she still have these same questions? Does anyone have the answers she seeks?

The focus—or rather theme—of this book is as old as time itself and as complex as the most intricate workings of the universe. The meaning of life, and of one’s very existence and purpose, have been reflected upon by some of the greatest philosophers of history. Yet, here the authors put such contemplations into thoughts that elementary children can understand and relate to. Much of the text consists of questions. As the girl reflects upon her questions about life, she never really comes to an absolute answer, though she draws some possible conclusions or suggestions. Ultimately, this allows the book to be a springboard for helping children consider life, purpose, identity, and belonging, without fully influencing their final conclusions, leaving that to the gentle, loving guidance of parents and guardians, as well as the child’s own feelings and convictions.

The text itself appears on a clean white background, drawing the reader's eyes to the corresponding page’s beautiful illustrations. Overall, this book is a short, contemplative read that will inevitably lead to valuable conversation and reflection for young and old to share in together.

Justina McBride, CLJ

PRIMARY NONFICTION

Spark Story Bible Psalm book : prayers and poems for kids / written by Judy Beglau [and 8 others] ; edited by Naomi J. Krueger ; illustrated by Peter Grosshauser.

Minneapolis: Sparkhouse Family, 2016.
121 p. : col. ill. ; 21 cm. Grades K-5
242.62 Rating: 4

Psalm Book: Prayers and Poems for Kids is an illustrated collection of 50 prayers, worded and compiled for young readers.

Nine authors contributed to this 2017 Junior Library Guild Selection, edited by Naomi J. Krueger and organized into four chapters: Prayers of Morning and Evening, Prayers of Praise, Prayers of Comfort, and Prayers of Creation. Each short prayer is titled, referenced to a psalm, and accompanied by an illustration. The prayers reflect a range of thoughts, emotions, and situations.

Imbedded sparkles on the book’s cover suggest
that something really special is inside! Cartoon-style illustrations by Peter Grosshauser add brightness and activity to the pages; a friendly green snake playfully appears throughout. The readability and length of the prayers are right on target for children.

"A Message for Kids" explains what the psalms are, where to find them in the Bible, and why they are such an expressive part of prayer. "A Message for Grown-ups" encourages parents to help their children engage with the material. Blank pages at the end of the book are included for readers to write their own notes or prayers.

With an intended grade school audience, *Psalm Book: Prayers and Poems for Kids* offers simple, succinct prayers that children can share and understand. The book’s well-organized format and small size make it the perfect travel companion or bedside devotional.

*Nina Ditmar, CLJ*

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*Our Father* / written by Rainer Oberthür ; illustrated by Barbara Nascimbeni ; translated by Bob Gaudet, edited and abridged by Rachel Bomberger.


LCCN 2015024242 ISBN 9780802854681, hardcover, $16.

1 vol. unpaged : col. ill. ; 22 cm. K-Grade 5

242.722 Rating: 4


*Our Father* offers a line-by-line explanation of the Lord’s Prayer for young readers. Written by Rainer Oberthür, this picture book also presents thoughts for reflection and about praying.

*Where is God? Why can’t I see God? How can I talk to God?* These and other questions frame an introduction to the “prayer that Jesus gave us”. Each line of the Lord’s Prayer is then explored with a full page of narrative and an accompanying illustration.

Rainer Oberthür uses simple language, relatable descriptions, and a lyrical tone to help children understand and engage with the words that they likely already know by heart. The author includes the doxology of the Lord’s Prayer which may be unfamiliar to some. The book closes with ideas about talking to God and offers an even simpler form of the Lord’s Prayer as an example of how children can pray in their own words.

Barbara Nascimbeni’s colorful mixed-media illustrations lend a contemporary feel, with a thought-provoking paint and collage assortment of family, nature, and biblical compositions. The scene of Jesus breaking bread at a table with modern-day parents and children is especially effective.

*Our Father* has a wide reading audience owing to the timelessness of the material and the sophistication of the artwork. For children new to the prayer, *Our Father* would be a worthy introduction. For older readers the book may provide a deeper introspection and awareness.

*Nina Ditmar, CLJ*
INTERMEDIATE FICTION

The great Shelby Holmes / Elizabeth Eulberg ; illustrated by Erwin Madrid.
243 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.  Grades 3-7
Fic Rating: 4

Army brat John Watson thinks writing fiction was more exciting than his life—until he moves to Harlem and meets Shelby Holmes. After Shelby’s science experiment interrupts John’s moving day, his curiosity and desire for friendship get the better of him. After tagging along with Shelby on an errand, John realizes that his scientist neighbor is actually a junior sleuth—and no amateur at that. It seems like all of New York City knows her name!

Because of Shelby’s reputation, it’s no surprise that when Daisy (the award-winning dog) goes missing, Detective Holmes is on the case. Shelby is no people-person, and Daisy’s family’s emotions are running high before the next competition. She needs outside help to solve the case. But Shelby doesn’t have friends; she has contacts. Can Shelby find the pooch on her own before the big show? Or will she need to trust John in order to break the case?

Children of all ages will love Elizabeth Eulberg’s version of Sherlock Holmes. With a new twist on the classic story, Eulberg comedically sends these two characters to middle school. Just like Sherlock, Shelby is socially awkward and likes to work alone. John, like Dr. Watson, follows the detective out of curiosity. Their adventure leads them to the truth of friendship.

Thanks to John’s personal and journal-like tone in narrating the story, kids will get to experience the case and the peculiar Shelby Holmes up close. Kids can follow John’s thoughts and guess who was the pup-snatcher. The only problem is that Shelby is way more perceptive than John, so readers won’t get all the clues. But it’s still fun for them to guess who the culprit is based on the clues available.

Rebecca Schriner, CLJ

Making mistakes on purpose / written and illustrated by Elise Primavera.
354 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.  Grades 3-6
Fic Rating: 4

Author/illustrator Elise Primavera pens a sequel about girls at an unusual boarding school. The girls’ parents love them but are too busy to teach them life lessons, so the headmistress teaches them using silly lessons and adventures.

In Making Mistakes on Purpose, Bea, Mildred, Fay, Annabelle, and Dahlia return for their second term at Great Rapscott School for Girls of Busy Parents. Since Dahlia was lost last year and ended up at the Mr. Everbest Academy for Boys, she is careful to follow directions this time. However, Fay goes to the wrong address because she doesn’t follow directions. Ms. Rapscott, their headmistress, teaches the girls How to Get to the Top after they land at the Bottom of the Barrel. The girls learn how to Make a Bad Day Good, as well as How to Celebrate a Birthday. Making mistakes and learning from them becomes their
biggest adventure.

Elise Primavera provides delightful black-and-white illustrations throughout the text. They add to the whimsy of the story. Readers will enjoy Ms. Rapscott as she teaches the girls who never learned to peel a hard-boiled egg, or take matters into their own hands. The story inspires thinking and learning to fail in order to succeed. More plot development than character development, *Making Mistakes on Purpose* is a delightful book to read. The ending leaves one wondering what will happen in the next semester.

Recommended for school and public libraries. Fans of *The Mysterious Benedict Society* (Trenton Stewart), *Mary Poppins* (P. L. Travers), and *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle* (Betsy MacDonald) will enjoy this book.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*

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**The prince warriors / Priscilla Shirer with Gina Detwiler ; illustrations by Jon Davis. (Prince Warriors; 1)**

vi, 279 p. : ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6  
Fic Rating: 4  

**The prince warriors and the unseen invasion / Priscilla Shirer with Gina Detwiler. (Prince Warriors; 2)**

ix, 289 p. : ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6  
Fic Rating: 4  

**The prince warriors and the swords of Rhema / Priscilla Shirer with Gina Detwiler. (Prince Warriors; 3)**

xii, 299 p. : black and white ill. ; 23 cm. Grades 3-6  
Fic Rating: 4  

Priscilla Shirer and Gina Detwiler co-authored this fiction series for children ages 8-12 years old. Xavier and Evan are brothers and used to fighting each other. Now they discover the real battle is in the spiritual realm, and they have been called to fight it using the armor of God.

In *The Prince Warriors*, Xavier and Evan find themselves in a hidden realm (Ahoratos) where some friends join them, and they learn under the tutelage of Ruwach what it means to be Prince Warriors. He directs them in their first danger-filled adventure and warns them not to take anything from Ahoratos back to their world. Will they defeat the enemy in their first battle with him? What happens when one of them forgets Ruwach’s warning?

In *The Prince Warriors and the Unseen Invasion*, they face new weapons from the enemy, ones they never even imagined. They are given more armor to help them face the deadly Olethron. Have they learned their lessons well? What about the consequence of those seemingly harmless decisions that went against Ruwach’s instructions? Will that cost them the battle?

In *The Prince Warriors and the Sword of Rhema*, the Prince Warriors finally receive their long-awaited swords, promised to them when they first began their training in Ahoratos. Now they must
face the enemy for the final battle to stop him. Will their swords give them victory? Will they recognize the traitor in their midst?

Gina Detwiler and Priscilla Shirer, author of several best-selling adult non-fiction books, do an excellent job of capturing the voice of the children in this new series. They tackle the non-fiction topic of spiritual warfare through the use of fantasy fiction to reach their target audience. More character development than plot development, the series is an easy read for young readers, filled with adventure, choices, consequences of wrong choices, danger, and wisdom gained from experience. Both boys and girls alike will enjoy this series. Loosely based on Ephesians 6:10-18, the series highlights the armor of God and its application in spiritual warfare.

Recommended for school and public libraries. The authors have also created an app for smartphones and a 365-day devotional (Unseen: The Prince Warriors 365 Devotional) for their young readers, based on the series.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ

Tinker / Jill Williamson, Luke Williamson, Kirbi Fagan. (Robo tales; 1)
2015.
122 p. : ill. ; 20 cm. Grades 4-5
Fic Rating: 3

Mardok and the seven exiles / Jill Williamson, Luke Williamson. (Robo tales; 2)

Award-winning author Jill Williamson and her son Luke Williamson co-author this series aimed at young readers, featuring a robotic dog.

In Tinker, 13-year-old Tinker lives with his uncle and two cousins, Grezzer and Ratch, on the planet Kitz. Although his uncle owns the repair shop, Tinker does most of the work. When the Invention Institute holds a Recycle Race, Tinker builds an airbike to compete against his cousins. They sabotage his entry, and a robot dog named Robo helps him fix his entry in time. Who will win the Race and the coveted apprenticeship at the Invention Institute?

In Mardok and the Seven Exiles, Robo flies to the moon Relo on his way to President Cassian. Cadet Riv Mardok is asked by General Gruss to hunt down the Ice Beast. He eagerly accepts the quest but finds himself trapped in a deep pit in the forest. When he calls for help, it is Robo to the rescue. Together with the other exiles, they pursue the Ice Beast, discovering who is behind the strange things happening at the Space Force Military Academy. Can they stop him before Robo flies off to the President?

Ms. Williamson and her son pen convincing stories about Robo and his adventures. It is hard to believe that a robot dog is the main character in these tales, but somehow it works. Williamson used illustrations from a number of young artists, ages 10-15.

Although self-published, these books will appeal to its intended audience. The futuristic spin on a Cinderella story (Tinker) and Snow White (Mardok and the Seven Exiles) will delight readers. In light of the Makerspace movement in libraries, this reviewer recommends Tinker for book clubs.

Recommended for public and school libraries. The
third book in the series, *The Tiny Cyborg*, will be available in 2018.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*

**INTERMEDIATE NONFICTION**

**12 super-gigantic animals you need to know / by Nancy Furstinger.** *(Super-incredible animals)*


ISBN 9781632351388, hardcover, $28.50.

32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6

591.4 Rating: 5


**12 super-fast animals you need to know / by Tammy Gagne.** *(Super-incredible animals)*


32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6

591.479 Rating: 5

Animal locomotion--Juvenile literature.

**12 super-poisonous animals you need to know / by Carol Hand.** *(Super-incredible animals)*


ISBN 9781632351401, hardcover, $28.50.

32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6

591.65 Rating: 5

Poisonous animals--Juvenile literature, Dangerous animals--Juvenile literature, Poisonous or fast animals with each title featuring information about the animals’ life cycles, habitats, and traits. Full-color spreads offer fun facts and information that will tend to hold the interest of children in grades 3 to 6. An appealing feature of these spreads is that boxes, photos, illustrations, and varying headings are in color with font in varying colors.

Every 12 Story Library book is enhanced by its website, 12storylibrary.com, featuring regular updates by the editorial educators. Videos, interactive maps, graphics, and live content feeds help youth go beyond the book to research a topic of interest. The glossy photos, inserts, and highlights on the page seek to present lively text to catch and maintain a reader’s interest.

*Leroy Hommerding, CLJ*

**Zap! : Nikola Tesla takes charge / Monica Kulling ; illustrated by Bill Slavin.** *(Great idea series)*


1 vol. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm. Grades K-4

621.3 Rating: 4


In 1884, Nikola Tesla leaves his native Croatia for New York, bringing a new concept about electricity. *Zap! Nikola Tesla Takes Charge* is a picture book telling of Tesla’s early ideas, which advanced the use of electric lighting and hydroelectric power in America.

Author Monica Kulling focuses on the bright
immigrant’s enthusiasm and innovation, and his model of electricity (alternating current) that challenged Edison’s design (direct current). Her book introduces young readers to Tesla, his competitive relationship with Edison, his role in electrifying the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, and his dream of “harnessing” the power of Niagara Falls.

Handsome digitally-colored pen-and-ink sketches by Bill Slavin complement the tone, time period, and setting, with muted greys and browns evoking the grittiness of early industrial America.

_Zap! Nikola Tesla Takes Charge_ is an interesting biographical sketch, well-suited for both school and home libraries. The author provides a list of book and internet sources. “Electric Cat,” a short poem about young Niko’s fascination with static electricity, and “Tesla’s Robot,” an account of Nikola’s later invention of a radio-controlled toy boat, add additional information and insight.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ

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12 incredible facts about the Cuban Missile Crisis / by Sue Bradford Edwards. (Turning points in US history)

LCCN 2015933982 ISBN 9781632351272, hardcover, $31.35.
32 p. : ill., map ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6
972.91 Rating: 4
Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962--Juvenile literature.

Part of the Turning Points in US History Series, _12 Incredible Facts about the Cuban Missile Crisis_ looks at central figures involved in this critical moment in history and includes a timeline that enables students to grasp its significance. Included also are sidebars and questions that highlight what the Cuban Missile Crisis was and to what extent it affected the world. Third to fifth graders will find the discussion understandable.

As with all 12-Story Library books, the publisher’s website features updates on this subject, along with videos, interactive maps, graphics, and live content to research the Crisis. The title references 12 facts but, literally, this is misleading as it is really 12 chapters offering a multitude of facts. Most of the illustrations in this title are black and white and sidebars are shaded in green and orange. Content and discussion is of high quality.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ
MIDDLE SCHOOL FICTION

The Hedge school / Gloria Whelan.

184 p.; 21 cm. Grades 7 and up
Fic Rating: 4
Schools--Ireland--Juvenile fiction.
Ireland--1735--Juvenile fiction.

Padraic, 15 years old in 1735, is one of three students who are in their last year at a secret Irish school. Gloria Whelan's *The Hedge School* takes place during a time in history when Roman Catholics were forbidden by law to attend or teach school or to worship in a Catholic church. But the people revered education, so they created their own schools that met under hedgerows, moving often to avoid discovery. Schoolmasters and priests alike were always in danger; people were jailed or hung at the landowners' discretion for breaking any law, and there was no legal recourse.

Despite the desperate times, Padraic, Rose and Liam are irrepressible—full of stories of heroes of the Irish resistance to English rule and determined to enact their own rebellions. When the son of a landowner shows them a hidden way to his family's stables, as a ploy to force Rose to give him her colt, Padraic and the resistance fighters use that knowledge to visit mischief on the hated landowner. Unfortunately, Padraic, reveling in his success, makes a hasty decision that puts everyone in danger from the law.

The hedge school is itself a strong symbol of resistance, but the central idea of the story is the weft of resistance woven through the warp of English power to determine the daily lives of the Irish peasantry. Whalen's deft portrayal of teenage bluster and recklessness, and especially of Padraic and Rose, give life to the story. She shows Padraic's close relationships with his family and teacher and his growth through those relationships. It is their coming to his aid without censure that helps him to realize his mistakes, learn from them, and make better decisions for his and Ireland's future. Whelan's mastery of complex stories is evident in her plot and inclusion of historical details that set up Padraic's hatred of the English convincingly. However, her descriptions of the evil landowner, the selfless resistant fighter, the villainous churl, and others rely on stereotypical attitudes, dialogue, and behaviors, which dilute the emotional impact of the story.

*Diane Carver Sekeres, CLJ*

MIDDLE SCHOOL NONFICTION

Energy from water : hydroelectric, tidal, and wave power / Nancy Dickmann. (Next generation energy)

LCCN 2015044045 ISBN 9780778723806, library binding, $27.60.
32 p.; ill.; 28 cm. Grades 5-8
333.91 Rating: 5

Energy from wind : wind farming / Megan Kopp. (Next generation energy)

LCCN 2015020963 ISBN 9780778719830, library binding, $27.60.
Both of these interesting and well-presented volumes from the juvenile environmental education series, Next Generation Energy, are written at guided reading level S. Both titles in the series present action choices and preferred green options for middle grade students age 10 and up.

For centuries, falling water has been used in parts of the world to create energy to run grinding stones at mills and irrigation systems for crops. Nancy Dickmann’s *Energy from Water* shows how the use of this clean form of energy, called hydroelectricity, is being expanded to help us build a more sustainable future. Readers focus on how other forms of water-based energy, such as energy from ocean waves and tides, are being harnessed and used to help create electricity to power our homes, offices and factories.

Megan Kopp’s *Energy from Wind* discusses wind power as a clean, sustainable, and renewable form of energy. The chapter “Power Up” invites its readers to think it through, ask and answer questions, and design wind turbines, testing location distances from the wind source and using different blade sizes to see which one works best. A handy Glossary and Learning More section lists books and website resources for inquiring readers.

Both titles are filled with informational graphs, maps, and charts, as well as color-shaded sidebar features such as Fast Forward (where, *Energy From Water* notes, hydroelectric power is dependent on a consistent supply of running water) and Rewind (promotes comparative, critical thinking about the early hydroelectric plants compared to the most recent). The student is asked to make convincing arguments for their created answer to questions about difficult choices, with regard to environmental impact. There are positive messages regarding what students and young people can do to promote earth protection, such as living and eating green, and redirecting choices towards sustainable changes.

*Leroy Hommerding, CLJ*

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**A kids’ guide to America’s Bill of Rights**

*Kathleen Krull*; illustrated by Anna DiVito.


ix, 230 p. : ill. ; 22 cm. Grades 5-8

342.73 Rating: 4


*A Kid’s Guide to America’s Bill of Rights* explains, in an understandable way within the first 20 pages, how the Bill of Rights came to be, who wrote it, and why it was needed. This is followed by 10 chapters each covering one of the first 10 Amendments. Find an explanation of what the amendments are, why they’re necessary, and what court cases have occurred that have drawn on that particular amendment. The final two chapters briefly cover the 17 other amendments and discuss where the Bill of Rights went wrong.

Kathleen Krull’s work has an index and suggestions for further reading. The illustrations by Anna Divito, used throughout the book, are frequently humorous and enable students to focus on the discussion packed with anecdotes, sidebars, and case studies. The discussion leans toward an approach in seeing the need for the government to solve problems rather than more
responsibility being in the hands of the individual, though most students will not recognize the liberal versus conservative approach.

Those having *The Bill of Rights: The First Ten Amendments of the Constitution* by David L. Hudson, Jr. (Enslow Publishers) have a fairly comparable work. Krull’s work probably enhances more the possibility of discussion.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

**Significant people of World War II / Natalie Hyde.** (*World War II: history’s deadliest conflict*)

LCCN 2015023294 ISBN 9780778721154, library binding, $31.32.  
48 p.: ill. (some col.), col. maps ; 28 cm. Grades 5-8  
940.53 Rating: 5  
World War, 1939-1945--Biography--Juvenile literature.

**Significant battles of World War II / Kelly Cochrane.** (*World War II: history’s deadliest conflict*)

48 p.: ill. (some col.), col. maps ; 28 cm. Grades 5-8  
940.54 Rating: 5  
World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Juvenile literature.

For grades 5 to 8, the series *World War II: History’s Deadliest Conflict* looks at this worldwide conflict involving alliances between political leaders and military forces from many different countries. Each title, written at guided reading level U, offers a section with Further Reading and Websites, Glossary, and Index. Photographs accompany the text, and timelines and maps make it easier to follow the narrative.

Natalie Hyde’s *Significant People of World War II* looks at key figures involved during this war. Brief biographies give details of the lives and actions of political leaders Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt, Truman, Stalin, Hirohito and Tojo; military leaders Rommel, Goring, Conitz, Dowding, Pound, MacArthur, and Patton; as well as fighting aces, code breakers, and activists.

Kelly Cochrane’s *Significant Battles of World War II* follows the significant battles over the course of the war. European countries, their colonies and allies, such as the United States and Canada, supplied forces for battles. The focus continues on the five parts of the world where the fighting took place: western and eastern Europe, North Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, and Asia. With advances in technology since WWI, more destructive fighting occurred on land and on sea. The compelling book explores how victory was won or lost in famous conflicts such as the Battle of the Atlantic, Germany’s Blitzkrieg, the Battle of Britain, Dieppe, Paris, Stalingrad, Berlin, Midway, Pearl Harbor, and the dropping of the atomic bombs.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

**The first Thanksgiving / Sarah Gilman.** (*Explore colonial America*)

LCCN 2015047558 ISBN 9780766078697, library binding, $27.93.  
48 p.: ill., col. ; 23 cm. Grades 5-8  
974.4 Rating: 5  

Both of these titles, part of the series Explore Colonial America, offer full-color photos, maps, and illustrations to give students an appreciation and picture of colonial life. Each title contains a glossary, timeline, index, and section listing books and websites for further reading.

In *The First Thanksgiving*, the story explores who the Pilgrims were as well as the Indians living in the colony. Students will learn about the hardships experienced by the Pilgrims and their relationship with the local Wampanoag Indians.

In *The Founding of America*, students get a close-up view of the active grassroots campaigns among the 13 American colonies to break free from England. In the course of 11 chapters, the discussion centers on the Second Continental Congress, the Continental army, a Declaration of Independence, and the new Constitution. The narrative highlighting the new nation formed enables youth to grasp the uniqueness and importance of this venture and dream, the sacrifices of many, and the bonds achieved.

*Leroy Hommerding, CLJ*

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Marisa Moss’s *America’s Tea Parties: Not One but Four* is a book that will certainly provide new and illuminating information to the reader. The text not only covers how the issue of taxation led to the American Revolution, but it also discusses three lesser known demonstrations involving tea in addition to the famous Boston Tea Party. The reader will encounter names with which they are probably familiar but also a few names that they may have never heard of before. For example, while John and Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, and King George III all make appearances, the reader will also learn about Christopher Gadsden and other lesser known historical figures.

The book discusses the tactics used by the colonists to fight what they perceived as an oppressive tax on tea. Without representation in Parliament, the colonists believed a tax—no matter how small—to be an act of tyranny, thus establishing a belief in the right to demonstrate.

A timeline at the end of the book helps keep events in their chronological order. The illustrations and sidebars add to the artistry of the book as well as provide more information. The sidebars, while certainly informative, sometimes take up a whole page or more and somewhat interrupt the flow of the main text.

This book would likely be a very excellent title for a parent and child to share together, and is recommended.

*Michael E. Wilhelm, CLJ*
HIGH SCHOOL FICTION

Four winds / Lisa T. Bergren. (River of time California; 2)
292 p. ; 21 cm.  Grades 9 and up
Fic  Rating: 4

Lisa Bergren concludes her new young adult historical fiction series featuring a contemporary teen living an extraordinary adventure in 1840 California.

In Four Winds, 17-year-old Zara Ruiz meets a handsome ranchero–Javier de la Ventura–when she travels back in time to California, 1840. She finds true love, a family (his extended family), and adventure–her three wishes. But is staying in the past really her future?

When she tries to return to her own time, it doesn't work. Then the Ventura ranch is attacked, and Zara and Javier’s younger brother Manuel are kidnapped. This causes Javier to wonder if Zara wouldn’t be safer returning to her own time. As much as he loves her, can he help her find her way back? It didn’t work last time but can she return now? Does she want to leave true love behind– and will she?

Bergren is known for her detailed historical research, strong plot development, and excellent characterization. As in her earlier River of Time series, she writes strong female characters who are independent yet vulnerable, with men who are chivalrous and handsome. Four Winds is a clean romance (no more than heated kisses) with adventure and plot twists a-plenty.

Her series have a strong sense of faith (evident but not preachy), courtly love, and family.

Although self-published, Four Winds is another worthy addition to Bergren’s growing list of young adult fiction.

Highly recommended for young adults, teens, and adult readers. Fans of young adult historical fiction will enjoy Bergren’s new series. Fans of her earlier River of Time series will be delighted with this addition.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

A time to rise / Nadine Brandes. (Out of time; 3)
399 p. ; map ; 22 cm.  Adult (HS Grades 10-12)
Fic  Rating: 4

Nadine Brandes concludes her award-winning dystopian series in which the government issues a personal clock to individuals, programmed to show their exact time of death. But what happens when those clocks are faulty?

In A Time to Rise, Parvin Blackwater has died–at least that’s what the world thinks–and she wasn’t scheduled to die (not according to her clock). But Parvin awakens in a shallow grave, with the sense that God is not done with her yet. As she climbs out of her buried coffin, she wonders: will she be reunited with Solomon? Will her “resurrection” be the catalyst for the Wall finally being destroyed? Or will the Council be able to stop them once and for all?

As in her earlier books, Brandes creates a future world where new technology and government control are all too real and possible. Her books are imaginative with realistic characters and suspenseful plot twists. The writing gets intense, and the violence is appropriate for the story.
Military control and conspiracy are part of the plot twists.

Parvin struggles in her faith, making her journey in each book both a spiritual and physical one. She is not the only one who changes. Other characters are introduced to God—some embrace him, some do not. Parvin has grown quite a bit since the first book (A Time to Die), as have a number of characters. Learning to trust God in the midst of every circumstance is laced throughout the series.

Recommended for fans of dystopian fiction and speculative fiction, especially readers of Krista McGee’s Anomaly series, Lisa Bergren’s Remnant series, Bonnie Calhoun’s Stone Braide Chronicles series, and Jill Williamson’s Safe Lands series. Adults and older teens will like this series.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: A Time to Die (Jan/Feb 2016); A Time to Speak (Mar/Apr/May/June 2016).

Resilience / L.R. Burkard. (The pulse effex series; 2)
280 p.; 23 cm. Grades 10 and up
Fic Rating: 4
Electromagnetic pulse--Fiction.

L. R. Burkard pens a sequel to her suspenseful contemporary novel about a major disaster, told from the viewpoint of three teenage girls.

In Resilience, Andrea Patterson, Lexie Martin, and Sarah Weaver are friends with very different family situations. An electromagnetic pulse (EMP) hits the earth and technology no longer works. Now their biggest challenge is facing the rumors of foreign militia, U.S. government militia forcing people into government camps, and bands of raiders trying to take their supplies by force.

Andrea joins the Martin family and others on their farm. Lexie longs for the day when she and Blake can get married, and Sarah hopes to reach Aunt Susan’s home in Indiana. Will the U.S. be able to recover from this disaster? Will the girls survive to see another day? What will they have to learn just to survive and move forward?

Burkard uses first-person narrative by the three 16-year-old girls, similar to a journal format. The EMP disaster is a chilling possibility in our future. Ms. Burkard tackles an EMP from a young adult point of view.

By using each girl’s experience, the author depicts realistically what could happen. Resilience is more than just a young adult book—adults will find it a clean read (no drugs, alcohol, or sex) with minimal violence, a book that may cause them to think about how they would face the situation of the electric power grid failing.

Recommended for school and public libraries. The third book in the series, Defiance, will be available later this year (2017).

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: Pulse (Jul/Aug/Sep 2016).

See how they run / Ally Carter. (Embassy row; 2)
323 p.; 22 cm. Grades 7-10
Fic Rating: 4
Adventure stories.

Take the key and lock her up / Ally Carter. (Embassy row; 3)

327 p.; 22 cm. Grades 7-10
Fic Rating: 4
Conspiracies--Fiction. Murder--Fiction.
Diplomatic and consular service, American--
Fiction. Brothers and sisters--Fiction. Trust--
Fiction. Adventure and adventurers--Fiction.
Adventure fiction. Action and adventure fiction.


In See How They Run, 16-year-old Grace is living in Adria. She is reeling from her recent discovery of the truth behind her mother’s murder. Her brother Jamie comes home from West Point with a buddy, Spence, whose grandmother was born in Adria. Troubles ensue when Grace stumbles upon a secret society, female assassins, Roman tunnels, and ancient secrets tied to her mother’s death. But the truth doesn’t set Grace free – it threatens her life!

In Take the Key and Lock Her Up, Grace knows the terrible secret that has been guarded for over 200 years, a family secret so big that revealing it could start a revolution. Some people will do anything to prevent it from being found out. Now Grace is in a race to save everyone she cares about by cutting through the years of lies and the web of deceit that is hidden in a conspiracy no one will ever believe.

Ally Carter writes books with plenty of action, adventure, and thrills. Carter cleverly uses lines from a nursery rhyme to title her books in this series. The relationships between Grace and her friends are not the usual boy-girl romances; there may be a hint of attraction but that is not the focus. The depth of friendship is more important, making this a clean read even for older middle school readers. The series will grab the reader’s attention from the start and hold it until the end.

Recommended for public and school libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Earlier Series Title Reviewed by CLJ: All Fall Down (Sept/Oct 2015).

The silent songbird / Melanie Dickerson.

296 p.; 22 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic Rating: 5
Arranged marriage--Fiction. Social classes--
Fiction. Middle Ages--Fiction. Great Britain--
History--Richard II, 1377-1399--Fiction.
Christian life--Fiction.

Award-winning author Melanie Dickerson continues her medieval retelling of fairy tales, this time loosely basing her novel on the story of The Little Mermaid.

In The Silent Songbird, 17-year-old Evangeline, cousin to King Richard II, is known for her beautiful singing voice. She is unhappily betrothed to a much older man whose character is suspect and whose first wife died under mysterious circumstances. Evangeline runs away, seeking a life where she can marry for love instead of politics.

She pretends to be a mute servant to avoid detection and joins a band of servants on their way to their home. She becomes acquainted with Westley le Wyse, who is intrigued by her. But when the truth is revealed, it shatters any hope of
TEENS' BOOKS

a future together. When Evangeline finds herself in the midst of a plot that threatens the king, where can she turn?

As in her earlier books, the faith element is clearly evident yet not preachy. Dickerson's tales feature wholesome relationships while still building a strong attraction between the main characters, making this a good choice for teen readers. Dickerson is a masterful storyteller with a carefully crafted plot, richly-drawn characters, and detailed setting. The reader is easily pulled into the story.

Recommended for young adults and adults who are young at heart.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Vango: Between Sky and Earth / Timothee de Fombelle ; translated by Sarah Ardizzone. (Vango; 1)

421 p.: ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 7 and up
Fic Rating: 4

Translated from the French, this duology revolves around Vango Romano, a young man with mysterious origins, who was washed up on the shore of a remote island off the coast of Sicily, Italy, at the age of three. Political intrigue, corruption, murder, revenge, mystery, adventure, suspense, heroism, loyalty, and a dash of romance are skillfully blended together into this fast-paced series.

Vango: Between Sky and Earth is set against the backdrop of the Nazi rise to power. The story begins in 1934. Nineteen-year-old Vango is minutes away from being ordained as a priest when the service is interrupted by the arrival of the police, who are in pursuit of Vango. Vango scales the walls of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris to escape while also dodging bullets from an unknown assailant. After Vango discovers he is wanted for murder, he embarks on a cross-continental journey to prove his innocence and to find out the truth about his heritage. A timeline of events pertinent to Vango’s life and a map of where he spent his childhood is included in the book.

A Prince Without a Kingdom is set against the backdrop of World War II and leads off with a cast of characters, a brief recap of the first book, and a flashback from Vango’s life as a teenager. Then the novel moves forward to 1936. Vango is still searching for answers to his heritage, which has led him to hunting for a man he believes is not only partly responsible for a deadly attack on his parents but who also knows the secret of his identity. Vango’s pursuit leads him to cross paths with an old trusted friend from his past, who is on a dangerous mission of his own. Vango ends up

A prince without a kingdom / Timothee de Fombelle ; translated by Sarah Ardizzone. (Vango; 2)

443 p.: ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 7 and up
Fic Rating: 4
embroiled in more than one dangerous adventure with assailants hot on his trail who would like nothing better than to put an end to Vango’s endeavors.

Timothee de Fombelle has included a multitude of fictional characters intermixed with real historical figures and events. The Graf Zeppelin and the Hindenburg airships are key elements in the storylines with black and white pictures of the airships included in the books. Flashbacks are interwoven into the two books providing readers with the backstory of Vango’s childhood.

*Dianne Woodman, CLJ*

**Murder at the courthouse / A. H. Gabhart. (Hidden Springs mysteries; 1)**
Grand Rapids, Mi: Revell, 2015.
332 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

**Murder comes by mail / A.H. Gabhart. (Hidden Springs mysteries; 2)**
Grand Rapids, Mi: Revell, 2016.
346 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Nothing ever happens in Hidden Springs, Kentucky! Or say they so until the body of a stranger turns up at the courthouse and following that, another dead body, this one a local that everyone knows. Deputy Michael Keane is the protagonist in these mysteries, a likable and very low-key main character who thought his new job would be stress-free and relaxing. With two murders on his hand in *Murder at the Courthouse*, he finds that every citizen seems to have a theory of “whodunit.” But following these leads is his job, no matter how crazy they might sound, and surely one of them will lead him to the killer.

In the second in the series, *Murder Comes by Mail*, Deputy Keane saves a man from suicide and is touted by the whole town as a hero. When Michael becomes convinced that the man he saved has gone on to become a murderer, he feels like anything but a hero and must protect those he loves in Hidden Springs from being the next victims.

A. H. Gabhart fills her books with odd but lovable characters (although at times her use of their idiosyncrasies is rather repetitive). The books are clean but not necessarily gentle reads as evidenced in the second title where there are some rather violent murders. There is just a hint of romance, also, which may be developed in ensuing books. This series is not overtly Christian yet Christianity is woven to some extent into the plots.

*Ceil Carey, CLJ*

**Thick as thieves : an Andrea Carter book / Susan K. Marlow. (Circle C milestones; 1)**
173 p. ; 22 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic Rating: 4

**Heartbreak trail : an Andrea Carter**
**TEENS’ BOOKS**

**Thick as Thieves / Susan K. Marlow. (Circle C milestones; 2)**

166 p.; 22 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic Rating: 4

Teenager Andrea “Andi” Carter lives on her family’s Fresno, California cattle ranch in the early 1880s. She’d rather help her older brothers raise horses than go to school, wear a dress, or learn how to be a young lady. But life in the Old West is challenging at its best and dangerous at its worst, and Andi is forced to grow up before her time.

In *Thick as Thieves*, Andi is thrust together with the new girl at school, Macy Walker, when she is assigned as Andi’s seatmate. Alternately rude and cruel, Macy is the bully of the schoolyard, and the other students expect Andi to do something about it. In *Heartbreak Trail*, against her mother’s best judgment, Andi is allowed to accompany her brothers on the cattle drive as Cook’s helper. When a river crossing brings tragedy, Andi is promoted to wrangler and must do the work of two men.

Each story is written in the third person, but chapter headings include snippets from Andi’s diary, allowing the reader to experience her thoughts and emotions first hand. Author Susan K. Marlow sprinkles historical references throughout and uses period dialogue and colloquialisms to evoke the era. Messages of faith and salvation are woven into the stories without being preachy. The characters are well-developed and complex. Difficult subjects such as child abuse and death are handled with sensitivity. Ms. Marlow provides a well-researched, highly readable, fictionalized account of the life of a teenager in the Old West. Adults may also enjoy The Circle C Milestones series.

*Linda Matchett, CLJ*

**Broken Trust / by Jill Williamson. (Mission league series; 3)**

22 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic Rating: 4
Alaska--Fiction.

Award-winning author Jill Williamson continues her contemporary series, filled with spies and adventures—just the type of book to appeal to teens and tweens, especially boys.

In *Broken Trust*, Spencer Garamond wants to be a normal teenage boy: a basketball player who hopes to recover from an ACL injury in time to still have a shot at a scholarship. But Spencer isn’t a normal teen—he’s an agent-in-training in the Mission League. His training continues, this time on an outdoor survival trip to Alaska. Spencer is still juggling his relationship with Grace and trying to figure out where Nick fits in with things. When someone close to him appears to betray Spencer and the Mission League, it is hard to know whom to trust. Spencer wants to figure everything out.

In this series, Williamson successfully captures the teenage boy’s challenges and interests: spies, girls, sports, and drugs/alcohol temptation. Spencer is a young adult who struggles with faith issues. He is a reluctant member of the Mission League, yet he is willing to go on these short-term missions.

The series is filled with good and bad examples of teens. Spencer is never far from trouble, both from his own choices and from the actions of
others. Despite his choices and injuries, he manages to learn from his experiences, making the reader eager to read his next adventure. As in the other books, the chapters are presented as filed reports, making the timeline easier to follow. Spencer will return for his final adventure in *The Profile Match*.

Recommended for teen collections in public libraries, church libraries, and school libraries.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*
ADULT FICTION

From this moment / Elizabeth Camden.
350 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Artist Stella West has given up her dream of artistic success in London to hunt for her sister’s murderer in Boston. While the police and medical examiner swear Gwendolyn’s drowning was an accident, Stella insists on foul play. She goes undercover at City Hall to look for a man that Gwendolyn wrote about in her final letters.

Seeking the help of Romulus White, co-owner of the famous magazine Scientific World, Stella risks sharing her tale. As Stella reveals the tragedy of her sister’s death, confirmed bachelor Romulus sees an opportunity to trade his public influence for her artwork. Romulus is powerful, stylish, ornery—and handsome. Could Stella’s choice of involving him get in the way of finding the true killer?

Clues that indicate a cover-up surface, but the more Romulus gets involved with the whirlwind that is Stella West, the more trouble he encounters. If he pursues her wild story, it could mean the demise of his magazine and reputation. But if he doesn’t, Gwendolyn’s killer could return to finish off her sister.

Elizabeth Camden is a skilled writer who knows how to use her setting as a character. The ideas of the first American subway, snail mail, telegrams, and train travel play major roles in the plot of this novel. Her word choices fit the era, and her point of view changes between Stella and Romulus allow readers to see two unique perspectives as these characters come together to deal with their problems.

While the main characters both have bold and distinct personalities, their character development (apart from their affections toward each other) seems minor compared to the greater character arches found in the supporting characters, notably Romulus’s cousin Evelyn and her ex-husband. Readers will see multiple characters relying on God in their greatest moments of struggle for physical salvation and redemption of broken relationships.

Readers of romance, history, and mystery will enjoy the suspense of this dramatic narrative. As the plot unfolds, readers will love becoming pseudo-detectives with Stella and Romulus as they solve this murder mystery and deduce the killer’s identity.

Rebecca Schriner, CLJ

Spy of Richmond / Jocelyn Green. (Heroines behind the lines: Civil War; 4)
429 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Spy of Richmond, by award-winning author Jocelyn Green, is an intriguing historical fiction set in the Confederate capital of Richmond, VA during the Civil War.

Defying the will of her father, Sophie Kent treats
her family’s slaves with compassion and dignity, even attempting to free them. When her righteous indignation over the inhumanity of slavery can no longer stay dormant, Sophie befriends Elizabeth Van Lew, who recruits her to be a secret agent for the North. As a southern born abolitionist, Sophie finds herself on the wrong side of the war and is compelled to become a spy for the Union to soothe her aching conscience. As the war creeps closer to her own backyard, Sophie has to decide what she is willing to lose in order to help the cause to which she believes God has called her.

Green creates an intense page-turner with both moral and spiritual conflicts that are artfully tackled. Her attention to historical detail provides an insightful view into the horrors of war while also depicting the very human side of that turbulent time in America’s history. This fictional account of Sophie Kent is masterfully woven with historical facts to depict the story of the many brave men and women who risked their lives to end slavery.

_Schimri Yoyo, CLJ_

**Never forget / Jody Hedlund. (Beacons of hope; 5)**

345 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Jody Hedlund pens another installment in her historical fiction series, this one set in coastal Rhode Island during the 1880s.

In _Never Forget_, Abbie Watson cares for her aging grandfather and the Rhode Island Lighthouse, trying to keep them both going. Her grandfather is showing signs of senility, which may lead to their eviction.

Wealthy playboy Nathaniel Winthrop suffers a concussion in a yachting accident, making him lose his recent memories and washing him up on Rose Island. His memory loss causes him to forget the type of man he was—a “bad boy” among Newport’s social elite.

As Abby tends to Nathaniel, he mistakenly assumes he is her husband, Nate, who deserted her recently. He is determined to be a better husband and assistant lightkeeper. Abby doesn’t correct him because his presence soothes Gramps and prevents their possible eviction. What will happen when the truth is discovered? What happened to Nate? Who is digging for treasure on their island? Will Nathaniel leave, continuing his reformed life elsewhere? What will become of her and Gramps?

Hedlund excels in well-researched historical details and rich character development. While this self-published book stands alone, readers might find it helpful to read the earlier books (published by Bethany) to understand the significance of the driftwood cross. These books are a blend of romance and mystery. The faith element is light, with the main characters facing their broken pasts to find their ultimate security in God, not in their circumstances.

Recommended for public and church libraries, and for fans of her earlier books.

_Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com_
The innkeeper of Ivy Hill / Julie Klassen. (Tales from Ivy Hill; 1)

444 p. : map ; 23 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Award-winning author Julie Klassen debuts her first historical fiction series, set in the English village of Ivy Hill "where friendships thrive, romance blossoms, and mysteries await" (back cover).

In Innkeeper of Ivy Hill, genteel Jane Bell becomes a reluctant innkeeper after the death of her husband. She has no clue about managing the business and saving it from bankruptcy. She turns to her mother-in-law Thora for assistance, even though they did not have a close relationship in the past. As she helps Jane, Thora begins to find a new purpose for life and is faced with two suitors for her heart.

Pressure mounts from the bank, even as Jane tries new methods to restore the inn and pay off its debt. Several men seem to have a vested interest in her success or failure, but are any of them trustworthy? Will Jane succeed or lose the inn?

Klassen is known for her excellent plot and character development in her inspirational Regency novels, which are filled with love and redemption and family relationships. The faith elements are not heavy-handed. The historical details that one comes to expect from Ms. Klassen's works are clearly evident in this new series.

She lays the groundwork for the next few books in this series by introducing the reader to several characters in the village of Ivy Hill and telling parts of their story. Discussion questions are also included. Readers will look forward to the second book, Ladies of Ivy Cottage, which is expected in December 2017.

Recommended for public and high school libraries. Fans of Julie Klassen, Sarah E. Ladd, Carrie Turansky, and other historical fiction fans will be delighted with this new series.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Fatal frost / Nancy Mehl. (Defenders of justice; 1)

299 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4
United States marshals--Fiction. Saint Louis (Mo.)--Fiction. Suspense fiction.

Prolific author Nancy Mehl kicks off a new romantic suspense series featuring US marshals.

In Fatal Frost, US Marshall Mercy Brennan is assigned to a joint task force with the St. Louis Police Department after being shot while on duty. Unfortunately, it puts her in contact with her father's undercover work with a St. Louis gang. Her life is in danger when the gang believes he passed off sensitive information to Mercy before his death.

Her bossassigns her ex-boyfriend, US Marshall Mark St. Laurent, to work with her. They follow clues leading back to a mole on their own team. En route to a remote safe house, they are stranded by an ice storm, facing their common enemies: a traitor in their midst and the drug cartel hunting down Mercy. Mark and Mercy's earlier relationship ended when Mark became a Christian. Being together brings back memories—will Mercy find healing from childhood hurts?
Mehl has written a number of cozy mysteries and romantic suspense novels. This series represents a slight departure for her—it is more plot-driven. Like her earlier works, however, this book is also character-driven. Mercy is a strong female protagonist who has made a life for herself despite her estranged relationship with her father. Readers will encounter good and bad cops, gang violence and drug cartels. The faith element is not heavy-handed, and the violence is appropriate for the story.

Recommended for public and high school libraries. Fans of DiAnn Mills, Irene Hannon, and Dani Pettrey will appreciate this new series.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

**Still life / Dani Pettrey. (Chesapeake valor; 2)**

347 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Award-winning author Dani Pettrey continues her romantic suspense series set in coastal Maryland, about childhood friends with careers in law enforcement.

In *Still Life*, crime scene photographer Avery Tate reunites with crime scene analyst Parker Mitchell on a case involving the switching of a photograph at a gallery opening. The model in the photograph is Avery’s friend, who is posing as if she is dead—and what’s worse, she is missing! Avery and Parker dig into the case, following leads that are potentially deadly. Domestic terrorism, psychotic killers, and bizarre artists play into this story.

Pettrey’s series features strong personalities with problems readers can relate to. Avery left Parker’s employ six months ago to sort out her feelings about him. Avery has a past she keeps hidden. She is afraid that when Parker finds out the truth he won’t be interested in her. Parker is attracted to her but still cares for his first love, who was killed a number of years ago.

The faith element is evident: Parker reminds Avery that she is a “new creation in Christ” regardless of her past, and they pray for a friend injured in the line of duty. Their relationship is clean, appropriate for even high school readers.

The plot is intriguing, with enough twists to keep the reader engaged until the end. Watch for loose ends that will probably show up in later books. The violence is a little dark, but appropriate to the story. Suspense, romance, and action add up to a thrilling read!


Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

**Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: Cold Shot (Mar/Apr/May/Jun 2016).**

**Rescue me / Susan May Warren. (Montana rescue; 2)**

323 p. ; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Susan May Warren continues her new contemporary romance series set in Montana and featuring park rescue professionals living in a
close-knit community.

In Rescue Me, Deputy Sam Brooks is convinced Sierra Rose is perfect for him—she’s practical and organized, and totally opposite to her free-spirit sister, Willow, who has been secretly in love with Sam for years. Willow wants her sister to have a happily-ever-after ending with Sam, despite her own feelings for him. Sam thinks Willow, a volunteer youth leader, is naïve in her faith and her assessment of what the teens in the youth group need.

When circumstances force Sam and Willow to rely on one another for their safety and that of the kids in the youth group, they fight a strong attraction to each other. Will they recognize their feelings and God’s purpose in their lives?

Warren does a superb job of creating a dramatic story of survival in Glacier National Park where the characters fight an angry grizzly bear, a wintry storm, and a car crash on several field trips. Both have a lot to learn about relying on God and appreciating the different ways that God gifts a person. In Rescue Me, one learns that only God can rescue us from ourselves.

Characters from earlier stories make reappearances, and their stories continue to move along, but this is mainly Willow and Sam’s story. Packed with excellent character and plot development, Warren draws vivid word pictures in her stories, with a faith element that is present but not preachy. Action, drama, adventure, flawed individuals, and emotional and spiritual challenges are hallmarks of Warren’s books.

Recommended for public libraries and church libraries. The next book in the series, A Matter of Trust, is due latter this year (2017).

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ


A matter of trust / Lis Wiehl with April Henry. (A Mia Quinn mystery; 1)

311 p.; 25 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

A deadly business / Lis Wiehl with April Henry. (A Mia Quinn mystery; 2)

310 p.; 25 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4
Mystery fiction.

Lethal beauty / Lis Wiehl with April Henry. (A Mia Quinn mystery; 3)

303 p.; 25 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

The series centers on Mia Quinn, who is facing both personal and professional struggles in her life. Mia’s recently deceased husband left behind a staggering amount of debt, so she has returned to her job as a prosecutor in Seattle’s King County Violent Crimes Unit. It is not an easy adjustment, especially with her heavy workload and the demands of motherhood. Mia’s dad, who has recently surrendered his life to Christ, is the one witness for Mia. Will she learn to trust God again?

Lis Wiehl starts off each book with a gripping
scene that pulls readers into the stories and makes them want to read more. The books include a series of in-depth questions that are perfect for reading group discussions.

In *A Matter of Trust*, Mia is busy with two high profile cases, both of which have the serious potential to either advance or derail her career. She is the lead investigator looking into the murder of a colleague and the suicide of a teenager linked to bullying. Mia is not pleased when her boss assigns her to work with Charlie Carlson, a homicide detective, with whom she has some unpleasant past work history. Mia struggles with trying to fulfill her duties as a full-time prosecutor while also dealing with a rebellious teenage son and a preschooler who suffers from nightmares.

In *A Deadly Business*, Mia’s boss, who is in a tight race for re-election, puts into her hands the decision of whether to try three teenage boys as juveniles or adults. Mia is under a time constraint, and the fallout from her decision could affect her job security. At the same time, Charlie suspects that the death of Mia’s husband was not an accident, but murder, so Mia and Charlie end up conducting an unofficial investigation. Between the two cases, personal issues, and taking on a second job to help make ends meet, Mia is trying to find balance in her life.

In *Lethal Beauty*, Mia is involved in a prominent businessman’s trial for the murder of a Chinese prostitute who is an illegal immigrant. After a mistrial is declared, Mia refuses to give up on proving the businessman’s guilt. While Mia and Charlie work together to try and find more evidence to justify a retrial, more dead bodies are discovered. It is up to Mia and Charlie to figure out if there is a connection between the murders. Meanwhile, her son Gabe has made some decisions in order to improve his self-image that could lead to trouble not only for himself but also for his family. Will Mia’s personal and professional lives clash?

*Dianne Woodman, CLJ*

### ADULT NONFICTION

**A peculiar glory: how the Christian scriptures reveal their complete truthfulness / John Piper.**


302 p.; 23 cm. Adult

220.1 Rating: 5

Bible--Evidences, authority, etc.

“My argument,” says John Piper as he sums up *A Peculiar Glory: How the Christian Scriptures Reveal Their Complete Truthfulness*, “has been that the glory of God, in and through the Scriptures, is a real, objective, self-authenticating reality. Christian faith is not a leap in the dark. It is not a guess or a wager. God is not honored if he is chosen by the flip of a coin. A leap into the unknown is no honor to one who has made himself known.” (pg. 283)

Piper praises, values, but ultimately sets aside the most common evangelical apologetic strategies for promoting the truth of Scripture—the detailed historical investigations into the truth of the resurrection, for example. He instead focuses on the power of the Bible through the Spirit to defend itself. He applies to bibliology (the doctrine of Scripture) his common practice of careful exegetical analysis, copious Bible quotation, penetrating illustration, doctrinal rigor, and warmly personal, even passionate writing.
And, as always with Piper, Jonathan Edwards lies only just beneath the surface, breaking out at key points to deliver special insight. Piper insightfully points out that the detailed historical reasoning of an N.T. Wright (in the magisterial and massive *The Resurrection of the Son of God*) is simply inaccessible to most lay people today—just like the profundities of Jonathan Edwards’ theology, though wonderfully edifying for the church then and now, were not suited to Edwards’ missionary work among the Mohicans. Edwards realized that if these unlettered people were to be among “all the families of the earth” that God intended to bless through Abraham’s seed, Jesus, the gospel would have to be accessible to them. They would have to grasp its truth without the intermediation of detailed historical, theological, or other reasoning. They would have to come to the sweetness of the gospel the way they came to understand the sweetness of honey: by direct experience (in this case, enabled by the Holy Spirit through His own words).

If this sounds esoteric, it really isn’t: Piper is handling a very basic question every Christian must face: how can I *know* that the Bible is true? Piper shows that the Bible claims complete truthfulness for itself; it claims repeatedly to be the speech of God. But how can we know that these claims are accurate? The answer is that God, in order to glorify Himself, has to show the truth of His words. This is a richly biblical book about the Bible; it stands squarely in the Reformation tradition while applying a Reformed bibliology to modern times.

*Mark L. Ward, Jr., CLJ*

**Holy Bible : beyond suffering Bible NLT : where struggles seem endless, God’s hope is infinite / Joni and Friends, Inc.**

Tyndale House, 2016.
1696 p.; 25 cm. Adult
220.5 Rating: 5
Suffering--Christian life.

2017 is a year of special significance to bestselling author, artist, singer, and radio host Joni Eareckson Tada—it marks the 50th anniversary of her journey in a wheelchair. One of the ways she has chosen to commemorate this anniversary is by publishing the *Beyond Suffering Bible*, a special edition of God’s word for individuals who are struggling with disabilities as well as for families struggling to care for suffering people. The volume is a labor of love, reflecting Mrs. Tada’s desire to reach more people and to encourage and strengthen their walks by sharing the insights that have gotten her through the past 50 years.

With Mrs. Tada as its general editor, the *Beyond Suffering Bible* features the work of many distinguished contributors, including the experts at Joni and Friends Christian Institute on Disability. It is a study Bible with many valuable features, including book introductions with an emphasis on key suffering and disability themes, profiles of biblical persons who lived with a disability or acted as a caregiver, devotionals that tackle some of the toughest questions about suffering, and thousands of “Connection Points”–study notes that delve into verses in the context of suffering. There are essays that take an in-depth look at specific topics, written by people who also know suffering. For example, Stephen F. Arterburn’s article on accidental drug addiction is excellent, as is the article on living with chronic pain written by Dr. Michael Easley, president emeritus of the Moody Bible Institute.
The Beyond Suffering Bible may have been created specifically for people who are dealing with disabilities or illnesses, but would be a comfort and invaluable resource for anyone who has ever suffered—which is everyone.

Valorie Cooper, CLJ
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