

Bouwman, H.M. THE REMARKABLE AND VERY TRUE STORY OF LUCY AND SNOWCAP R
Grades 4-7

A fantastical sort of historical fiction set in a version of the United States in 1775, this story is about two stubborn girls who are on a mission to save the world as they know it. Lucy is Colay, an indigenous tribe that is suffering because all of the men have (literally) been turned to stone. Snowcap is the Child Governor of a neighboring town made up of criminals from England. Together, can they save the last male Colay baby, Rob, bring about peace, and maybe even build a friendship? Lucy and Snowcap are strong female characters and the story is moving and entertaining. The book would be a great book to talk about indigenous cultures, myths, struggles, and colonization in an accessible fantasy story.

Brewer, Heather THE CHRONICLES OF VLADIMIR TOD: NINTH GRADE SLAYS AD Grades
7-10

The next in the Vladimir Tod series, Vladimir is now trying to survive high school, which isn't always easy with harassing bullies, an annoying school photographer following him, and being hunted by a vampire slayer for being half-vampire and half-human. A trip to Siberia helps Vladimir connect with other vampires, hone his mind-reading abilities, and confront his past, but will it help him battle evil once again? The characters are flat, the writing is trite, and the story is somewhat tepid, especially compared to other vampire books out there, but for those who read the first Vladimir Tod: Eight Grade Bites, they'll want to read this fast-paced sequel.

Grabenstein, Chris THE CROSSROADS AD+ Grades 6-10

After his mother's death, Zack Jennings moves to a small Connecticut town with his dad and step-mother and unbeknownst to Zack, an evil ghost lurking in the town who's out to kill him! As Zack befriends an unusual boy and his step-mother researches the history of the town for her new novel, the evil spirit jumps into the body of the carpenter who's working on their house. A ghost story that switches viewpoints between humans, ghosts, and evil trees, the story is thrillingly creepy at times. That being said, the characters are overly simplified between the distant father, the overeager step-mother, the cheerful boy, and the purely evil spirit. However, readers will enjoy this fast-paced story that verges on scary without actually being scary.

Greene, Stephanie THE LUCKY ONES AD Grades 5-8

A lackluster Judy Blume wannabe, this book is about 12 year old Cecile, who is too old to be a kid anymore, but not ready to be a sullen teen who sleeps in all the time and is obsessed with boys like her older sister Natalie. The family's annual summer beach vacation seems crucial this year because of the strained family relationships—between the parents and between the sisters. Cecile explores issues of

growing up as she meets a new friend and has a crush on a boy and yet still wants to play in the sand and catch crabs like she always has. While Cecile is a strong character who tweens will identify with, every other character is flat or shallow (or both) and the story is just not that interesting.

Hobbs, Valerie ANYTHING BUT ORDINARY AD+ Grades 9-12

In this sweet story of first love and high school sweethearts, Bernie and Winifred have been friends since eighth grade, joining together as the outcasts and defining themselves as anything but ordinary. In high school, it's only natural that they start to date and plan their lives around each other, since they've barely spent time apart. But in senior year, when Bernie's mom gets sick and his world comes crashing down, their lives and plans start to drift apart and Winifred heads to college across the country—without Bernie. When Winifred's roommates turn out to be the stereotypical California bimbos, they pull her into their spiral of shallow, self-obsessed behavior, so much so that Bernie doesn't even recognize her when he drives across the country to save her. Will Bernie and Winifred be able to patch together a friendship, let alone a relationship? Teenagers thinking about friendship and college and relationships will find this story engaging with dialogue that feels real, even if the story sometimes relies too heavily on stereotypes and is a bit preachy at times.

McKenzie, Riford THE WITCHES OF DREDMOORE HOLLOW AD+ Grades 4-7

Set in the late 1920s, Elijah is a jumpy boy who'd rather read his Tom Swift books than go on adventures. But when his parents disappear and his two crazy aunts whisk him off to their house in the Moaning Marsh, he realizes that things aren't always what they seem. Serena and Agnes run Magic Snippers, the world's most mysterious beauty salon with the most unusual customers. As Elijah starts to uncover the secrets and mysteries of his family history, which may include (gasp!) witches, he meets a friend and embarks on adventure, learning about himself in the process. With other better books about witches and magic out there, this one doesn't stand out, but the story is entertaining and the characters are amusing.

Pow, Tom THE PACK R Grades 8 and up

Set in a post-apocalyptic future, this book is about three kids living with wild dogs on the edge of a devastated city in an area called the Zones, supported by an Old Woman who first taught them how to survive. Bradley is the leader of the pack, the one holding all of them together by scrounging for food and using saavy street skills. In a world as bleak as theirs where food is hard to come by and to be inquisitive means certain death, the Old Woman's message is to stay together and keep stories alive, because they are the only things that won't crumble and burn when everything else does. But will stories help them survive when one of the kids gets kidnapped? To save Floris and themselves, Bradley, Victor, and the dogs venture into the Forbidden Territories, a place overrun by criminal warlords and

vicious gangs. The world depicted is bleak and cruel, but hopeful. While the violence is not overly graphic, the scenes of cruelty and brutality may be hard for some readers.

Qamar, Amjed

BENEATH MY MOTHER'S FEET

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Grades 7-11

Nazia is a beti, a good Pakistani girl who always listens to her mother and tries to do the right thing, even if that means agreeing to a marriage engagement at age 14. But when her family's life spirals down after her father loses her job and her good-for-nothing older brother steals her dowry, she is forced to leave school and work with her mother cleaning houses. This poignant and often heartbreaking novel explores the cultural expectations of women in Pakistan and the tragedy of poverty from the view of a powerful female teenager who has to make tough decisions about what is right when the answer is not clear.