

# **BEST BETS**

## **2009**

### **Fiction Reading for Young Adults**

**The OLA's Canadian Materials  
Committee prepares this annual list.**

**Books are selected on the basis of their  
literary merit as well as their appeal for  
young adults. Illustrations are also  
considered in the case of graphic novels.**

**Armstrong, Kelley. *The Awakening*.**

**Doubleday Canada.**

Book two in the *Darkest Powers* trilogy, *The Awakening* picks up where *The Summoning* left off. Chloe Saunders, formerly a relatively normal high school student and film director in training, now finds herself seeing ghosts, raising the dead, and on the run from the scientists who are trying to experiment on her and three equally supernatural friends. Who can they trust? Will they find help before the Edison Group finds them?

**Butcher, Kristen. *Return to Bone Tree Hill*.**

**Thistledown Press.**

A bizarre and recurrent nightmare haunts Jessica Lawler on the boundaries of dream and memory. The day before her family left Vancouver Island and moved to Australia, she seems to recall herself and another girl spying on an older boy. It's the moments after he discovers them, that she can no longer recall properly. Six years later, she has returned for a visit only to discover the boy in her nightmare has been missing since that day.

**Clark, Joan. *Road to Bliss*.**

**Doubleday Canada.**

Exasperated with city life, Jim Hobbs suffers a mild concussion and decides then and there to drop school, leave home and hitchhike out west to start a new life. He winds up on the prairies where he gets steady employment from members of an aloof and austere religious community. As he learns more about them and takes a surreptitious interest in a young woman from that community he is given a chance to join. A fast paced realistic climax with credible driven characters should appeal to a wide range of reader expectations.

**Crane, Dede. *Poster Boy*.**

**Groundwood Books.**

Gray's world is shattered when his younger sister Maggie is diagnosed with a rare and inoperable form of cancer. Suddenly instead of girls and Friday night parties, he's thinking obsessively about what might have caused Maggie's cancer. Gray's research leads him to a belief that almost everything in his modern life is to blame, and he begins to cut it all out, finally becoming a poster boy for the environmental movement. As it turns out, this may not be the solution either, and Gray must find his own way to live and to grieve.

**Grant, Vicki. *Not Suitable for Family Viewing*.**

**Harper Trophy.**

Robin is the privileged daughter of world renowned celebrity hostess Mimi Schwartz and lives a life of ease in New York City. It's perfectly normal to see her mother on TV, or staring from the covers of books and magazines, so normal it's also slowly driving her mad. She used to be on the show with her, but has been kept away from the camera for years. One day a chance discovery leads her to cancel a routine custody swap with her father and slip north across the Canadian Border to investigate a few inconsistencies in her mother's authorized biography.

**Haworth-Attard, Barbara. *Haunted*.**

**Harper Trophy Canada.**

Dee (short for defiance) Vale has 'the Sight', or the ability to communicate with the dead. Her friend Mary-Ann disappeared a few years back, but there's been no trace of her, living nor dead. Dee's mother is also mysteriously absent. Dee never met her, but occasionally she writes. She lives with her grandmother, the local midwife, who also has the Sight. Set along a rural stretch of the Niagara escarpment just after the Great War, this novel, part mystery, part paranormal thriller

also captures the rivalry and mistrust between traditional living and the modern.

**Johansen, K.V. *Warden of Greyrock.***

**Orca Book Publishers.**

Book three in the *Warlocks of Talverdin* series, *Warden of Greyrock* begins with Maury installed as the warden of Greyrock, the fortress at the pass between the lands occupied by the humans and those occupied by the nightwalkers. Reconciliation between the two kingdoms seems imminent, yet the Yehillon, a shadowy group opposed to the nightwalkers, continue to cause problems. When Annot is kidnapped, Maury must decide whether to attempt a rescue of the love of his life, or stay to protect the pass, and potentially the safety of his people.

**MacDonald, Anne Louise. *Seeing Red.***

**Kids Can Press.**

Frankie is average. He has no special talents, he excels at nothing in particular. There is absolutely nothing outstanding about him, except perhaps his dreams. He has vivid dreams that have had a habit of coming true. One night he dreams of a black horse with a rider dressed in red. The rider falls. Can it be his best friend Tim? Can Frankie save him? What does weird mind reading Maura-Lee have to do with it?

**McClintock, Norah. *Back.***

**Orca Soundings.**

Jojo is back. He's out of jail and back in the neighbourhood. People are scared. They wish he would go away and never come back. They are afraid that his friends will come back and it will be like before. There are also those people who have hate in their hearts for what Jojo did. Ardell is one of those. It was his older brother that Jojo killed. Now, the neighbourhood watches Ardell, and Ardell watches Jojo.

**Wynne-Jones, Tim. *The Uninvited.***

**Candlewick Press.**

A lonely old house, inaccessible by road holds separate fascinations for three young strangers. Well to do New York student Mimi comes with the owner's blessing to work on a novel and elude a wealthy stalker. Jay, a guitarist needs a quiet place to draw inspiration, experiment and come up with something that will get him into a university music program. Cramer, an intense loner comes because he is compelled here by an incomplete and secret knowledge. A tightly woven, fast paced, tense and disturbing thriller.

## **HONOURABLE MENTIONS**

Bell, Joanne. *Juggling Fire.* Orca Book Publishers.

Lemire, Jeff. *The Nobody.* Vertigo.

Livingston, Lesley. *Wondrous Strange.* Harper Teen.

Mac, Carrie. *The Gryphon Project.* Penguin Group Canada.

Martin, C.K. Kelly. *One Lonely Degree.* Random House Books for Young Readers.

McGill, Nichole. *Girl #3.* Key Porter Books.

McNaughton, Janet. *Dragon Seer.* HarperCollins Canada.

Shaw, Liane. *Thinandbeautiful.com.* Second Story Press.

Slade, Arthur. *The Hunchback Assignments.* Harper Trophy Canada.

## OLA'S CANADIAN MATERIALS COMMITTEE

We are a long standing committee with a strong voice in promoting Canadian literature for children and young adults. Our goal is to highlight excellence in literature for children and young adults for the OLA membership and others with an interest.

The OLA's annual Best Bets evolved from a list put out by the Canadian Material's Committee of the Children's Services Guild. This Canadian Materials Committee is now under the wing of the OPLA Children and Youth Committee.

The OLA's Canadian Materials Committee selects books on the basis of their literary/artistic merit as well as their appeal for children and young adults. Text and illustrations are of equal importance in picture books and information books.

The Committee thanks S & B Books for their ongoing support with providing a place to meet and copies of books to review.

Meetings are held a minimum of four times a year at S & B Books Ltd (3086 Universal Dr., Mississauga). Members discuss and evaluate recent publications by Canadian authors and illustrators. The books evaluated are suitable for children and young adults from birth to nineteen years old. From these discussions, the Committee produces "Best Bets" lists, annual annotated lists of recommended titles. These lists are released each year at the OLA Super Conference.

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