Outstanding Books Reviewed in This Issue

The Hiding Game by Gwen Strauss; illustration by Herb Leonhard.

Oath of Honor by Lynette Eason.

Teach Us to Pray by Gordon T. Smith.

Special Feature:
Q&As with Selected Authors Featured in this Issue
A Letter from the Publisher

Dear CLJ Readers:

Happy Spring! And welcome to the first CLJ issue of 2018.

In this issue, we are excited to share with you Q&As with several authors whose books are covered in this issue: Irene Hannon, Lisa Harris, Kristi Ann Hunter, Rachel Dylan, and Connilyn Cossette. We hope you enjoy the fascinating glimpses into these talented writers’ thoughts and processes.

We are currently working on our annual coverage of selected ALA Award titles and hope to present them to you in time to assist with making summer reading plans.

As always, we appreciate your support of CLJ and look forward to another year of sharing fine reading with you!

In Christ,
Angela Walsh
Publisher and Editor
derator@christianlibraryj.org.
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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Q&As with Irene Hannon
Author of Dangerous Illusions

Can you please tell us about your new series?
The Code of Honor series features three childhood friends whose bond has been strengthened by time—and danger. As children, they vowed to help make the world a better place when they grew up, and each chose a career that does just that. Colin, the hero of Dangerous Illusions, is a police detective. Kristin, the heroine of book 2, runs a fair-trade shop. And the hero of book 3, Rick, joined the military but now runs a camp for foster kids. This is a group of honorable high-achievers, and I love the dynamic among the three friends.

How did you come up with the plot for Dangerous Illusions?
I wanted to start this series off with a story that had a very unusual plot twist, and I think the idea I came up with will truly give readers a “wow” moment when they realize what’s going on. I can’t say more than that without giving the surprise away!

What was the most interesting thing you learned while doing research for your book?
I learn a tremendous amount with every book I write. But if I shared the most interesting things I learned while working on this one, I’d give away some significant plot surprises!

Which character is your favorite and why?
That’s like asking a mother to pick her favorite child! Every character in this book—bad and good—has a unique story, and all of them fascinate me.

How did you choose the setting for your novel?
Since this is a book with a strong psychological suspense element versus an action/adventure novel in which the setting plays a critical role, it could have taken place almost anywhere. The book did, however, require huge amounts of research—so I chose a setting I know well, which shaved some research hours off the writing process.

What lesson(s) do you hope readers will take away from reading Dangerous Illusions?
That even in the toughest times, God is at work in our lives. I want readers to finish the book uplifted, filled with hope, and more cognizant of the tremendous power of love to transform lives.

What are you working on next?
I recently turned in the next book in my Oregon coast Hope Harbor series, Pelican Point, which will be out in April 2018. That’s a contemporary romance/women’s fiction novel. I’m now fine-tuning book 2 in my Code of Honor series, which is due at the end of the summer and will release in October 2018.

How can readers connect with you?
They can visit my website at www.irenehannon.com or follow me on Facebook and Twitter. I’m very active on Facebook and love to interact with readers there.
Q&As with Lynette Eason
Author of Oath of Honor

Oath of Honor is the first book in the Blue Justice series. Why did you decide to write a series based upon a law-enforcement family?

I know, it’s crazy, right? I have no background in law enforcement, but it fascinates me. And I just respect so much those who serve like they do, I hope my stories honor them. I was watching Blue Bloods one night and I thought, I want to write a story about a family in law enforcement. So I did. I’m very excited about this new series. I hope the readers fall in love with the St. John family.

The setting for Oath of Honor is Columbia, South Carolina. Why did you decide upon this city?

I like the layout of Columbia and the police department is divided into five regions. I add a fictitious sixth region so as not to single out any one region. The city was perfect for the setting. And I went to school at the University of South Carolina for four years, so I’m fairly familiar with the city. That helps.

This is the first book in the Blue Justice series. How many books are proposed for this series?

There are four books in the series. Called to Protect is book 2; books 3 and 4 haven’t been named yet.

What type of research was required for writing your book?

There was SO much research to do for this book. I’ve had so many questions that I’ve had to get answers to. Fortunately, I have a lot of resources that I’ve been able to tap into and get those answers.

How would you describe your writing style?

Intense, gritty, with a bit of morbid humor thrown in occasionally.

What do you hope readers can take away from Oath of Honor?

If they don’t already have it, I hope they come away with a deep respect for the people in law enforcement. For the men and women who put their lives on the line every day, giving selflessly and often working for days without a break to keep us safe. I can write about it, but I don’t think I could do the job.

What are you working on next? I’m working on Called to Protect, book 2 in the series.

How can readers connect with you? I’m on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lynette.eason and Twitter @lynetteeason.
Q&As with Lisa Harris
Author of Vanishing Point

Can you please tell us about your new book?
Garrett Addison’s first case as a criminal investigator for the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is the murder of a young girl, which is quickly tied to a string of disappearances and a possible serial killer. Special Agent Jordan Lambert, a woman Garrett once loved, joins the case, but another girl is killed and they are unable to find the elusive killer. With a string of murders now spanning over a decade, the case will push those involved to their limits as they search for the truth. Readers who enjoyed the Nikki Boyd Files will be happy to see several appearances of Nikki in the book, from before she became involved in law enforcement to the final showdown and revelation of what happened to her sister, as well as her and Tyler Grant’s relationship.

How did you come up with the plot for Vanishing Point?
After writing the Nikki Boyd series, my publisher asked that I write a fourth book that would tie up the series—in particular the story line of what happened to Nikki Boyd’s sister, Sarah, who disappeared over a decade ago. I loved the chance to spend the pages of an entire book telling her story along with the other girls who were victims of the Angel Abductor.

How did you choose the setting for your novel?
Since this book is tied closely to the Nikki Boyd Files, I kept this fourth novel set in Tennessee as well since that is where Sarah and the other girls vanished.

What was the most interesting thing you learned while doing research for your book?
In many ways it was a heartbreaking story to write. Because of this I worked hard to ensure readers are given a satisfying story that completely wraps up the series. While I normally do not like stories about serial killers—and, honestly, avoid them—this is more than just a book about the Angel Abductor. It’s about relationships, loss, and how God is still right there in the midst of tragedy. Research on serial killers was actually very interesting. And especially the fact that most are not like Hollywood’s stereotypes.

What lesson(s) do you hope readers will take away from reading Vanishing Point?
One of the main questions asked in the novel is, where is God when tragedy strikes? It’s a question both Garrett and Jordan struggle with throughout the book. In the end, they come to the same conclusion that I pray my readers will come to. Just because God doesn’t intervene in a situation doesn’t mean he isn’t there. In fact, he is there, but he has decided not to just sweep down and fix our problems every time something goes wrong. Instead he chose to redeem us eternally by sending his Son.
What are you working on next?
I'm currently working on a brand-new stand-alone for Revell that will come out in 2018. It’s another fast-paced suspense novel that deals with hackers and a secret worth dying for.

How can readers connect with you?
I really do love hearing from my readers! You can check out my books at my website, www.lisaharriswrites.com, or stop by my Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/AuthorLisaHarris.

Q&As with Kristi Ann Hunter
Author of An Uncommon Courtship

This book has an unusual beginning for a romance novel. Why did you choose to start it that way?
On page one, we find ourselves at the wedding breakfast of the hero and heroine. The vows are already completed and Lord Trent, whom many readers have gotten to know in the rest of the series, is suddenly married. I started it this way because I wanted it to be a bit of a shock for the readers, just like the marriage was a shock for Trent and Adelaide.

How are the spiritual elements of this story different from the other ones in the series?
An Uncommon Courtship focuses a good bit more on godly relationships and how those impact your personal walk with God than some of the other books. There are scenes I particularly love where a group of God-honoring men gather together to help each other follow God more closely. Trent and Adelaide especially find themselves struggling in
their marriage until they realize they need to bring God into the relationship as well.

Q&As with Rachel Dylan
Author of Deadly Proof

The Atlanta Justice series is centered around strong, female lawyers who take on high-stakes cases. What made you want to write their stories?

I’d have to say it’s personal! Having been an attorney for eleven years now, I love being able to pour parts of myself into the books. My everyday life as a lawyer isn’t that exciting and is definitely not as dangerous! But I’m able to draw on what I’ve lived through to bring life and authenticity to these characters.

What type of research did you do for Deadly Proof?

One of the great things about writing books related to my career is that I know lawyers who practice all different types of law. Deadly Proof focuses on Kate Sullivan, who is a plaintiff’s attorney taking on a big pharmaceutical company. I don’t do this specific type of plaintiff’s work, but I know lawyers who do, and I was able to talk with them. Also, I was able to relate to my characters on the defense side because I’ve done that work for years. It was really fun to write the perspectives of characters on both sides of the case.

Is there a reason you chose Atlanta for this series?

Yes! I’m from Georgia and lived in Atlanta, practicing law at a large law firm, for eight years. I wanted to pick a setting I was intimately familiar with to give readers an authentic Atlanta experience—sweet tea and all.

Where do you think Kate’s passion for her work comes from?

Kate truly believes that her life’s work is to help those who have been wronged. I believe a lot of her passion stems from her strong faith that has developed over the years. She’s not a lawyer to make big bucks but to change people’s lives for the better.

What is the next book in the Atlanta Justice series about?

Book two is about Kate’s friend Sophie Dawson, who we meet in Deadly Proof. Sophie is an Atlanta prosecutor. This story is exciting because it involves a completely different type of legal case than Deadly Proof. But I promise things get just as dangerous!

Q&As with Connilyn Cossette
Author of Wings of the Wind

What was your inspiration for writing Wings of the Wind?

When I was contemplating what to write after Counted with the Stars, I had a conversation with
my mom about Rahab. The question her Bible study group had posed was, “What might make a Canaanite prostitute be so willing to put her life, and the lives of her family, in danger to protect enemy spies?” The Bible makes it very clear that Rahab did what she did because of faith in Yahweh, not simply out of fear of the God who had brought Egypt to its knees. As we tossed ideas around that day, the spark of a story came to my mind: What if someone else was a witness to Rahab, not only about the power and might of God, but of His goodness, His grace and mercy, and the beauty of His protective laws for His people? And so, with those questions in mind (and without revealing any spoilers . . .) Alanah’s story began to unroll itself in my imagination. And interestingly enough, I wrote the majority of Wings of the Wind before the idea for Shadow of the Storm came to me. So I had to put Alanah’s story aside in order to work on the second book in the Out From Egypt series when I signed a contract with Bethany House Publishers.

What does your research process look like and what historical resources did you use when writing Wings of the Wind?

Research is one of my favorite parts of being a historical writer. Of course, first and foremost, I go to the Bible before I even begin a story. I want to do my very best to stay within the parameters of the Word, its timeline, and its historical references. I also used the writings of Josephus, whose works are great for filling in some of the background information along with some research into other ancient rabbinical midrash (commentary). With regards to the Canaanite culture, there is much confusion and disagreement, and so many big blank spaces in the historical record, that it makes it much more difficult to research than ancient Egypt, which has such a plethora of information. One of the best sources I found to study the Canaanite religious texts was a book called Stories from Canaan, which went a long way in helping me understand what myths and epics were a part of Canaanite culture. For some of the background and setting detail, I spent some time on YouTube learning about archery and how to build a compound bow (since Alanah is an archer), used Google Earth to explore the geography, and wiled away many hours looking at pictures of the land of Israel—from the ruins of ancient Arad, to modern-day Jordan, to the ruins of Jericho, and the beautiful areas around the Galilee. I cannot wait to head to Israel this summer with fellow author Cliff Graham’s tour group and see some of these places with my own eyes! Research for me is an ongoing process as I write each story, and entails a lot of poking around on the internet, stumbling across hidden gems in out-of-print books on Google Books, and honestly spending quite a few hours following useless information rabbit trails that never end up in my books!

What do you want readers to take away from Wings of the Wind?

Like Kiya in Counted with the Stars, Alanah begins her journey as an enemy of the people of God—so much so that her one goal is to kill as many of them as possible! Like Alanah, we too are enemies of God’s people before we take part in the Covenant of the Cross, and in Alanah’s story I hope to display the way that God cared for us “while we were yet sinners” (Rom. 5:8), how we were known from the beginning and wooed by the One who created us, and how each of us is being used by God to glorify Him in ways we do not yet understand and possi-
bly in ways that will affect generations to follow. Alanah begins the story as a desperate woman who believes she is completely alone, but comes to learn that Yahweh was with her all along. I also hope that readers will be reminded that God’s story for us includes burning away the “chaff” of our sin and sorrow to reveal the purity of His unmerited grace and abundant mercy.

Since you began writing the Out From Egypt series what have you learned about juggling being a wife, a mom, and an author?

If you had visited me in a time machine back in 2008 or so and told me that I would be releasing my third book this year with Bethany House Publishers I would have probably laughed you back into your own year. My dream was to publish one book—someday—and even thinking beyond that to a career was pretty far outside the scope of my imagination. But since God decided to gift me with this wonderful and exciting career while I am still a homeschooling mom and while my husband travels 90 percent of the time for his job, I’ve had to learn some tough lessons about my priorities, time management, strengths and weaknesses, and my own limitations. I’ve learned that I cannot “do it all,” so I’ve had to say no to a lot of good things, but ultimately things that were not a good fit with my family and career goals. I’ve learned that my schedule may not look like other people’s schedules, workwise and schoolwise, and that it’s okay to order our school day/bedtime/wakeup time to fit what works for us, without guilt. I’ve also learned that if God opens up an opportunity He will absolutely provide me with the tools necessary to fulfill His plans, no matter the obstacles. I have been astounded that this procrastinating, nonproject-finishing girl has completed four novels (on time!) and is working on number five, and I attribute that to God’s call on my life and His faithfulness in sustaining both me and the passion I have for writing stories that glorify Him.

Now that you are finished with the Out From Egypt series where do you plan on journeying next?

I am thrilled to be working on my next three-book series for Bethany House. These books will be a spin-off of the Out From Egypt series, following one of the characters from Wings of the Wind (not going tell who yet though!), and takes place during the period between the Conquest and the Judges. It will be called the Cities of Refuge series and will be based upon the provision that the Law of Moses made for those accused of accidental killing. These Levitical cities were a place of safety from the vengeance of the victim’s next of kin, but also came with unique conditions and consequences. As I researched these laws, I found the cities of refuge to be a beautiful picture of grace and mercy in the Old Testament that point forward to our Messiah and His work at the Cross. It’s been exciting to meet some different characters in these new adventures during the time the tribes were settling Canaan and to visit a few that we’ve gotten to know during the journey out from Egypt.
PRIMARY NONFICTION

The beautiful garden of Eden / written by Gary Bower. (The faith that God built)
LCCN 2016010621 ISBN 9781496417435, hardcover.
K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

A patch on the peak of Ararat / written by Gary Bower ; illustrated by Barbara Chotiner. (The faith that God built)
LCCN 2016010620 ISBN 9781496417442, hardcover.
K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

The frightening Philippi jail / Gary Bower. (The faith that God built)
LCCN 2016010622 ISBN 9781496417503, hardcover.
K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

The hurry-up exit from Egypt / written by Gary Bower ; illustrated by Barbara Chotiner. (The faith that God built)
LCCN 2016010623 ISBN 9781496417459, hardcover.
K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

These hardcover children's books retell the Bible stories of Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, the Israelites' flight from Egypt, and the imprisonment of Silas and Paul. Vivid artwork by Barbara Chotiner enlivens the action, immersing young readers amidst the people, animals, and setting of each story. The flat, folk-art style is eye-catching and dramatic, particularly the crowded, concluding scenes. Gary Bower uses clever rhyming lines of text that repeat and build with theatrical flair. The vocabulary is fresh and alive, a wonderful blend of descriptive phrases, uncommon adjectives, alliteration, personification, and a touch of humor.

The Bible is introduced as the source of each story and a verse from Scripture (New Living Translation) is provided. The Beautiful Garden of Eden, A Patch on the Peak of Ararat, The Hurry Up Exit from Egypt, and The Frightening Philippi Jail are uniquely presented and especially well-suited to being read aloud.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ

Jesus Christ risen today! / by Eric C. Bohnet/illustrated by Erika LeBarre (Arch books Bible stories)
ISBN 9780758657350, paperback.
K-Grade 4
200  Rating: 4

K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

LCCN 2016461438 ISBN 9780758652263, paperback.
K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

Peter surprises Rhoda: the story of Peter’s escape from prison from Acts 12:1-19 for children / written by Larry Burgdorf; illustrated by Len Ebert. (Arch books Bible stories)

ISBN 9780758657336, paperback.
K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

The Christmas connection: the story of Jesus’ birth and death Luke 2 and Matthew 2 and 28, for children / written and illustrated by Karyn E. Lukasek. (Arch books Bible stories)

K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

Falling into sin: the story of the fall from grace and God’s promise of a Savior, from Genesis 2:15-25; 3:1-19, for children / by Martha Streufert Jander/illustrated by Michelle Dorenkamp Repa. (Arch books Bible stories)

ISBN 9780758654700, paperback.
K-Grade 4

Cain and Abel / by Nicole E. Dreyer/illustrated by Deborah Borgo. (Arch books Bible stories)

ISBN 9780758652256, paperback.
K-Grade 4
E  Rating: 4

Jesus Christ is Risen Today!, Joshua and the Fall of Jericho, Peter Surprises Rhoda, The Night Peter Cried, The Christmas Connection, Falling Into Sin, and Cain and Abel are seven recent titles in the 125+ volume Arch Books Bible Story Series. The books present events from Scripture in an illustrated, rhyming format for children.

Each slim paperback is retold in memorable four-line stanzas and accompanying full-page artwork. The title pages include a biblical reference, and each book concludes with a thought-provoking letter to parents.

Different author/illustrator pairings for each title contribute to the appeal of the series. Though following a similar format, each story has a unique look and tone. Overall, the poetic writing is clever, with a good amount of challenging vocabulary for young readers. The story settings and details depicted through the varied styles of artwork add visual interest and help distinguish each book.

Jesus Christ is Risen Today!, Joshua and the Fall of Jericho, Peter Surprises Rhoda, The Night Peter Cried, The Christmas Connection, Falling Into Sin, and Cain and Abel introduce children to both familiar and lesser-known stories from the Bible in a fun and engaging way. Whether shared aloud or read independently, these titles are likely to foster an understanding and further exploration of Scripture.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ
Ready, set, find Easter / Zondervan.

PS-K  
E  Rating: 4

Ready, Set, Find Easter is an interactive board book from Zondervan that introduces the story of Easter. Sturdy illustrated tabs flip to six scenes in the book: Jesus riding into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Judas’s betrayal in the garden, the crucifixion, resurrection, and afterward. On each page, a few simple sentences describe the events with an accompanying scriptural reference and enlargements of eight items for young readers to find.

The seek-and-find format encourages preschoolers to study the detailed scenes, which feature sweetly drawn characters in beautifully lit settings.

With its engaging content, fun format, and vibrant pictures, Ready, Set, Find Easter is a wonderful book to put into little hands. The simplicity of the text allows slightly older children to participate in reading to younger siblings.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ

INTERMEDIATE FICTION

Mr. Lemoncello’s great library race / Chris Grabenstein.

LCCN 2015040525  ISBN 9780553536065, hardcover.  
Grades 3-7  
Fic  Rating: 5

Award winning author Chris Grabenstein pens another humorous middle-grade novel combining the elements of an adventure, a mystery, and a race, set in a research/fact-finding environment.

In Mr. Lemoncello’s Great Library Race, Mr. Lemoncello calls on Kyle, his friends, as well as Kyle’s nemesis, Charles Chiltington, to test his new game (Fabulous Fact-Finding Frenzy), a game that involves an old-time bicycle, a bookmobile, and Mr. Lemoncello’s jet. The first team to bring the correct facts about historical figures back to the library wins the grand prize. When some disturbing “facts” begin to circulate about Mr. Lemoncello, it causes Kyle to question everything he knows about Mr. Lemoncello and to work hard to uncover the truth.

Grabenstein is back with another whimsical and clever story about solving puzzles and uncovering facts. The action takes part in Mr. Lemoncello’s Library, as well as his home and Imagination Factory in New York City. Mr. Lemoncello’s Great Library Race celebrates readers, libraries, authors, and librarians. Grabenstein continues to develop characters that readers will enjoy getting to know. His storytelling and settings and delightful sense of humor will engage the most reluctant of readers. A number of books are given the nod in this book, and the author lists them in the back (C. S. Lewis, Wonder, Seuss, and more).

The Lemoncello series is filled with adventure, suspense, humor, and puzzles for the reader to solve. Fans of the earlier books will devour this book, with its hidden bonus puzzle. Readers will be delighted to know Grabenstein has been signed to write another Lemoncello book!

Recommended for school and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ
Leather Shoe Charlie / written by Gyeong-hwa Kim ; illustrated by Anna and Elena Balbusso ; edited by Joy Cowley.

LCCN 2015046913 ISBN 9780802854735, paperback.
Grades 2-5
E Rating: 3

Charlie prides the leather shoes his grandfather made for him. He even hopes to one day become a cobbler too. But something has changed in the English village where he lives, causing many to move away and leaving few people to buy his grandfather’s shoes.

When Charlie and his family also depart and relocate to the city of Manchester, he finds himself not only in unfamiliar surroundings but at a crossroads. He must decide whether to keep or to give up his comfortable leather shoes.

Leather Shoe Charlie, narrated from a child’s point of view, introduces young readers to the Industrial Revolution and globalization. The brown and grey color scheme by illustrators Anna and Elena Balbusso helps the reader to understand Charlie’s feelings about the changes occurring in society and in his family. At the end of the story, Gyeong-hwa Kim provides an easy-to-understand description of these movements and how they affected working and living conditions. Also included are Key Terms and Concepts, a map and pie chart, and a Timeline of Events; all of which serve to enhance comprehension and encourage further exploration of the topics.

Embedded in Leather Shoe Charlie, mainly a story of the changes that mechanized production and the growth of factories ushered in, lies a treasure. Despite the flux and shift that transform Charlie’s world, Gyeong-hwa Kim skillfully establishes a firm foundation for him. The choice he makes regarding his shoes demonstrates that though the world may change, family and love always remain constant and unchanging.

Veronica Jorge, CLJ

INTERMEDIATE NONFICTION

The hiding game / Gwen Strauss ; illustration by Herb Leonhard.

LCCN 2016288762 ISBN 9781455622658, hardcover.
Grades 5-9
944 Rating: 5

Little Aube, daughter of the famous poet, Andre Breton, is forced to move from place to place with her family during the 1940s in Nazi-occupied France. They eventually find shelter in a hidden villa where an American, Varian Fry, with funds from the New York American Rescue Committee, works to arrange passage for them, and others, out of war-torn Europe.

Sundays are Aube’s favorite day because, together with all of the guests in the house, she spends the day drawing, singing, and playing games. "Papa said that ‘by singing, playing and laughing with the greatest joy,’ they would fight against fear." But most of the time, things remain secret-like the radio for listening to the war news and the cow in the yard for giving milk. Aube also has her own secret hiding place: the old armoire in the kitchen, just in case "they" come.

The Hiding Game, a work of creative nonfiction based on a true story, is a moving account of a little-known part of history. Strauss introduces the reader to Varian Fry and her great-uncle Danny Benedite, brave men who were
instrumental in saving the lives of some of the most important scientists, artists, writers, and thinkers of the day such as: Vlady Serge who fled to Mexico and became one of the country’s leading muralist; Max Ernst, a German painter; and artists Marc Chagall and Marcel Duchamp; among others.

Illustrations by Herb Leonhard draw the reader into the lives of the characters, turning a factual account into a personal encounter with time and history. Strauss also provides actual photos of the individuals, a brief history of the account, and links for further study and reading.

*Veronica Jorge, CLJ*
YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Gilt Hollow / Lorie Lagndon.
Grand Rapids, MI: Blink, 2016.
Grades 9 and up
Fic Rating: 5

Six years ago, the courts dumped Ashton into juvie for murdering one of his friends. And while he admitted to the crime, he lied. Released early for good behavior, Ashton is now ready to use his freedom to clear his name—by whatever means necessary. The problem? Everyone believes he’s guilty…. Except Willow.

As his childhood friend, Willow knew Ash better than anyone. She stood by his side when no one else would, and he repaid her by ignoring every letter she wrote him over the past six years.

With Willow’s life finally starting to get back to normal, Ashton’s release adds new complications to high school. He seems determined to ignore her; but even though juvie brought out his dark side, Willow’s still convinced that her best friend could never kill anyone. But will she stand her ground when her family’s safety depends on her condemning Ashton?

Young readers may want to keep the lights on while reading Gilt Hollow. Lorie Langdon’s dark murder mystery keeps readers in suspense as Ashton and Willow balance high school drama with hunting down a killer. Because the story alternates between Willow’s and Ashton’s perspectives, readers will have the opportunity to gather clues, eliminate suspects, and guess who the killer is before the mystery’s revealed.

Gilt Hollow is Lorie’s first solo-written novel, and she does a great job capturing how teens think and react in dramatic and traumatic experiences. However, these characters feel a bit too perfect. While Willow is desperate to fit in, she is utterly loyal to her ex-friend, despite lingering doubt and peers’ opinions. Ashton is attractive and, despite everyone supposedly hating him for his “crime,” he is accepted fairly easily. The killer, when revealed, instantly becomes a dislikable and psychotic character—losing all humanness and desire for reader-character empathy.

This book effectively includes flashbacks to enhance the plot and strengthen minor characters’ motives. And although faith is not a strong factor in this book, the subtle Christian references highlight the moral-ness of the story.

Rebecca Schriner, CLJ

The divide / Jolina Petersheim. (Alliance; 2)
LCCN 2016057081 ISBN 9781496402226, paperback.
Grades 7-10
Fic Rating: 3

The Divide, the sequel to Petersheim’s, The Alliance, continues the story of a Montana Mennonite community fighting to hold on to their beliefs after an EMP—an electromagnetic pulse—disrupts their lives. Leora, a Mennonite teenage girl and Moses, an Englischer outsider, struggle with their differences and their feelings for each other.

In The Divide, Leora stands mired in a quandary: should she marry within her group, or should she change her whole way of life and marry for love, which means choosing Moses, the outsider?

Forced to flee to the mountains for safety and
refuge from roving bands of looters, Leora and the Mennonites strive to remain true to their teachings and traditions while laboring to keep starvation and invaders at bay. One day Leora—already overwhelmed by her responsibilities as the sole care-giver and protector for her family, her emotions for Moses, and making adult decisions—finds herself holding a weapon. Forced to choose between the Mennonite values of sanctity of life and peace, and protecting her own, Leora must decide if it is ever right to kill.

Aptly titled *The Divide*, Petersheim reveals the separation and divisions that occur within each character and within individuals: conflicts with moral values, the chasm between reason and faith, and the great divide between what one believes and the realities of life.

*Veronica Jorge, CLJ*
ADULT FICTION

Wings of the wind / Connilyn Cossette. (Out from Egypt; 3)  
LCCN 2016048832 ISBN 9780764218224, paperback.  
Adult Fic Rating: 5

Alanah craves revenge. Disguised as a male soldier, she risks her life to join the Canaanite army and attack the Hebrews, who murdered her family. Just as she sees her last arrow meet its mark, Alanah is struck down.

Scouring the battlefield for his lost friend, Tobiah stumbles upon a dying Canaanite. As he is about to fulfill his duty and end the soldier’s life, he realizes it’s a Canaanite woman. Tobiah hesitates to save Alanah’s life because he knows that protecting her means obeying the Hebrew Torah and marrying the enemy—even though he is already betrothed. Can he betray his childhood love, his family, and his deceased friend to follow Yahweh’s Law?

Forced into a similar near-impossible situation, Alanah has 30 days to choose: will she embrace the Hebrew lifestyle with the stranger who pledged his life to her or will she run?

Book three in Connilyn Cossette’s Christy Award-nominated Out of Egypt series will run away with the hearts of historic and contemporary women’s fiction fans. While some characters play a part in each book, the stories can be read independently. Compared with the first two books in this series, Wings of the Wind creates a more unexpected love story with greater heartache and greater hope.

Connilyn’s first-person writing style doesn’t merely tell the story; it transports the reader back in time to the book of Joshua and portrays characters as if they are real historical people. Because this book explores an unlikely union between enemies, both protagonists—Alanah and Tobiah—feel trapped in their situations, and each must give up control and forgive the other before moving toward any future. By introducing famous biblical locations and figures, this book creates a tactful avenue to address family issues, slavery, and prostitution in ways that resonate with 21st century life.

Rebecca Schriner, CLJ

A viscount’s proposal : book two in the Regency spies of London series / Melanie Dickerson. (The Regency spies of London; 2)  
ISBN 9781503938649, paperback.  
Adult Fic Rating: 4

A dangerous engagement / Melanie Dickerson. (The Regency spies of London; 3)  
ISBN 9781503938656, paperback.  
Adult Fic Rating: 4

Prolific author Melanie Dickerson pens additional novels in her Regency Spies trilogy.

In A Viscount’s Proposal, instead of settling for a loveless marriage like her parents, Leorah Langdon is determined to marry for love. When a carriage accident forces her to spend the night unchaperoned with Edward, Viscount Withinghall, she is determined to turn down his proposal, despite the damage to her reputation. Edward, on the other hand, has political ambitions and wants to avoid scandal at all costs. Can they work together to save her reputation and his career by
uncovering the villain behind the “accident”?  

In *A Dangerous Engagement*, Felicity Mayson receives an invitation to Lady Blackstone’s country manor, Doverton Hall. She is flattered by the proposal of wealthy Oliver Ratley. She doesn’t realize the political undercurrents among the guests until she meets Government agent Philip McDowell who is undercover. Lady Blackstone and Oliver are the leaders of a group of revolutionaries and Felicity is their pawn. Philip convinces Felicity to maintain his cover. Both are risking their lives to uncover the conspiracy before their government is overthrown.

The plot is typical of a Regency romance, but Dickerson weaves in plot twists and turns. The romance is wholesome, and the faith element is clear but not preachy, making this a good choice for teen and adult readers. *A Dangerous Engagement* has a stronger suspense plot than *A Viscount’s Proposal*. *A Viscount’s Proposal* lacks the tension, mystery, and intrigue found in romantic suspense novels.

Recommended for young adults and adults who are young at heart. Fans of Georgette Heyer will enjoy this series.

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

**Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: A Spy’s Devotion** (Mar/Apr/May/June 2016).

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*Catching the wind / Melanie Dobson.*

LCCN 2016055744 ISBN 9781496417282, paperback.  
Adult  
Fic Rating: *5*

Dietmar and Brigitte, young friends in Germany during WWII, make a daring escape from Nazi soldiers in *Catching the Wind*. Now 77 years later, Dietmar, who changed his name to Daniel Knight following the war, urgently longs to find out what happened to Brigitte. He last saw her when they arrived in England, and a couple took her in for the duration of the war. After multiple investigators over his lifetime fail to find Brigitte, Daniel feels perhaps Quenby Vaughn—a young journalist whose articles reflect her passion to dig out stories and help others—can help in his quest. Quenby and Lucas Hough, Daniel’s very handsome solicitor, team up on an impossibly cold case which just happens to coincide with Quenby’s research for an article about a prominent family in WWII England and their possible involvement with Nazis during the war.

Melanie Dobson’s intriguing plot is filled with tension as modern day Quenby attempts to piece together the puzzle of what happened to Brigitte, and then Dobson shows what is happening to Brigitte during WWII. In addition to the tension of the investigation, and the tension of Brigitte’s life, sparks fly between Quenby and Lucas as they team up for the search. Daniel Knight is a knight in the truest sense of the word, searching for Brigitte and wishing he could have better protected her. Both Brigitte and Quenby undergo transformations throughout the book, and their stories provide wonderful themes for life. “She couldn’t change her past…but it didn’t define who she was today...She had the power to write a new story from this moment forward. Her story....A new story filled with...a heart open to trusting God...A heart willing to forgive.” (p. 374)

*Kristina Wolcott, CLJ*
**Deadly proof / Rachel Dylan. (Atlanta Justice; 1)**

LCCN 2017012338 ISBN 9780764219801, paperback.
Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Rachel Dylan pens a legal thriller in a new contemporary romantic suspense series set in Atlanta.

In *Deadly Proof*, lawyer Kate Sullivan goes after a pharmaceutical company when a whistleblower dies, refusing to put her ethics aside as she fights for justice. Every step she takes to uncover the truth in the corporate cover-up puts her life in more danger. Her opposing counsel is a friend from law school, providing drama and tension in the courtroom battle. Former Army Ranger Landon James works as a private investigator for Kate in tracking down the whistleblower’s allegations.

The more time they spend together on the case, the more their relationship grows. The attraction between Landon and Kate moves very slowly, then quite rapidly. At the same time, the danger grows as they face an enemy who will go to any length to stop the lawsuit, even murder. Will they get justice for those affected by the pharmaceutical company’s dangerous drug before one of them is gravely injured?

Dylan pens a fast-paced legal thriller that grabs the reader early and keeps the reader on the edge of their seat until the final page. Forgiveness is a central theme. Landon lives a life filled with regret—he gave up on God. Kate, having gained her own forgiveness for her past, prays for him and encourages him to forgive himself. While the book is part of the Atlanta Justice series, there is little in the book that reflects its Atlanta or southern setting.


Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

**Oath of honor / Lynette Eason. (Blue Justice; 1)**

LCCN 2017036640 ISBN 9780800727215, paperback.
Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Bestselling author Lynette Eason pens a new romantic suspense series about a law enforcement family.

In *Oath of Honor*, police officer Isabella (“Izzy”) St. John comes from a close-knit, law enforcement family, a family who supports one another when trouble comes. Her partner’s homicide detective brother Ryan assists her as she investigates her partner’s murder. When her investigation leads to a criminal organization and possibly “dirty” cops, maybe even someone from her family, can she trust Ryan? Can she find justice for her partner Kevin when it could mean a family member is guilty?

Lynette Eason kicks off a new series guaranteed to grab the reader’s attention from the first page and keep it engaged until the last page is read. Eason creates a fast-paced story with an ensemble of complex characters, a romance between longtime friends, and enough suspense to make the reader stay up all night trying to figure out the answers. Not only is there a murder of Izzy’s partner (who is Ryan’s brother), but there are ties to gangs, the local mafia, and even a psychotic ex-boyfriend/stalker to complicate the plot.
Having most of her family in law enforcement make the bonds between them even stronger. What happens when the evidence points to one of them? Eason does a masterful job wrapping up loose ends as the clues are revealed and the groundwork is laid for the next book in the series.

Highly recommended for public libraries and romantic suspense fans of DiAnn Mills, Dani Pettrey, Irene Hannon, and Dee Henderson. Look for additional books about the St. John family coming soon!

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

The Columbus code : a novel / Mike Evans.
Adult Fic Rating: 5

A quest to discover an ancestral link to Christopher Columbus leads Secret Agent John Winters on the case of his life in The Columbus Code. As he journeys through Spain to uncover his past, there are those who would prefer the past to stay hidden. One of those people has a dangerous connection to Winters’ daughter, Maria. Maria, a new lawyer, is also in Spain, working on a deal for Catalonia Financial. Terrifying consequences could arise if Winters does not crack the Columbus Code.

Mike Evans’ writing moves quickly, flowing from one scene to the next, as story threads converge. With terse dialogue, a mysterious ancestry, political intrigue and relationship issues, Evans creates a page turner. Though this book is plot-driven, the characters of John and Maria both undergo some heart changes by the end. The overarching themes of good versus evil and the importance of fulfilling one’s destiny weave their way through the characters’ lives and decisions.

Kristina Wolcott, CLJ

Cleansed by death / by Catherine Finger. (Jo Oliver thriller; 1)
Anchored Productions LLC, 2016.
ISBN 9780997991901, paperback.
Adult Fic Rating: 3

Shattered by death / by Catherine Finger. (Jo Oliver thriller; 2)
Adult Fic Rating: 3

Anchored by death : Jo Oliver thriller / Catherine Finger. (Jo Oliver thriller; 3)
ISBN 9781946638304, paperback.
Adult Fic Rating: 3

In Catherine Finger’s Cleansed by Death, Police Chief Jo Oliver is tracking a serial killer, one who has her in his sights. The Mentor Sister Serial Killer always first takes a young girl in anticipation of an adult woman in her life. The child is not fatally harmed but brings the adult to his door, an adult he does unspeakable things to before taking her life.

Jo has desperately wanted to adopt Samantha, but her cruel and abusive husband would not allow it. Now on the brink of divorce from Del, she is determined to make that adoption a reality. But can she save Sam from the kidnapping that is intended to bring about her own death?
In this book Jo herself has mentors who gently lead her to Christ, a decision she makes before the book’s ending. She does have a friend named Nick with whom there is a definite attraction and sexual tension. They do not act on this, and Jo gives as her reason the fact that she is still married.

The second book in the series is *Shattered by Death*. On the brink of a very costly divorce and having once said she would be glad to see her ex-husband and his girlfriend both dead, when Del and his paramour are found brutally murdered, Josie Oliver is the key suspect. One by one, her worst enemies are being killed. Who is behind this, who hates Oliver enough to want to make her a prime target?

Once again, Jo is concerned about Sam and how this will affect the adoption. Her newfound faith is present and active but her doubts abound, too.

*A cup of dust : a novel of the Dust Bowl* by Susie Finkbeiner. *(Pearl Spence Novels, 1)*

ISBN 9780825443886, paperback.
Adult Fic Rating: 5

*A trail of crumbs : a novel of the Great Depression* by Susie Finkbeiner. *(Pearl Spence Novels, 2)*

ISBN 9780825444463, paperback.
Adult Fic Rating: 5

In 1934, dust is a constant for the citizens of Red River, Oklahoma, including ten-year-old Pearl; however, she and her family have it better than most. Her daddy is the town Sheriff, meaning he gets paid every month and they do not have to bear the shame of relying on the government aid trucks. They also enjoy the comforts of a real home, not a sharecropper’s cabin. Life is not perfect. Some days Pearl tires of watching her big sister Beanie whose mind does not work the same as other folks’. Pearl also struggles with the injustices of her world, like a man who hurts his family or That Woman no one ever acknowledges. Life is hard, but Pearl has her family and fairy tales to help her rise above the dust seeping into every corner of life.

Her peaceful existence, however, is threatened when a strange drifter jumps off a passing train. Who is this Eddie with the hard, mean eyes and how does he know so much about Pearl? In *A Cup of Dust*, Pearl stumbles on a mystery that threatens to unravel all she holds dear.

In *A Trail of Crumbs*, Pearl feels life has returned to some semblance of normal, though she “didn’t make believe anymore” (p. 15). However, tragedy rears its ugly head again; this time, she does not
know if her family can find their way back from it in one piece.

Susie Finkbeiner’s “Pearl Spence Novels” are a rich delight to the mind and heart. Experiencing life during the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression through the eyes of Pearl lends a fresh, poignant look at some of the darker times in American history. The author’s skillful use of Pearl’s point of view also serves to dull some of the sharpness of the more weighty, gruesome circumstances of the plot. Readers cannot help but fall in love with Pearl’s courageous heart and innocent, yet perceptive understanding of life and the people around her. In the first book, she learns an important lesson that kindness and meanness both have the power to “break a heart”; the difference, however, is that kindness softens the heart, while meanness “just made the heart want to be hard” (p. 25). These contrasting truths echo throughout this coming of age journey wrought with trials and loss but anchored in the surety of love, belonging, and never-ending hope.

*Justina McBride, CLJ*

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**Dangerous illusions / Irene Hannon.**  
*(Code of honor; 1)*

Grand Rapids, Mi: Revell, 2017.  
LCCN 2017020778 ISBN 9780800727673, paperback.  
Adult  
Fic Rating: 5

Award-winning author Irene Hannon pens a new contemporary suspense series featuring a group of childhood friends.

In *Dangerous Illusions*, art teacher Trish Bailey cares for her ailing mother after the car accident that claimed her father’s life two years earlier. Accountant Matt Parker befriends Trish after the accident by handling the finances of their family’s charitable foundation.

When her mother dies, the police start to suspect Trish might have played a role in her mother’s death. Matt supports her through the investigation, but he has been acting strangely since his own recent car accident. Detective Colin Flynn isn’t sure whether Trish made a mistake in administering her mother’s medication or if her mother’s tragic death was the result of a deliberate act. Together they try to uncover the puzzle pieces behind her mother’s death, only to find a deadly plot in play.

Hannon captures the reader’s attention from the first page and holds it until the final page. She pens believable characters, a well-written plot with plenty of twist and turns, just enough romance to make things interesting, and subtle faith elements in the story. Things are never what they appear to be on the surface.

Hannon weaves the intrigue throughout the fast-paced story, distributing clues a little at a time, making the reader wonder if they missed something earlier in the story. Hannon’s latest novel is a page-turner that will keep the reader up late at night, trying to finish the book and uncover the truth.

Highly recommended for all high school and public libraries. Fans of DiAnn Mills, Dani Pettrey, and Dee Henderson will enjoy this new series.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*
Vanishing point: a Nikki Boyd novel / Lisa Harris. (The Nikki Boyd files)

LCCN 2017029618 ISBN 9780800728489, paperback.
Adult  Fic  Rating: 5

Nikki Boyd’s sister, Sarah, was abducted and killed by the Angel Abductor, but he’s never been caught. Vanishing Point follows the team that takes on the Angel Abductor case as they desperately try to find him before he harms any other girls.

Garrett Addison is new to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation when he first gets the call about an abducted girl fitting the profile of the Angel Abductor’s preferred victims. It doesn’t take long to confirm that the Angel Abductor has indeed struck again. Six girls have become his victims. Immediately, the TBI calls in the FBI for help. When FBI agent Jordan Lambert gets the call to head to Nashville to assist with the case, she is grateful to also be able to squeeze in time with her family that lives nearby. The last thing she expects is to run into Garrett Addison at the crime scene. Can they put their history behind them and work together peacefully?

The Angel Abductor kidnaps blonde-haired teenage girls, takes a polaroid picture, and kills his victims. The police know how he operates, but they can’t seem to catch him. Too many times, they are just one step behind. Nikki joins the team to help solve the case, and things are personal for her. They all want to see justice for the girls’ families. When a mistake leads to deadly consequences, Agent Addison questions his decision to join the task force. Will the team hold together long enough to solve the case? How many girls will be killed before the abductor is finally caught?

Vanishing Point is Lisa Harris’ best thriller yet. The character development and the depth of the plot are enticing. Harris makes this a hard book to put down. The action is continuous and there’s just enough romance to lighten up the plot. This is an excellent Christian mystery.

Dani Seilhamer, CLJ

An uncommon courtship / Kristi Ann Hunter. (Hawthorne House)

LCCN 2016034515 ISBN 9780764218262, paperback.
Adult  Fic  Rating: 5

An inconvenient beauty / Kristi Ann Hunter. (Hawthorne House)

LCCN 2017942758 ISBN 9780764218279, paperback.
Adult  Fic  Rating: 5

Born a second son, Lord Trent Hawthorne enjoys a carefree life and the luxury of choice, not bearing the weighty responsibilities of inheriting a dukedom like his older brother. However, his days of ease and freedom end when a night trapped in ruins with Lady Adelaide Bell sends him to the altar in an effort to salvage both their reputations. His family has a tradition of marrying for love and his plans were to follow suit, but at his own leisurely pace. Now trapped in a marriage of convenience to a woman he hardly knows, what are the chances that Trent and Adelaide will find love in An Uncommon Courtship?

In An Inconvenient Beauty, Griffith Hawthorne, the Duke of Riverton, has finally decided to find a wife, something required of a man in his position
and a responsibility he has put off long enough. Unlike the other members of his family, he is determined to apply rational logic to the task at hand, rather than the chaotic flutterings of the heart. He likes the perfect order of his life and he wants a wife that can join this order with little disturbance. Soon after he selects Miss Frederica St. Claire as his most logical choice of a bride, Griffith finds her cousin Miss Isabella Breckenridge to be an unfortunate obstacle to his perfectly devised plan. Will Griffith’s determined logic and Isabella’s lack of faith keep the two from finding a love that can conquer anything?

In the final two books of the delightful “Hawthorne House” series, Kristi Ann Hunter tells the stories of the two male members of the Hawthorne siblings. It is not often that the latter books in a series prove to be as wonderful as the first, yet the charm of these two books competes with the first two in its series. Like the previous two, these books are full of endearing characters, lively discourse, mystery, and gentle romance. Hunter does an excellent job portraying the pomp and pretense of London society and drawing a sharp contrast to it with her leading lords and ladies who strive to honor God with their lives. The theme of the third book is learning that love is often a choice, while in the fourth book, it is learning to sometimes follow the heart and not just the mind. Overall, these two books will capture the heart of Regency romance lovers.

Justina McBride, CLJ

The memory weaver : a novel / Jane Kirkpatrick.
LCCN 2015014642 ISBN 9780800722326, paperback.
Adult
Fic Rating: 5

At the tender age of 13, Eliza Spalding Warren loses her mother, but the troubles that haunt and shape her life precede her mother’s death, tracing back to the time she was held hostage by the Cayuse Indians. Her memories of that traumatic experience often take her away from the present. They color her relationships with her father, her sisters, and her husband Andrew Warren. They are also the driving force behind her insistent need to control the lives of those closest to her. Though she is grown now, she longs for her mother’s wisdom and gentle presence to help her navigate the ups and downs of marriage and life.

When life events force her to go back to the place of her childhood trauma, Eliza discovers that memories are not always the most reliable accounts of the truth. When Eliza is given her mother’s diary, she further discovers that many of her preconceived notions are wrong. Will facing the past and the words of her mother help Eliza find freedom to truly live in the present, free from the fear and failures of the past?

In The Memory Weaver, Jane Kirkpatrick merges her love of history and the questions it leaves unanswered to bring to life the heart and soul of the pioneer woman. Her gift of storytelling paints vivid imagery that take one back to the untamed lands of yesterday, while her poignant words linger in the heart with lasting lessons of life, love, and truth. Eliza’s story is skillfully woven together with her mother’s through strategically placed diary entries that often show the parallels of the two women’s struggles, while also showing how a child’s perspective of a parent is not always
accurate. The lesson that most stands out in Eliza’s journey is best summed up by the following: “every day is a day that starts a new life, that requires knitting and going back to pick up lost stitches” (p. 262). Ultimately, the past, present, and future are interwoven in the threads of life and sometimes one must go back to move forward, whole and free.

Justina McBride, CLJ

The ladies of Ivy Cottage / Julie Klassen. (Tales from Ivy Hill; 2)

LCCN 2017030031 ISBN 9780764218156, paperback.
Adult Fic Rating: 5

Award-winning author Julie Klassen continues her Regency series set in the English village of Ivy Hill.

In The Ladies of Ivy Cottage, Rachel Ashford is Mercy and Matilda Grove’s guest at the Ivy Cottage. Rachel is a gentlewoman who seeks to make a living as her funds are dwindling. Her friend Jane Bell, the innkeeper of Ivy Hill, and Mercy, manager of the local school for girls, encourage her to start a circulating library with books she inherited from her father, as well as with donations. As she sorts through the villagers’ donations, she uncovers a mystery hidden within one of the books that she tries to solve.

Meanwhile, Mercy fills her days at the school, having given up the thought of marriage. When several men begin taking an interest in the ladies of Ivy Cottage, she assumes Rachel is the attraction, but what if she is wrong? Will the ladies solve the mysteries of the past and find hope for the future?

Klassen is known for her excellent character development in her inspirational Regency novels, which are filled with love and redemption, and family relationships. The faith elements are light-handed. Readers will appreciate the nod to Jane Austen, as well as the depth of the historical details. Discussion questions are also included.

Recommended for public and high school libraries. Her novels should appeal to adults and high school readers alike. Fans of Julie Klassen, Sarah E. Ladd, Carrie Turansky, and other historical fiction fans will be delighted to read this series. Watch for the next book in this series, The Bride of Ivy Green, coming in December 2018.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill (Jan/Feb/Mar 2017).

Merchant of Alyss / Thomas Locke. (Legends of the realm; 2)

Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2016.
LCCN 2015027194 ISBN 9780800723866, paperback.
Adult (YA) Fic Rating: 3

Award-winning author Davis Bunn (writing under the name of Thomas Locke) continues his fantasy series for adults featuring a hero who uses his special abilities in the fight against evil.

In Merchant of Alyss, Hyam returns to the Falmouth Port, thinking he will now enjoy peaceful days with his wife Joelle at his side. But life is bittersweet, for Hyam lost his powers in the most recent battle, and Joelle falls under a sorcerer’s spell. After a shipment of Milantian scrolls arrives, Hyam is haunted by dreams. One of those scrolls promises new powers but comes with a strong warning about a threat. Hyam leaves
on another journey, leaving behind his wife and community to find the answers he seeks, unaware that the merchant of Alyss is looking for him. Will he succeed in his quest to save his community and his wife?

Locke creates a fantasy world where good and evil face off, and unusual creatures fill the landscape along the way. Like most epic fantasies, the story features a reluctant, orphaned hero who faces his inner demons to undertake a dangerous quest. In Hyam’s case, he discovers that he has magical powers he must learn to control and use for the good.

Although Locke excels in plot development and world-building, there is not a lot of evidence of a Christian theme in the book, except in the eternal fight between good and evil. Elves, wizards, sorcerers’ magic, and strange creatures abound, making it more fantasy than Christian allegory.


Carolyn Miller continues her Regency series, set in England.

In *The Captivating Lady Charlotte*, Lady Charlotte Featherington, the beautiful daughter of a marquess, expected to receive a marriage proposal during her Season. She falls in love with a dashing suitor, but her father intends for her to marry Duke William Hartwell, a man who does not captivate her. Being a dutiful daughter, Charlotte will probably marry Hartwell. She has captured his heart, but can he capture hers? His wealth and title will not win her over, but will his patient courtship? Will they find a love match beyond their expectations?

In *The Dishonorable Miss Delancey*, Clara Delancey leaves London after a scandal caused by her unreal expectations of a gentleman’s attentions, her mother’s attempts to force a marriage upon said gentleman, and her brother’s financial affairs. Relocating to Brighton, she makes the acquaintance of an injured naval captain’s sisters. Captain Benjamin Kemsley also befriends Clara and seeks to lift her from the despair that threatens her. A friendship ensues, much to the disdain of Clara’s mother. Can they find a future together without financial and family support?

Miller writes a wholesome Regency series with features that her fans have come to expect: a courtly romance suitable for adults and older teens, with historical detail and excellent characterization. Her characters face real problems in terms of finances, others’ expectations, faith issues, and finding one’s place, permitting the reader to more easily identify with them. Appearances of characters from earlier
books are a welcome surprise for Miller fans. The faith element in these books is light but evident.

Recommended for high school and public libraries. Fans of Julie Klassen, Jane Austen, and Regency romances will enjoy this series. The author’s next series comes out in spring 2018.

Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com

Earlier Series Titles Reviewed by CLJ: The Elusive Miss Ellison (Oct/Nov/Dec 2017)

Beyond the silence / Tracie Peterson, Kimberley Woodhouse.

LCCN 2015952150 ISBN 9780764214103, paperback.
Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Twenty-one-year-old Lillian Porter is ready to break free of the prison her grandfather has constructed for her behind the safe walls of his wealthy home. For years, she has allowed it, hoping he would break free from his grief over the death of his wife and daughter, but the time has come for her to make her life count and follow her mother’s dreams of heading out west. Her chance to do both comes when she takes a position in Angels Camp, California as a nanny to a young boy who has not spoken since his mother’s death.

Almost as soon as she steps off the stagecoach, she hears dark accusations about her new employer and is warned to take the first stage back to the safety of home. However, Woodward Colton, the sincere and conscientious man employing her, does not measure up to the ugly rumors attached to his name, nor does his account of what happened to his wife. She instantly loses her heart to her young charge and settles into her new life, but danger is lurking and more

accusations are hurled. Will the truth come to light before it is too late to save herself and those she has come to love?

In Beyond the Silence, Tracie Peterson and Kimberley Woodhouse weave an engaging tale of suspense, healing, and love. The main characters quickly pull readers in: Lillian with her desire for purpose and meaning in life, Woody with his broken heart, and little Jimmy with his silent cries. Told in the alternating voices of the main characters as well as the antagonist, this story goes beyond a typical romance novel and paints a picture of the contrasting outcomes of family tragedy and grief. One is seen through Lillian’s grandfather whose grief ultimately drives away the only family he has, another through the bitterness and evil acts of the antagonist. Still another, and the one desired, is seen through Woody who allows God’s healing and forgiveness to save him, opening the door to another chance at love.

Justina McBride, CLJ

Imperfect justice / Cara C. Putman. (Hidden justice; 2)

LCCN 2017029606 ISBN 9780718083489, paperback.
Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Award-winning author Cara Putman pens another contemporary legal thriller featuring strong women.

In Imperfect Justice, attorney Emilie Wesley’s client Kaylene Adams is accused of killing one daughter and seriously wounding another. Emilie doesn’t believe it, because Kaylene was about to leave an abusive relationship to protect her
daughters. Kaylene’s brother Reid Billings discovers a letter from Kaylene, pleading for his help in protecting her girls from their abusive father, telling him to consult Emilie for her assistance. Emilie and Reid work together to track down the truth about Kaylene’s husband and protect her surviving daughter.

Domestic violence is a central theme in this novel. Only two people believe that Kaylene didn’t do it—her attorney and her brother. The police killed Kaylene in the process of trying to arrest her, thinking she had killed her first daughter and wounded her second one. Who was the real killer, and why didn’t others see what was really going on? Legal proceedings and custody battles ensue for Reid and Emilie as they try to uncover the truth and protect Kaylene youngest daughter.

Putman is well-acquainted with the legal scene—she holds a law degree and teaches law. Author of legal thrillers, historical romances, and romantic suspense, Putman excels at the development of a twisting plot and sensitivity for an important topic: domestic violence and custody battles. Putman knows the ins and outs of the law, and creates a believable scenario in her stories. Faith elements are clearly present as is a clean romance.

Recommended for public libraries and fans of contemporary suspense novels.

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

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**When mercy rains** : a novel / Kim Vogel Sawyer. (The Zimmerman Restoration trilogy; 1)


LCCN 2014013305 ISBN 9780307731319, paperback.

Fic Rating: 5

**When grace sings** : a novel / Kim Vogel Sawyer. (The Zimmerman Restoration trilogy; 2)


LCCN 2015295704 ISBN 9780307731333, paperback.

Fic Rating: 5

**When love returns** : a novel / Kim Vogel Sawyer. (The Zimmerman Restoration trilogy; 3)


LCCN 2015010453 ISBN 9780307731357, paperback.

Fic Rating: 5

The Zimmerman Restoration Trilogy tells the stories of a woman living with a secret and two young girls that have been denied the truth.

In *When Mercy Rains*, Suzanne Zimmerman has stayed away from her family for 20 years. Since Suzanne is a nurse, her brother is asking for her assistance with their mother due to an accident. Nobody knew she was pregnant when her mother sent her away at 17, not even her boyfriend at the time, Paul. Suzanne is conflicted on returning home with her daughter, Alexa, who doesn’t even know the story of her birth. What will happen when the truth comes out about the daughter nobody knows about, the daughter she was supposed to give away?

In *When Grace Sings*, Alexa Zimmerman has decided to stay in Kansas with her grandmother to open a bed and breakfast. She and her family have learned the story of her birth, but she still wonders if she’ll ever be fully accepted in the Old Order community. Alexa’s cousin, Anna-Grace, is getting married and wants to stay closer to her future husband and to get used to the community.
Alexa agrees to have her stay at the bed and breakfast. She knows that Anna-Grace will be a huge help to the business. However, she also feels fear and guilt whenever Anna-Grace is around. She’s afraid that she will be pushed aside because everybody knows her mother’s secret—and feels guilty because Anna-Grace is the only one that doesn’t know.

In *When Love Returns*, Suzanne has decided to move back to Kansas even though the decision was not an easy one to make. She can’t help that she still has feelings for Paul after all these years. She also senses that he still has feelings for her. They have accepted their past and wonder if they could have a future together. Meanwhile, Suzanne has to accept that Alexa is a grown woman who needs to seek out a truth of her own. This hurts Suzanne because she’s afraid what Alexa might find and that the truth could take her away from her.

Kim Vogel Sawyer has introduced a very sensitive subject for an Old Order Mennonite family. There are so many emotions that this family has to experience. Suzanne’s mother realizes that what she did was wrong, but felt it was her only option at the time. She now has to live with the guilt of missing out on her daughter’s and granddaughter’s life. Suzanne has been hiding a secret for 20 years and afraid that the truth could hurt those she loved the most, including her daughter, Alexa. This family has had to put their trust and faith in God that he will help restore their family’s relationships and place forgiveness in their hearts. When they place it in the Lord’s hands, they realize that their faith and family is strong and they will be able to mend relationships over time.

Recommended for public and school libraries.

*Trina Chase, CLJ*

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**If I live / Terri Blackstock. (If I run; 3)**

LCCN 2017034904 ISBN 9780310332541, paperback.

*Adult Fic Rating: 5*

Casey Cox has been living on the run since she was falsely accused of her good friend’s death. Through her own investigation, Casey has found evidence that she believes implicates many people at the Shreveport Police Department. The *If I Run* series tells Casey’s story. *If I Live* is the thrilling conclusion to this riveting trilogy.

Forced to reestablish her life in a new town yet again, Casey takes on a new name and finds a new job. Is it possible for her to live under the radar until she has enough evidence against the dirty detectives who wish her dead? Dylan Roberts, the private investigator hired by the Shreveport Police Department, believes in Casey’s innocence—this belief and his budding love for her are what pushes him to his limits to prove Casey’s innocence and to catch the real murderers. When the two of them finally believe they have the best evidence possible, they make an action plan to bring down the dirty cops. From the start, the plan is riddled with complications and failures. Is it possible for Dylan to prove Casey’s innocence? More importantly, will they both live through the ordeal?

Terri Blackstock is a skilled suspense author. *If I Live* is by far the best installment in the *If I Run* series. Through a maze of suspenseful events, the story finally hits its finale in this novel. Readers will be on the edge of their seats as they tear through the pages of this story to find out the ending. The characters, plot, and action make this novel a must-read mystery.

*Dani Seilhamer, CLJ*
**ADULT NONFICTION**

**Let There Be Science: Why God Loves Science and Science Needs God / by Tom McLeish and David Hutchings.**

ISBN 9780745968636, paperback.
Adult (YA)
200 Rating: 4

In *Let There Be Science: Why God Loves Science and Science Needs God*, physics teacher David Hutchings and physics professor Tom McLeish lay out a discussion of the relatedness—and even inseparable relationship—between God and science. The authors propose that “science flows naturally from the Christian worldview, and that it always has” (p. 10). In order to support this claim, Hutchings and McLeish set forth an initial explanation of science as a way of thinking, rather than a specific body of knowledge or modern technological advances. Each chapter then tackles a broader, typically theologically-related topic by presenting historical narratives of scientific discoveries, then analyzing or comparing these narratives within an openly Christian framework.

Hutchings and McLeish do a fabulous job of creating an understandable and relatable text. The authors use biblical texts and narratives from the history of scientific discovery as their main tools. In so doing, the authors constantly remind the reader that science is something that is innately human. Although “science” sometimes seems unapproachable or a field only for a certain group of people, Hutchings and McLeish superbly explain each topic, as well as show the humanness or relatability of the process of scientific discovery and the individuals involved. Each chapter then concludes with a summary section that helps to clarify connections or implications within individual chapters and chapters up to that point.

By the end of the book, the reader has heard the stories of numerous scientists, from ancient to modern, and the biblical analysis that best explains the continued progression of science no matter the circumstance. From biblical invitation to study the universe, to the knowableness of nature, to the order found in chaos, to perseverance in the face of hardship, Hutchings and McLeish present a thought-provoking argument for the unavoidable relatedness of God and science.

*Elisabeth A. Orr, CLJ*

**Teach us to pray / Gordon T. Smith.**

LCCN 2018011731 ISBN 9780830845217, paperback.
Adult
248.32 Rating: *5

In *Teach Us to Pray*, Gordon T. Smith elaborates on an aspect of prayer overlooked by a majority of the Christian body. Smith believes the phrase “Thy Kingdom come” is not merely a statement of God’s glorious kingdom establishing itself within His creation, making believers nothing but observers, but an acknowledgement that believers are participants in that coming—and that this kingdom view emerges in the life of a believer through the constant practice of prayer.

Smith believes that many times Christians miss the subtle workings of the living God, giving in to hopeless despair by focusing on all that’s wrong with the world and people around them, and by giving in to a need to be heroes or little messiahs. Only through regular, consistent, persistent, and intentional prayer does the believer become aware of God’s transforming power and grace.
When believers shift their focus and open their spiritual eyes, the world becomes viewed through the eyes of the kingdom.

Explaining the three movements in prayer—Thanks, Confession, and Discernment—Smith reveals, not an instructional manual on how to pray, but a change in perspective. He explains how allowing the Spirit freedom to lead the prayer allows for a deep fellowship with God and an opening to knowing the joy of God.

Smith’s minimal use of theological language allows readers to understand quickly the purpose behind Spirit-led prayer. Through every change or new life situation readers will be able to apply the spiritual practices laid out in logical, easy-to-follow sequence. Understanding that intentional prayer is a practice, they will always be learning, and prayer will always be an essential element in their growing relationship with God.

*Cicely K. Ben, CLJ*
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