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ENGL 112B

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Annotated Bibliography Rationale

Young adult literature tends to be misunderstood, because it is often perceived as simple teenage stories about romance that lack depth and character development. In truth, young adult literature, specifically fantasy, allows readers a chance to escape into a new world that parallels their own. It is their chance to be a character on a quest for understanding the complexities of life. The novels that I chose to include within my annotated bibliography fall under “Chapter 7: Fantasy, Science Fiction, Utopias, and Dystopias” in *Literature for Today’s Young Adults* and have a significant focus on fantasy novels with relevant topics of courage, identity, and bravery. Fantasy novels are structured as a metaphor for the humanity filled with realism, fables, heroics, and social and religious commentary. I chose this genre because often teenagers need a break from the realness and rawness of life.

Fantasy is often a reflection of the world we know but is filled with dual images and polarities of life. It is way for readers to view the world not as it is, but as it could be. Fantasy launches young adults into a world of quests and adventures where any one can become a hero. It is a safe space where insecurities become commonalities, readers become stronger, and adventure is only the turn of a page away. Fantasy novels that encompass magical realism allows readers to escape into new worlds, but also maintain a connection between reality and magical elements. When we are in a relaxed state, such as reading a novel, we are more able to absorb the messages of resiliency and safety from the realness of our current struggles. Fantasy is

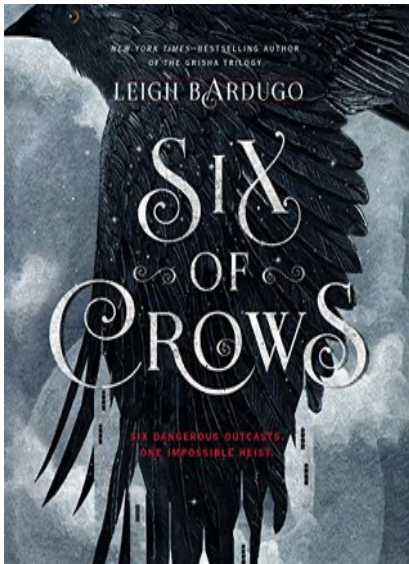
far enough away from reality that it is whimsical, but close enough to reality that it is relatable. It is a form of escapism, a relaxed state, and the fictional journey subtly teaches morals, compassion, empathy, and friendship. Characters in fantasy novels often rely on magic to guide them. However, when it comes to heroism and mundane situations, they must rely on one another and trust that they will be okay. As readers follow along with fantasy novels such as *The Belles*, *The Cruel Prince* and *Six of Crows* they are exposed to self-discovery journeys and questions.

Chapters six through eight from *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story* feature the main subgenres or issues that I chose to focus on: Books about Identity, Discrimination, and Struggles with Decisions, Courage and Survival, and Myths, Fantasy, Allegories, and Parables. I have selected novels that prominently fit into “Chapter Seven: Courage and Survival” because as teenagers venture out into the world, they must be brave, curious, and strong to assert their identity and make choices during challenging times. These novels present themes of protagonists embarking on a quest of self-identity and surviving their unique circumstances by overcoming obstacles and challenges. Common hero’s struggle to determine their own unique identity, find the courage to speak out against the status-quo, and learn the importance of creating and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. As Lloyd Alexander puts it in *Literature for Today’s Young Adult*, chapter seven, ““The fantasy hero is not only a doer of deeds, but he also operates within a framework of morality. His compassion is as great as his courage-greater, in fact. We might consider that his humane qualities, more than any other, are really what the hero is all about. I wonder if this reminds us of the best parts of ourselves?”” (Donelson and Nilsen’s, 2). In the real-world, heroes arise from having a sense of

morality and grayness. Any child, teenager, and adult can be a hero—they just need to have courage.

Annotated Bibliography: Courage in Fantasy Novels

Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo



Read in 2022

Bardugo, Leigh. *Six of Crows*. Indigo, 2016

ISBN-13: 978-1627795098

Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo is an action-packed, dark fantasy that follows six uniquely skilled characters with alternating narrative chapters. The novel is in Ketterdam—a city of violence and opportunity. The story focuses on the main character Kaz Brekker, who is a notorious thief and has a reputation as a brutal street lord. Kaz is approached by a dangerous but profitable opportunity and must break into the

impenetrable Ice Court and retrieve the package, Yuk-Bayur. The man with the formula for the highly addictive drug *Jurda parem* amplifies a Grisha's (those born with magical abilities) powers to extreme ends. It is the ultimate heist of these teenagers' lives—but can they pull it off? *Six of Crows* is the first novel within the duology set in the same world as the *Shadow and Bone* Trilogy.

The novel deals with real-life experiences: making life choices, facing violence or abuse, peer relationships, death and loss, and identity issues – gender, race, ethnicity, assimilation, discrimination, bullying, decision-making, courage, and survival. This book is valuable because of the character dynamics, realism, and prioritization of friendship. The characters are rich and full of life because they process their trauma, insecurities, and prejudice and apply it to their morals, empathy, and compassion. The novel presents the main characters with a diverse

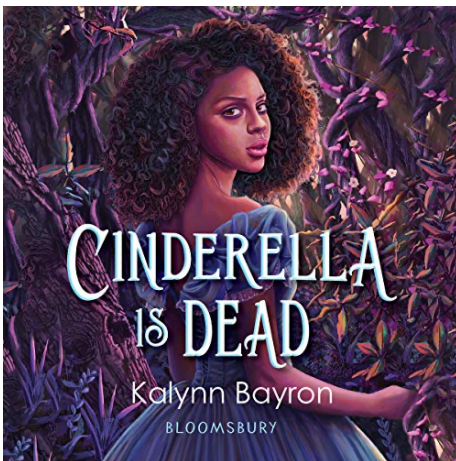
representation as they identify within communities of color and the LGBTQ+ community. They also struggle with PTSD, addictions, sex trafficking, slavery, and physical disabilities. The novel best displays Exeter Qualities two (exciting plots that include secrecy, surprise, etc.), three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers), and four (characters who go beyond typical experiences). The characters are lively, charismatic, and go beyond the typical YA experience. The story may be long, but it has become a new standard for YA literature.

Cinderella is Dead by Kalynn Bayron

Read in 2022

Bayron, Kalynn. *Cinderella is Dead*. Bloomsbury YA. 2020

ISBN13:9781338803273



Cinderella was a beautiful young girl who wished for a Fairy Godmother to appear and whisk her away to a ball where she would fall in love with Prince Charming, or so the story goes. Two hundred years later, Sophia is preparing to attend the same ball as Cinderella did. It is a tradition for the girls of Lille to study the story of Cinderella and hope that if they are as good and pure as Cinderella once was, they too will be chosen by a fairy

godmother and suitable husband. Except everyone is afraid of who will choose them as their wife and what their life will be like after the ball. Unlike Cinderella, Sophia does not want to marry a Prince, she wants to marry a Princess. Against all odds, Sophia escapes the ball and meets Constance, the last living relative of Cinderella. Together they collaborate with an unlikely friend or foe to unearth the mystery of Cinderella and take the whole kingdom down. Is this what

Cinderella meant when she said she wanted every girl to have her happily ever after? (Long, Book Talk)

Cinderella is Dead is a dark dystopic LGBTQ+ coming of age fantasy novel that reimagines the classic tale of Cinderella. This novel is valuable as teens may feel ostracized because they are different or have different desires for love or futuristic ambitions. They should learn that just because their dreams and desires are different from their peers, it does not make them any less worthy. This novel shows how one young woman overcomes rejection and is resilient. Sophia's journey is less about uncovering the mystery of Cinderella's true story and more about figuring out how to bring about change in a community that relies on oppression to maintain power. She is brave when she tells Erin she loves her, escapes the kingdom, befriends an enemy, and fights the patriarchy. Yet she is often stubborn and unwilling to compromise. The novel best exemplifies Exeter Qualities two (exciting plots that include secrecy, surprise, and tension), three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers), six (themes that inform truthfully about the wider world), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

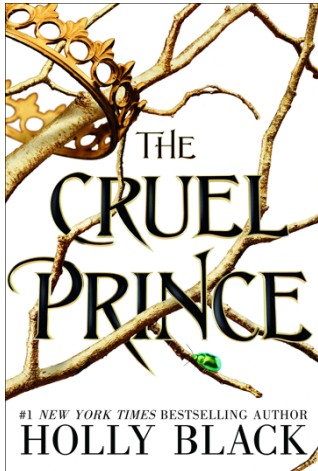
***The Cruel Prince (The Folk of the Air)* by Holly Black**

Read in 2022

Black, Holly. *The Cruel Prince*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018.

ISBN-13: 978-1471407277

Jude Duarte is a mortal who lives among the Fey in the land of Faeries, on a quest to prove that she is worthy of power and love. After witnessing her parents' murder as a child, she and her sisters are taken to Elfame and raised by her parents' murderer—The General of Faeri. The Fey in Faerie despise Mortals, but Jude is brave, eager, and desperate to prove herself as a valuable member of the community. Faerie is the only home she knows, and she cannot envision



herself living outside of it without her sisters. Prince Cardan, the youngest Prince of Faerie, has it out for her but she might just have to swallow her pride and work with him if she wants to make things right. When Jude's arrogance and eagerness lead her to put her trust in the wrong person, she must accept the help she is offered by swallowing her pride. She uses her own political and military strengths in an alliance with an unlikely foe that saves her family, the Courts of Faerie, and proves a true warrior. It is the first book within the *Folk of the Air* series.

The Cruel Prince is a highly acclaimed Mabinogiun inspired novel for its vivid imagery, worldbuilding inspired by British-Celtic fables, complex characters, and a steady fast pace first-person narrative from Jude's perspective. Every page is filled with magic, political schemes, power, action, anger, heartache, love and loss, betrayal, and grief as Jude navigates through her quest for identity. There are themes of dysfunctional family dynamics, abusive families, generational trauma, LGBTQ+ identity, identity, and mental health. The novel explores how cruelty and courage shape a person. Specifically, it shapes how one person's cruelty teaches another person to be cruel as well. It is a powerful example of the cycle of abuse and bullying. While the novel explores these themes throughout the text, the language is never didactic. Jude is a strong female character and heroic archetype because of the grayness of her character. Her stubbornness and eagerness cause her to put her trust in the wrong person, but her determination, resiliency, and strong conscience guide her towards doing what she knows is right. The novel best fits the Exeter Qualities two (exciting plots that include secrecy, surprise, and tension), three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers), six (themes that inform truthfully

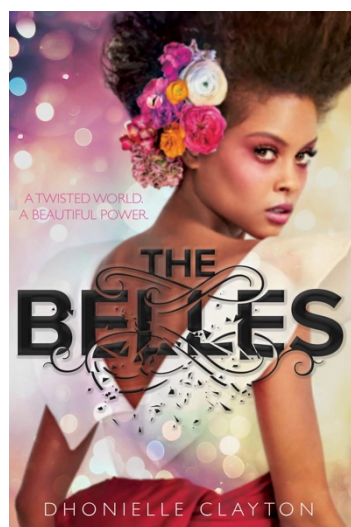
about the wider world), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

The Belles by Dhonielle Clayton

Read in 2022

Clayton, Dhonielle. *The Belles*. Disney-Hyperion, 2018

ISBN-13: 978-1484728499



Camille Beauregard, a Belle, has the power to restore beauty to Orléans—a place where beauty standards change daily. The people of New Orleans are born gray and ugly, and the Belle's have the power to change a person's shape, complexion, and mannerisms. When Camille becomes the kingdom's favorite Belle, she becomes in charge of the royal family's beauty and influence. However, darkness seeps into the narrative, as the Princess' insatiable quest to be the most beautiful and powerful unravels dark secrets and actions. The

Princess will do whatever it takes to get what she wants—even if that means endangering everyone in the kingdom. It is up to Camille to stop her. *The Belles* is the first book within the trilogy.

The Belles is a dark fantasy narrative told from the first-person perspective of Camille Beauregard that explores themes of beauty, perfection, and individuality. It is a valuable message about how true beauty comes from within and perfection is impossible. Camille is a strong young headstrong female protagonist who is constantly seeking the truth. She struggles with being perceived as imperfect, arrogant, and making decisions for herself. To be the favorite and well-loved in this society—a woman must be perfect. It is exhausting and life draining—and the repercussions of failure are unthinkable. Yet, Camille, a girl who can change the entire

physical look of a person, knows that true beauty is from within a person's mannerisms and actions. It truly is a vivid imagined world filled with sensory, intrigue and mystery. The novel poses deeper questions about the commodification of women's bodies, gender equality, racial identity, and vanity. What is the price of beauty? Why do we value it, and would you pay the price? *The Belles* demonstrates Exeter Qualities three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers), five (lively, varied, and imaginative language), six (themes that inform truthfully about the wider), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

Mystic by Jason Denzel

Read in 2015

Denzel, Jason. *Mystic*. New York, Tor Books, 2015.

ISBN 13: 978-0765381972



For hundreds of years, high-born nobles have competed for the chance to learn of the Mystic, the energy that lives at the heart of the universe. The Mystics are the most privileged sects of society and keep their power within their caste. That is until a new High Mystic chooses Pomella AnDone, a commoner teenager as a candidate. Since Commoners are never chosen to become apprentices, Pomella bravely chooses to accept the summons and journey to Kelt Apar and break both law and tradition to prove her worthiness in a series of three trials. In an act of bravery, “Pomella must blindly navigate this deadly world of intolerance and betrayal, unaware that ruthless conspirators intend to make her suffer for having the audacity to seek to unravel the secrets of the Mystic” (Denzel). *Mystic* is the first novel within the *The Mystic Trilogy*.

Mystic is an Epic high fantasy coming of age story filled with adventures, wonders, and magic. Pomella is a strong and courageous teenage character whose singing is her greatest strength and connection to the Myst. The realism within the novel makes the magic feel as natural as if it was a part of the Earth and environment, but only select people have the ability to “unveil” and manipulate it. Despite the beauty of the Myst, there is a classist system that restricts the knowledge and training of the Myst to the upper class. Pomella fights for her chance to serve as a High Mystic and in doing so tears down social barriers to achieve her own goals. If she loses her apprenticeship or turns down the invitation she will lose her name, her family, and friends. Pomella will be demoted to the caste of people who are the lowest of lows, forced to shave her head for all to know she is not welcome in society. This novel is valuable because teens may not feel courageous enough to assert their opinions or fight for their voices to be heard. Teens may feel weak in the face of adversity and rely on their close-knit relationships to their family to chase their dreams. Pomella’s courage stems from working hard to know herself instead of relying on others’ expectations. This novel best exemplifies Exeter Qualities three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers), four (characters who go beyond typical experiences), five (lively, varied, and imaginative language), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

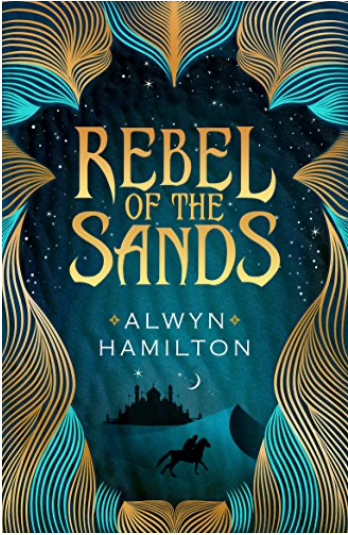
***Rebel of the Sands* by Alwyn Hamilton**

Read in 2016

Hamilton, Alwyn. *Rebel of the Sands*. Viking. 2016.

ISBN: 978-0147517975

Amani Al’Hiza is a barely tolerated female orphan in a culture that considered women worthless. She is also a sassy desert sharpshooter who is desperate to get out of the Last Country before she is wed or killed. In Miraji, Dijin was once bartered for wishes and heroes rode immortal steeds of wind and sand. The mythical beasts still roam the outskirts and wilderness of



the land, but rumor has it that somewhere, Djinn still perform their magic. Now the mortals rule Miraji and the oppressed citizens of Dustwalk forge weapons for the Sultan while trading whispers about the Rebel Prince. Desperate to get out of the Last Country, Amani bravely dresses as a boy and enters a shooting contest. That is until the rakish foreign scoundrel Jin arrives at the shooting contest and he becomes the perfect escape route. She also wasn't expecting the barn to burn down, the factory to blow up and an army to arrive. Nor did she think her escape would come on a mythical

horse and fall for a scoundrel. Will she ever be free?

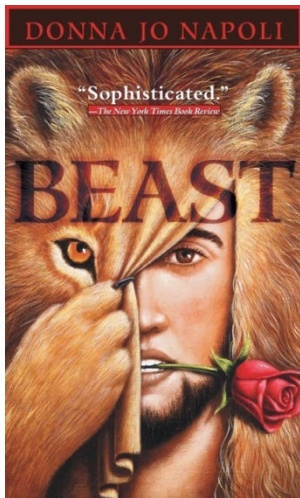
Rebel of the Sands is a coming of age of story that follows Amani on a quest to gain freedom and her own identity free from stereotypes. The novel mashes a Middle Eastern setting and Arabian Mythology with a steampunk Old West setting. The language, setting, and characters allow for an immersive and imaginative experience. Amani is a powerful heroine whose voice is witty, cynical, and fierce even in the face of oppression, hatred, and adversity. She is vulnerable in her narration and idealistic for the future as she continually chooses to be brave. Amani is willing to face the outcome of her decisions and actions, and takes on the obstacles of her quest with courage. The secondary character Jin is snarky and sarcastic, providing Amani with the typical young adult relationship and unlikely companionship she has been longing for. Their various foes range from cartoonish to terrifying to dark and tragic. This is a magical story of bravery and survival against the challenges of discrimination. This novel best exemplifies Exeter Qualities three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers), four (characters who go beyond typical experiences), five (lively, varied, and imaginative language), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

***Beast* by Donna Jo Napoli**

Read in 2022

Napoli, Donna Jo. *Beast*. New York, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2000.

SBN 13: 978-0689870057



Orasmyn is the prince of Persia and unlike the Beast from most faerie tales, his religion fills his heart and mind, as he strives to be like his father.

When he allows his pride and arrogance to act as a barrier to his judgment, he sacrifices an imperfect animal for the Feast of Sacrifices and is cursed by a djinn and transformed into a lion or a beast. Only a woman who truly loves him can free him from his beastly appearance. But who could ever learn to love something so monstrous?

Beast is an animal fantasy novel that harrows the journey of Orasmyn in a retelling of the Charles Lamb version of *Beauty and the Beast*, which was itself set in Persia. This story is not an average young adult love story, it's about the transformation of Orasmyn and the struggles he faces while trapped in a beast's body, fighting his instincts, and frequently conflicted with what he had done or what he might do. This novel is valuable because like Orasmyn, teens may struggle with making difficult life decisions out of fear. They also may struggle with accepting themselves as they are, (flaws and all), their culture or religion, and their sexuality. Orasmyn reflects an experience of devout Muslim faith and devotion. He also struggles with his sexuality, and he is horrified that explicit thoughts could cross his mind. Orasmyn also connects himself to canonical literary texts of heroes' journeys like Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid* to tell his story to Belle. Additionally, teens are also learning how to get a better understanding of themselves instead of others' perceived judgements or assumptions. Their compassion for another is heartwarming and it models the greyness of good and evil. The novel presents healthy parental relationships and

getting to know a person for their spirit as opposed to their appearance to be the heart of compassion. Additionally, loneliness is a common demon and issue that teenagers face today. It is a part of depression and increases the risks of self-esteem issues, uncontrollable anxiety, and difficult to form connections. This novel best exemplifies Exeter Qualities four, (characters who go beyond typical experiences), five (lively, varied, and imaginative language), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

To Carve a Fae Heart by Tessonja Odette

I have not read this novel, Summary is adapted from Goodreads
Odette, Tessonja. *To Carve a Fae Heart*. Crystal Moon Press. 2022
ISBN: 978-1955960113



The peace between humans and Faes is kept only because of a fragile treaty. According to this ridiculous treaty the Reaping of two human girls must take place every one-hundred years by going over the wall to marry two Faes. This year for an unknown act of treason, two girls who were sent are executed. Evelyn and her older sister, Amelie, are forced to go in their place. In the Autumn court, they meet their husbands-to-be: stern King Aspen and his dashing younger brother, Prince Cobalt. Where Amelie tries to make the best of her situation and enjoys the lavish food and gorgeous dresses, Evie is suspicious of everyone, especially the King whom she'd had the displeasure to meet only once before. If they fail to marry, an ancient war will return bringing devastation not seen in a thousand years. Can Evie sacrifice herself for the good of her people or will her dangerous desire to carve the King's heart out with iron blade kill her first? *To Carve a Fae Heart* is the first novel in *The Fair Isle Trilogy*.
(*To Carve a Fae Heart*, Goodreads)

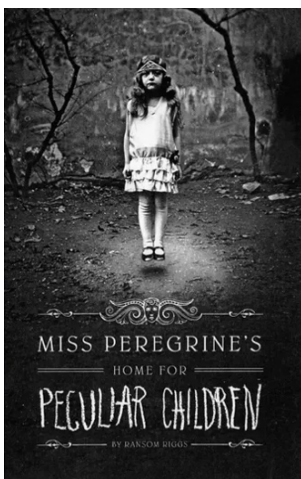
To Carve a Fae Heart is a dark fantasy romance and coming-of-age story that parodies and utilizes fairy tale tropes. It expresses courage, the nature of friendship, identity, and the grayness of good versus evil. Evie Fairfield is a strong female character who is pragmatic, intelligent, and scientific but her stubbornness leads to very rigid way of thinking. Amelie experiences common teenage struggles, especially isolation and the challenge to "fit in." Evie must navigate the difficult emotions of defending her family, falling for her enemy, and struggling to guess who a friend is versus a foe. While Amelie must work through the idea that she is not perfect and like every other human being, has flaws. This novel exemplifies the Exeter Qualities two (exciting plots that include secrecy, surprise, etc.) and three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers).

***Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Riggs**

Read in 2022

Riggs, Ransom. *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, Quirk Books, 2011.

ISBN-13: 978-159474603



After a horrifying family tragedy surrounding the mysterious death of his Grandpa Abe, Jacob sets out to Wales with his bird obsessed father to uncover the truth about his grandfather and find out who he, Jake Portman really is. Once he reaches the island and explores the children's home, he discovers that the children were not just exaggerated stories but are still very alive. Among them is Emma, whose peculiarity is the ability to manipulate fire in her hands and is ready to spark a change. Among the other peculiar children

is Olive who is weightless, Bronwyn who can lift objects ten times her size, Enoch who can speak to and raise the dead, Fiona who can manipulate nature, and an invisible boy named

Millard. The children live within a time loop forever re-living the same day. Peculiar children are hunted by eyeless monsters called wights and large nightmarish creatures called hollows. What would you do if everyone you trusted betrayed you? What would you do to save a friend? *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* is the first novel within a hexalogy of stories.

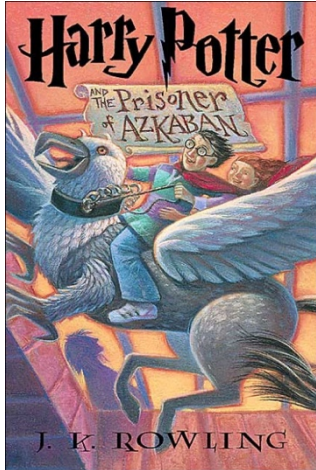
Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children is a dark contemporary fantasy told from the first-person narrative of Jacob Portman with a mix of found vernacular photographs. The photographs are chilling and provide haunting visuals for the imaginative reader. The novel explores themes of bravery and courage, death and loss, and real-life experiences. At the start of the novel, Jacob is a seeker, a troubled friend-less teenager. He also grapples with the issues stemming from generational trauma from World War Two and PTSD following the death of his grandfather. The novel highlights how teenagers may not be able to communicate with loved ones who have experienced discrimination during war times, were persecuted in horrific events like the Holocaust, or are veterans. Jake struggles to separate reality from truth once he enters the island and the loop that protects the children's home. He constantly doubts and compares himself to his grandfather and the other peculiar children. He allows fear, anxiety, and others to tell him how to live his life. In the face of advisory and patronization, Jacob must find his voice and be brave. Additionally, Emma is the novel's main female protagonist, a strong female character who is also brave and courageous in the face of adversity. This novel is valuable because teens may struggle with coming to terms with identity and questioning the status-quo. *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* demonstrates Exeter Qualities five (lively, varied, and imaginative language), six (themes that inform truthfully about the wider world), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth). It is a vivid and imagined world filled with sensory, intrigue and mystery.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J.K. Rowling

Read in 2014/2022

Rowling, JK. *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban*. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999.

ISBN 13: 978-140855658



In the Muggle world Harry Potter is an average thirteen-year-old kid who is excluded and outcasted by his family and neighbors but at school he is a star athlete on the Quidditch team, an average student, and famous for defeating the darkest wizard. He is excited to return for his third year at school, but before he even arrives at the train station for the new semester, he learns that yet again he is in for a chaotic school year. Azkaban the dark and dreaded prison that has housed infamous prisoner and convicted murder

Sirius Black for twelve years —has escaped and is after Harry. Now the dark creatures Dementors, the guardians of Azkaban, guard the halls of Hogwarts and streets of the Wizarding world, preying on the fear of the innocent. No one is safe. The Dementors who are supposed to keep the children safe, seem to make Harry faint from fear when they come near. To make matters even worse there might be a traitor in their midst. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* is the third novel in the series *Harry Potter*.

Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban is a canonical high fantasy text that tells the story of a young hero's quest to overcome his fear. In the *Prisoner of Azkaban*, friendship is a common theme that grants Harry power and presents a framework of courage, trust, mercy, and kindness. With the guidance of his mentor Albus Dumbledore, Professor Remus Lupin's classes, his best friends (loyal Ron and intelligent Hermione)—Harry learns how to be brave, courageous, and self-reliant. Like many teenagers, Harry fears the Dementors because of how they make him feel weak and afraid. When Harry acts strong and secure in his own actions, he

can overcome his demons, his struggles, and conjure a Patronus. The novel uses descriptions and breathless language to communicate Harry's conflicted emotions. His feelings are impacted by his surrounding situations and his textual speech matches his mindset. Additionally, the novel grapples with themes of death and loss, as Harry has lost his family and possible healthy relationships with adults to the murderous Lord Voldemort. This novel is valuable because teenagers believe that their heroes are unerring, and one of the difficulties of growing up is that all heroes fall. They also may struggle with the insecurity of not feeling like they are brave or courageous. Harry perceives himself as an ordinary boy, not a hero, but he still holds himself to impossible standards of heroism, spurred on by the wizarding community. In the world of Harry Potter, teenagers can cast spells, ride a broomstick, and wander the streets of Hogsmeade. It is an enchanting world that exhibits Exeter Qualities five (lively, varied, and imaginative language), six (themes that inform truthfully about the wider world), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

***Eragon* by Christopher Paolini**

Read in 2015

Paolini, Christopher. *Eragon*. Paolini LLC, 2002.

ISBN 13: 978-0375826696



Eragon is a poor young farm boy who discovers a polished blue stone in the forest and is shocked when the stone hatches into a legendary dragon. When King Galbatorix discovers Eragon has the egg, he sends his men after the pair. Eragon is forced to flee with the fledgling dragon Saphira into a dark and dangerous new terrain. He is rescued by the magical and powerful Dragon Rider and storyteller Brom—who offers him timeless advice and guidance. It is the first book within the *Inheritance* trilogy.

Eragon is a classic coming of age and quest story where a farm boy-turned-hero is motivated by a strong moral code and compassion for others. The novel is within the subgenre bildungsroman because of the immense moral and age-development that Eragon goes through, which parallels the author's own journey as he published the novel when he was just 15 years old. As a newfound Dragon Rider, Eragon faces new responsibilities, obstacles, and subsequently begins to question his identity. He battles villainous Kings within the political sphere and develops a heartwarming relationship to Saphira. The novel best exemplifies Exeter Qualities two (exciting plots that include secrecy, surprise, and tension), for (characters who go beyond typical), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

***Everland* Wendy Spinale**

Read in 2017

Spinale, Wendy. *Everland*. First edition. New York, NY, Scholastic Press, 2016.

ISBN-13: 978-1338095531



In *Everland* the only way to survive is by growing up. The city of London has been destroyed by bombs and disease. The only ones that have survived are children, including Gwen Darling, and her little siblings Joanna and Mikey. They spend their nights scavenging for food and shelter to survive and their days avoiding the ruthless Marauders. The Marauders are a German army led by Captain Hanz Otto Oswald Kretschmer better known as Captain Hook. The siblings are unsure if the virus has spread past England's borders but are desperate to leave. In the meantime, Captain Hook hunts for a cure, certain that it lives somewhere within the survivors. He and his Marauders sweep the streets snatching children for experimentation. No child has ever survived their kidnapping, that is until they grab Joanna. Desperate to save her

little sister, she stumbled upon a daredevil boy named Pete with his gang of Lost Boys and the fierce sharpshooter Bella. Despite her age and gender, Gwen exhibits none of the virus' flesh-eating symptoms which leads the lost boys and Captain Hook to think she is immune and the key to finding a cure. The Lost Boys live in an underground sanctuary, but the cost of their help is a promise bound by blood. How far would you go to save your family? *Everland* is the first novel within the trilogy *Everland*.

Everland is Peter Pan reimagined to include a dark, steampunk, and dystopian fantasy. This novel is valuable because it explores how it is our choices that we make in life that matter and the courage it takes to be self-determined instead of fated. The novel even incorporates a variety of the original lines from *Peter Pan*. Fifteen-year-old Gwen is forced to grow up as she takes on the task of caring for her younger siblings in a crisis time. Her story is valuable because teens may also find themselves acting as parents or caretakers for their younger siblings. She faces sexist obstacles and her own fear while trying to save her sister, prevailing against the stereotypes of female weakness. Spinales relies heavily on telling, rather than showing, to get emotion, backstory, and character relationships grounded into her vivid world of story. The novel best exemplifies Exeter Qualities two (exciting plots that include secrecy, surprise, and tension), three (female protagonists who reflect experiences of teen readers), six (themes that inform truthfully about the wider world), and seven (themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth).

A Final Word:



Growing up and into my young adult years, I have always been a bibliophile. I was the kid who sat in the back in the classroom, book hidden behind the textbook, totally enamored by Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House on the Prairie*. Novels were my safe space in school and at home. Since my early teenage years, I have struggled with depression and insecurity. However, when I engage in reading

fantasy it becomes hard for me to compare myself because I can become a part of the story while still distancing myself enough from the character’s emotions. The world of *Harry Potter*, *Everland*, and *Mystic* were my escapes.

If my life were fantasy novel, insecurity would be my inner heroine’s “fatal flaw” and compassion would be my “greatest strength” on a quest toward bravery and courage. With time I have learned that bravery and courage come from addressing my fear head on and acting. Fear will always be a part of our lives, but if we can conjure up our own skill sets that function as patronesses, happiness in the darkness, we can persevere. It is okay to be afraid, because when there are skill sets like chocolate in *Harry Potter*, our souls can find comfort and security.

Every day is an adventure with a new quest, villain, and challenge. After battling Marauders with Gwen, striving to find healthy relationships like Jude, fighting for equality alongside Pomella, speaking up against the status-quo with Sophia, and accepting myself as I am like Camille—I feel as if I can be my own hero too. As my own wise sage once told me, feel the fear and do it anyway.

Go forth on your quest heroes and live daringly with bravery and courage.

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