



Booktalks

2010-2011 Georgia Peach Book Award Nominees

After by Amy Efaw

Devon Davenport was a soccer star with great grades, a loyal best friend, and dreams of a college scholarship. She was good at her job—babysitting twins—and she mentored younger soccer players. Sure, getting along with her mom wasn't always easy, but since when is that unusual for a 15-year-old? And then Devon met Connor, and there moonlit walks, reciting poetry, and looking into his beautiful green, hazel-flecked eyes.

All that was before. Before Devon decided to withdraw from Connor, from soccer, from her friends. Before she stopped answering her cell phone, accepting jogging company, reading her best friend's letters. Before she turned a soccer injury into a reason not to play the game that had defined her. Before she rearranged her life so that she didn't have to, *could not*, know the truth about herself.

It was before a night of blood and pain and a morning of police officers knocking on the door, asking to question her about a baby found in a trash can in the alley outside their apartment.

All of that was Before. Now, Devon is about to find out what happens After.

Bonechiller by Graham McNamee

Danny has been pin-balled around northern Ontario by a father still reeling from the death of his wife to a brain tumor. This time they land in Harvest Cove for a winter lakeside caretaking job, where Danny actually develops a group of friends: Pike, an army brat with a touch of the psycho; Howie, his brother, their computer geek and conscience; and even a girl named Ash, a confident badass, half-Ojibwa boxer, with whom Danny's got a mutual attraction and affection going, but something weird is going on in Harvest Cove. An enormous creature chases Danny one sub-freezing night into a ditch and bestows a fierce kiss, a stinging blue sort of tattoo that begins to change Danny into a creature of the ice. The brainy weakling Howie also gets branded for the monster's horrifying transformation, and the two share nightmares that must be mined for precious information to defeat it. The group has only a short time to try to understand and stop the process that seems to end with Danny and Howie becoming tortured souls whose bodies sustain a thousand-year-old menace. It's no use trying to convince anyone else of the pattern of disappearances going back generations in the coldest winters. It's up to Danny to decide: Submit and die in ice and unending torment or rise against and try to crack the freezing hold of the bonechiller.

Brutal by Michael Harmon

The following is from Mackinbooktalk.com: <http://www.mackinbooktalk.com/viewBook.aspx?bookId=763>

Poe's mother has left her again. Her mom, "the brilliant martyr surgeon," has run off on her latest do-gooder magically-heal-the-sick-and-save-the-dying project in some jungle. This time the "brilliant surgeon" has decided to

leave her sixteen-year-old daughter with a dad that Poe has never met. When you are the results of a sperm donor program called "Poor Choices and Bad Mistakes," that happens a lot.

Her dad turns out to be the neat-freak counselor at the elitist, preppy high school she has to attend. Poe is not quite fitting in with her punk rock clothes, mohawk hair, and in-your-face attitude. She does find two friends. There is kindred-soul Theo, a whip smart punk rocker, who is unfortunately the mayor's son. And then there is Velveeta who is the kid everyone picks on, especially the school's untouchable football star, Colby.

When Colby's bullying escalates to violence against Velveeta, Poe takes a stand. She starts a crusade to end the school's unfair policies and end Colby's reign of terror.

Realizing that the bullying victims see school as a living hell they can't escape, Poe needs to find a way to stop the bullying—and the bully—before retaliatory violence becomes the only unacceptable answer.

***Burn* by Suzanne Phillips**

Quote: "Anger and Fear are a dangerous mix of emotions," Randy says, "Together they make a whole new person. Make a person do things they wouldn't normally do" *Burn* page 147

What would you do if you have been beat up, humiliated, bullied and no one will help you? Cameron Grady has spent his freshman year in exactly that situation and he can't take it anymore. Does he go after those who have hurt him? Does he hurt himself? Or does he do the unthinkable and unleash his anger and fear on the world?

***Carter Finally Gets It* by Brent Crawford**

Carter is about to start his freshmen year in high school. He's nervous about girls, about embarrassing his older sister Lynn, and about generally fitting in. He has ADD and his lack of focus leads him into many hilarious situations. Written as a stream of consciousness from Carter's perspective the reader is exposed to the real-life awkwardness of puberty in a frank and often humorous way. Definitely a book for boys and any girls who want to know what is going through boys' minds in the various social situations that occur in high school.

***The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks: A Novel* by E. Lockhart**

Let us diagram and dissect the title to better understand the nature and essence of this book.

The - a definite article used before singular or plural nouns, which indicates a specific object

Disreputable - not reputable or respectable. Adding a prefix makes the opposite of a word, rather like dis- in disreputable. But, there are other words that you always hear with the prefix and rarely without it. Like, grunted minus the dis-; when was the last time you heard someone say grunted? Is it even a word?

History - a narrative record of past events, which are notable, influential or deemed important

Of - a preposition used to indicate connection or association

Frankie Landau-Banks. Given name: Frances Rose Landau-Banks. Nickname: Bunny Rabbit. She is complex, intelligent and hard to define, so let's look at snapshots of her through the ages.

At 14: Freshman. Look: Invisible and not memorable. Group: Geek. Dating: No one. Clubs and activities: Debate.

At 15: Sophomore. Look: Va-va-voom! Hot and very memorable. Group: Popular. Dating: Matthew Livingston, senior. Clubs and activities: Not a member of the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, the school's good ol' boy secret society.

As this tome asks, "How does a person become the person she is? What are the factors in her culture, her childhood, her education, her religion, her economic stature, her sexual orientation, her race, her everyday interactions—what stimuli lead her to make choices other people will despise her for? This chronicle is an attempt to mark out the contributing elements in Frankie Landau-Banks' character. What led her to do what she did: things she would later view with a curious mixture of hubris and regret. Frankie's mental processes had been stimulated by Ms. Jenson's lectures on the panopticon, her encounters with Alpha, her mother's refusal to let her walk into town on the Jersey Shore, her observation of the joy Matthew took in rescuing her from her bicycle accident, and her anger at Dean for not remembering her. All these were factors in what happened next..." (107)

***Dream Factory* by Brad Barkley & Heather Hepler**

Mickey Mouse is mad. Donald is ticked. Goofy's making obscene gestures. No one in the Magic Kingdom is happy, and when all the costume characters go on strike, the park brings in teenage 'scabs' to fill their shoes.

Two of those teens are Luke and Ella.

Luke is cut-up Dale to his girlfriend Cassie's know-it-all Chip – both in and out of costume. He tries to find a connection with hyper-motivated Cassie, but it's not easy like it is with Ella.

Every day, Ella dons a big, frilly dress, drops her glass slipper, and marries prince charming. But what if Cinderella should be with a chipmunk instead?

Life is messy, even when you're living in the happiest place on earth. Ella is dealing with her brother's death and Luke has to decide if he's going to toe the family line or follow his gut.

Funny, with a wink of irony, *Dream Factory* is about two people discovering what and who makes them happy, taking a stand, and becoming your own person – or chipmunk.

***Flygirl* by Sherri L. Smith**

Ida Mae Jones loves flying and feels at home in her friendly skies. Having learned to fly with her daddy as he dusted local crops, she longs to stretch her wings and fly again. When World War II takes off, Ida Mae reads in the newspaper about the need for pilots and the opportunity for women to meet that need. She can enlist in Women's Airforce Service Pilot, and serve her country like her brother, who is stationed in the South Pacific. Is being a WASP her opportunity to realize her dream and return to the cockpit? Enlisting means leaving her momma, youngest brother and her grandpa behind on the family farm. But, the hardest part may be passing – not only the strenuous tests and exercises expected of the female pilots, but also as a white woman. Can a young, black girl from Louisiana fly for the United States? Can she stay true to herself and her mommy and daddy? Or, will she lose it all? Is it worth the risk to do what she loves?

***The Forest of Hands and Teeth* by Carrie Ryan**

Mary is trapped. She lives behind fences that protect her from "The Unconsecrated," a mob of flesh-eating zombies. She tries to stay away from the fences because the fences are surrounded by clawing, screaming Zombies who hunger for the flesh of the living. Their hunger never stops – it knows no limits. They cry and scream... constantly seeking to consume the living. Mary knows that to be bitten means certain death and then a brutal return as a Zombie. She knows this too well... her father has already become one of the Unconsecrated. Every day Mary and her Mom search the crowded fences hoping to see him.

The village constantly prepares for the onslaught of the Unconsecrated. Platforms have been built in case of a fence breach. When the alarm is sounded and the whistle blows everyone runs for a platform and hopes to get there in time before the rope ladders are pulled up. Most of the time it is a practice drill... yet each time it happens everyone fears the worst. What if the Unconsecrated have breached the fence?

Mary's is disappointed when Harry asks her to the Harvest Celebration... she really wants to go to with Travis – Harry's brother. It seems almost as if Harry knows this is what Mary is thinking. He tells Mary that Travis is taking

Cass – Mary’s best friend. While Harry waits for a reply the whistle blows. This time it is not a drill... the Unconsecrated have claimed another human life. Mary’s mother wandered too close to the fence and was bitten. Now she will die and return or she will die forever. Mary must choose.

Mary is trapped in the middle of the forest with no where to go yet she longs to see the ocean. Mary’s mother described the ocean as “a place where there is nothing but water as far as you could see.” Mary’s childhood friends have listened to the stories of the ocean and while some believe others do not. Cass cannot imagine a place with so much water. Yet Mary believes in the ocean. Her Mother told her about the ocean, with waves, sand, and lots of salt. As her Mother awaits her death she reminds Mary about the ocean, pleading with her to not forget.

Video Trailer created by Karrie Dillon

http://animoto.com/play/NX0USAwr1kYwRTOqC2LnVw?utm_source=blogspot.com&utm_medium=player&utm_campaign=player

Hold Still by Nina LaCour

Why didn't she see it coming? She should have been able to see Ingrid’s pain and to realize what her best friend was planning..

Paralyzed by sorrow and anger, Caitlin begins what should have been a happy, exciting junior year of high school life in San Francisco. Talented and bright, her best friend Ingrid committed suicide. Unable to cope, Caitlin refuses to see a therapist, pulls away from her family and classmates, and stops working on her own artistic endeavors.

But when she stumbles across Ingrid's journal, she learns about a sexual trauma that had haunted her friend, the depression she lived with, and the reason she finally decided to end her life.

Handsome Taylor and new friend Dylan are there to listen to Caitlin as she works her way through sadness, defeat, and anger. With these two classmates and her parent's support, she should recover from the loss of her dear friend.

But can Caitlin ever understand it?

from Mackin Booktalks! <http://www.mackinbooktalk.com>

If I Stay: A Novel by Gayle Forman

On a snow day off from school in Oregon, seventeen-year-old Mia and her family decide to take a trip to see some friends and her grandparents. On the treacherous, icy roads the family car collides with a truck. Mia’s parents are killed instantly, but both she and her younger brother, Teddy, are taken to separate hospitals with severe injuries. An observer to the events occurring after the accident, the comatose Mia narrates her story from her current perspective and through relating episodes from her past via flashbacks.

After overhearing a comment from one of the nurses, Mia comes to believe that whether or not she stays (lives) or goes (dies) is pretty much up to her. As she wrestles with her decision, the reader experiences Mia’s thoughts and feelings right along with her, and is kept guessing all the way to the end

Jerk, California by Jonathan Friesen

Twitch, Jerk, Freak, Sam Carrier has been called them all. Because of his Tourettes syndrome, Sam is in near constant motion with tics and twitches and verbal outbursts. So, of course, high school is nothing but torment. Forget friends; forget even hoping that beautiful, perfect Naomi will look his way. And home isn’t much better with his domineering stepfather reminding him that the only person who was more useless than Sam was his dead father, Jack. But then an unexpected turn of events unearths the truth about his father. And suddenly Sam doesn’t know who he is, or even where he’ll go next. What he does know is that the only girl in the world who can make him happy and nervous at the same time is everywhere he turns . . . and he’d give anything just to be still.

Review from Powell’s Books

***King of the Screwups* by K.L. Going**

What do you do when your father wants you to be the next Bill Gates, but you were born to walk the run way instead? Liam Geller finds out in *King of the Screwups*.

With a genius business man dad and a former supermodel mom, Liam Geller is popular, fun and creative – none of the things his father wants him to be.

So, what do you do when you get caught drinking, fooling around with a girl, and get kicked out of your house? You go live with your glam-rocking, cross-dressing, gay uncle Pete.

Suburban high school attendance and trailer park living are far cries from the bright lights of Manhattan, but Liam is determined to be what he thinks he should - serious. He tries dressing badly, joining the wrong clubs, and hanging out with the nerds, but no one is fooled.

With help from his Aunt Pete (as Liam calls him) and his uncle's friends, he's able to discover that 'screwing up' is all in the eye of the beholder.

Witty, smart and – at times – heartbreaking, *King of the Screwups* is Liam's journey of self-discovery. Because sometimes who someone *wants* you to be and who you're *meant* to be are two different things

***Muchacho: A Novel* by LouAnne Johnson**

Eddie Corazon is angry. He's also very smart. But he's working pretty hard at being a juvenile delinquent. He blows off school, even though he's a secret reader. He hangs with his cousins, who will always back him up—when they aren't in jail.

Then along comes Lupe, who makes his blood race. She sees something in Eddie he doesn't even see in himself. A heart, and a mind, and something more: a poet. But in Eddie's world, it's a thin line between tragedy and glory. And what goes down is entirely in Eddie's hands.

Gripping, thought-provoking, and hopeful, *Muchacho* is a rare and inspiring story about one teen's determination to fight his circumstances and shape his own destiny.

[product review from Amazon.com]

***North of Beautiful* by Justina Chen Headley**

Terra has charted her life by two landmarks: her port-wine stain and her overbearing, critical, & professionally disgraced, cartographer father. The first she attempts to cover in thick makeup or erase with the latest laser technology; the second she skirts whenever possible and intends to escape with an early admission to college, if he will let her. Her father has controlled and berated her two brothers out of the house and her mother into trembling submission with his demands for order and perfection, and Terra tries to move only within the boundaries of the coordinates he has set for her. Her boyfriend Erik knows only the Terra of the sculpted body and camouflaged face, so when Terra almost runs down Jacob and his vibrant mother Nora who are on their way to vacation in her Washington town, his connection with her at her ugliest begins a series of changes that strips Terra's map down to its barest outlines. China, once just another interesting map, comes alive for Terra when she and her mother travel with Jacob and his mother there. When Terra meets a little girl with a port-wine stain in the very orphanage where Jacob once lived after being abandoned because of a cleft lip, Terra must determine if she is strong enough to scout new territory, opening vistas of beauty and independence, in self-discovery. Even those lines that seemed indelible on the maps of her father and society are not real boundaries guarding against the dragons of the unknown but mutable parts of a life and an identity that only she can chart. Romance, art, travel, geocaches, family, and friendship—this life-affirming book has so much going on that you'll find yourself loving the way it takes you all over the map.

The Orange Houses by Paul Griffin

Meet Tamika Sykes—Mik to her friends (if she had any). She's hearing impaired and way too smart for her West Bronx high school. She copes by reading lips and selling homework answers, and looks forward to the time each day when she can be alone in her room drawing. She's a tough girl who never gets close to anyone, until she meets Fatima, a teenage refugee who sells newspapers on Mik's block. Both Mik and Fatima unite in their efforts to befriend Jimmi, a homeless vet who is shunned by the rest of the community.

The events that follow when these three outcasts converge will break open their close-knit community and change the lives of those living in the Orange Houses in explosive and unexpected ways.

Review from goodreads.com

Shiver by Maggie Stiefvater

For years, Grace has watched the wolves in the woods behind her house. One yellow-eyed wolf—her wolf—is a chilling presence she can't seem to live without. Meanwhile, Sam has lived two lives: In winter, the frozen woods, the protection of the pack, and the silent company of a fearless girl. In summer, a few precious months of being human. . . until the cold makes him shift back again.

Now, Grace meets a yellow-eyed boy whose familiarity takes her breath away. It's her wolf. It has to be. But as winter nears, Sam must fight to stay human—or risk losing himself, and Grace, forever.

From author's website <http://www.maggiestiefvater.com/shiver/books.php>

Skinned by Robin Wasserman

Lia Kahn almost died in a car accident, but she is back – in a new body, no less. Lia's sleek though synthetic look alienates most of her former friends and her boyfriend, all of whom have difficulty accepting that Lia is really the same person she was before her consciousness was downloaded into her artificial body. Eventually, the reactions of her peers and her own curiosity drive Lia to join up with a group of others like her, called Skinners. Now Lia has some choices to make: how far will she go to fit in? With its futuristic setting that feels not all that removed from our own, *Skinned* examines what it truly means to be human.

Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson

"When I was a real girl, with two parents and one house and no blades flashing, breakfast was granola topped with fresh strawberries..."

When did Lia stop being a real girl? It must have been before the first Saturday in October, last year. That's when, driving toward the SATs without breakfast, or even a meal the day before, Lia plowed into a tree. Cassie, her best friend, was beside her in the passenger seat. Lia's blood sugar level had been dangerously low. After that, her bitterly divorced parents forced Lia into treatment, she moved in with her father, stepmother, and stepsister, and Cassie turned against her.

But Cassie and Lia had a history together. They had shared frustrations with family, the tree house at Lia's that was their castle when they were twelve—and their dream of thin perfection. Lia took the starvation road; Cassie, the bulimia path.

Now, Lia's life is a series of numbers.

- 16: calories in 10 raisins
- 93: Lia's weight the first time she was admitted for treatment
- 107.00: the fake pounds that register on the scale her dad bought because the doctors told him to. the one she steps onto with quarters sewn into her bathrobe pockets

- 99.00: Lia's weight on her own secret, killer-accurate scale, the one that she *doesn't* tamper with
- 90.00: Lia's weight Goal Number Three (or is it 85.00? or 75.00?)
- 25 bites + 16 bites + 1 hour = scrambled eggs and one muffin = breakfast if Lia's mother *really* insists
- 113: Number of the motel room where Cassie died
- 33: Number of times Cassie called Lia the night she died
- 0: Number of times Lia answered

Cassie's dead. Lia saw her in her casket. But Cassie's reaching out to Lia, still. And whenever Lia nearly becomes a real girl again, she remembers:

"...she called. thirty-three times. you didn't answer."

The Year We Disappeared: a Father-Daughter Memoir by Cylin & John Busby

One day your neighbor is there, the next the house is empty—and everyone that lived there is gone! This is the story written by a father and daughter that leave just such an empty house.

In 1979, tough cop John Busby spent the day in court and is tired as he drives to his night shift at the Falmouth, Massachusetts police department. As he drives, a car pulls up beside him, two shots explode, the window shatters, and he looks over to the passenger seat to see blood, teeth and bone.

Badly hurt, he drives to a lighted house. Rushed to the hospital, doctors work to save his life and do what they can for the missing lower half of his face. John survives but is unable to speak and eat. Doctors insert a tube into his stomach and slowly start reconstructing his face.

Nine-year-old Cylin, her two brothers, and their mother are thrown into a chaotic and frightening situation. Besides coping with John's injuries, the whole family may possibly be in danger.

Everyone knows who the attempted murderer is, but he is a powerful man—and both the police department and the City Hall are corrupt. Would he ever be brought to justice? For a year the family lives in fear.

And then they disappear.

From Mackin Booktalk! <http://www.mackinbooktalk.com>



Discussion Questions

2010-2011 Georgia Peach Book Award Nominees

After by Amy Efaw

(the first three questions are from KidsBuzz, archived here:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs073/1100934529474/archive/1102777950260.html#Ater>)

1. Devon doesn't want to give Dom a list of character witnesses because she doesn't want her friends and teachers to find out about what she did. If you had read about Devon's story in the paper, what conclusions would you have drawn about her? Would they be different than what you think about Devon after reading her whole story in *After*?
2. Devon's mother was a teenage mother herself. How do you think this affects Devon's motivations and decisions? Do you think Devon would have reacted differently if she wasn't afraid of becoming her mother? At what point in the story does Devon begin to view her mother in a different light?
3. How are the adults in Devon's life complicit in the situation? Should her mother or coach have noticed that she was pregnant and discussed it with her? Do you think they were negligent?
4. Devon's lawyer, Dominique, says about Devon's decision at the end of the book: "I don't know if I agree with your decision, but the decision has to be yours." Devon's thought is that she (Devon) had "won." What did Devon win, and why is Dom ambivalent about it? Do you think Devon won?
5. Devon chooses not to continue seeing the young man who fathered the baby. Would her story have turned out differently if she had maintained contact with him and told him about her situation? In what ways? Why do you think so?

Bonechiller by Graham McNamee

1. Why does Danny stand a chance against the creature when it has been taking young people from around the lake for hundreds of years? What makes him unique?
2. What makes Danny's group of friends hang together and work as a unit? What does each of them bring to the table in the friendship and need to take away from it?
3. How and why do you think Danny and Howie's transformation experiences and night terrors differ?
4. What information about the beast do the kids learn first-hand and pick up through their research—what does he look like, what's his pattern, what are his strengths and vulnerabilities?
5. What stories of the Windigo does Ash's father tell Danny? How does it seem the beast might fit into the Ojibwa traditions and tales?

Brutal by Michael Harmon

1. How does the author let you know what group Poe Holly hung around in her old high school? How does this relate to her reaction to her new high school? Do you think the group descriptions are realistic?
2. How does Poe Holly's relationship with her parents create tension to move the story along? Do you think these relationships are realistically described?
3. How does the father's job as the counselor at the school affect the story? What are some other actions he could have taken?
4. How do you think the bullying in the book could be more realistic? What are some actions that the students could have taken to protect themselves and their friends from the bullying? How could the bullying have been prevented before it started?
5. After reading the Epilogue, do you think each character's outcome matched their actions in the book? How would you write the end of this story?

Burn by Suzanne Phillips

1. Cameron Grady was brutally bullied throughout the book, is there anything you think he should have done to try and stop the bullying that he didn't?
2. In the book a humiliating photo of Cameron is shown to everyone, what would you do if you saw the photo?
3. "Anger and Fear are a dangerous mix of emotions," Randy says, "Together they make a whole new person. Make a person do things they wouldn't normally do" pg 147. What do you think this quote means? Do you think fear and anger changes a person and makes them do something they wouldn't normally do?
4. Cameron's father isn't in the picture anymore and when he was he wasn't a very good father. Do you think this affected the outcome of the story? How?
5. What do you think happened to Cameron and his family after he was released from the juvenile detention center? Do you think people can change?

Carter Finally Gets It by Brent Crawford

1. Carter is "Slappy the Pool Boy." How does he get this nickname? What is one nickname you have heard another student get called? How did that student get the nickname? Was it a name the person liked or was it a put-down?
2. What are some of Lynn's "Holy Grail of Chick Knowledge" that she shares with Carter? Do you think these pointers would help a freshman boy in your school? Why or why not?
3. What is ADD/ADHD? How does Carter deal with his ADD?
4. Why does Carter try to keep it a secret that he is in the Spring musical? Is this a view that is true at your school? Do you think it is fair?

The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks: A Novel by E. Lockhart

1. Frankie undergoes both a physical and an emotional transformation in the book. Why do you think people only recognize one of them? Is it difficult for women who are beautiful to be taken seriously? Why?
2. How does Frankie first meet Alpha? Why doesn't he acknowledge their chance encounter? Matthew, too, has no memory of having met Frankie. How does this make her feel? Would you have handled this situation similarly, or not? Why?
3. Why do you think the author chose a boarding school as the setting for the novel "that patriarchal establishment, the insular, over privileged life"? How does the setting add to the conflicts and development of Frankie's story? What is the most interesting thing about Alabaster?
4. Discuss Frankie's romance with Porter. Do you think this contributed to what happens with Matthew?
5. Frankie gains not only a boyfriend but a whole posse of charming boys to hang out with, too. Why is this group so much fun for her to hang around with? Why does she find it a bit scary to invest so much of her energy into this group?
6. Frankie learns about the theory of a panopticon in her favorite class. Do you agree with the theory that most people behave because they have this sense of being monitored? Do you think this sense prevails in modern life even more than in previous times? How? Why? Does it influence your own behavior? How?
7. Why do you think secret societies exist at all? What does Frankie learn about the Bassets as the novel progresses? Why do you think she's unable to just let it go?
8. Frankie weighs everything before she says it and considers her options before she speaks. Are you able to do this? Do you wish you could? Do you think most people consider their words before speaking? Are you clever or funny like Frankie? How do people develop wit?
9. Over the course of the novel Frankie seems to get more and more angry about how other people perceive her. She's tired of pretending to be just one thing. Have you ever felt this rage against expectations? What did you do about it? What does Frankie do?

10. Which of the pranks did you find the most compelling? Have you ever been a prankster? What does Frankie learn about herself as she plans and executes the pranks? How does it change everyone's perception of her?
11. Frankie also rails against the unwritten codes of her school, such as who gets to sit at the senior table. What are the unwritten codes and rules at your own school? Has anyone ever tried to defy them? What were the consequences?
12. Describe Frankie's romance with Matthew. Who would you say is in control of the relationship? Why? How does it end between them? Do you think Matthew is justified in his feelings? Do you think he was ever really in love with Frankie to begin with? Why?
13. Frankie wants Matthew to "... admire her cleverness, her ambition, her vision. That he would admit her as his equal, or even as his superior, and love her for what she was capable of." Do you think this is even possible in teen relationships? Is it possible in life? How many marriages that you know operate under this banner?
14. How do the others react when they learn she was the mastermind behind the pranks? Why were they it considered "brilliant" when the Bassets thought Alpha was in charge, but "psychotic" when Frankie is revealed as the perpetrator?
15. In the end, Frankie concludes, "It is better to be alone, than to be with someone who can't see who you are." Do you agree with her? Do your friends and romantic partners see who you really are or only who they expect and want you to be? What don't you reveal to your friends and family? Do you think men or women share their true selves more with others? Why?

Dream Factory by Brad Barkley & Heather Hepler

1. Why do you think Luke stays with Cassie through most of the novel?
2. The book is by two authors, writing alternating chapters as Luke and Ella. Do you think this is effective? Why? Why not? Which voice did you enjoy more? Why?
3. If you could invite any of the characters to dinner, who would you invite? Why?
4. Why do you think the authors chose the Magic Kingdom as the setting for the novel? Do you think it influenced/added/detracted from the story?
5. What do you think Ella and Luke will decide to do after the summer?

Flygirl by Sherri L. Smith

1. Where does the word "flygirl" come from? Why do you think this word is the novel's title?
2. In *Flygirl*, Sherri L. Smith uses the terms "Negro" and "colored," which were commonly used in the 1940s but aren't used now. What do you think of her choice to use these terms? How would using contemporary terms have changed her novel?
3. After returning home, Thomas uses a derogatory term for the Japanese, "Nips" (pg 196). Why isn't Ida Mae or anyone else offended? Are there any circumstances in which derogatory terms like this one are acceptable? Explain your answer.
4. Ida Mae and other characters frequently discuss different skin shades of brown and white. Why are these different skin shades important to them? How does their skin shade affect them and their interactions with others?
5. Do you think pretending to be something you're not would be easy or difficult? What parts of passing as white give Ida Mae the most trouble? Do you think she would react differently if she were able to be honest about her racial identity?
6. Why are female flyers like Bessie Coleman, Amelia Earhart, Jackie Cochran, and Nancy Love role models for Ida Mae? Who are your role models, and why are they important to you?
7. Why does Ida Mae respect institutions owned and run by black Americans, like the Coffey School of Aeronautics? What purpose did such institutions serve in 1940s America? If there were a special school for you, based on your interests, background, or gender, would you go there? Explain why you made your choice and what benefits or downsides there might be in going to that school.

8. Why are so many items rationed in *Flygirl*? How does rationing help contribute to the war effort? What items would you be willing to do without and why? What items would you be unwilling to give up and why?
9. Ida Mae lies about her racial identity and heritage when applying to and participating in the WASP program. Why does she do this? Do her reasons justify her lying? What would you do in her situation?
10. Why do some characters in *Flygirl* say WASP are “easy women” (p 147)? How does this stereotype affect military personnel and civilians’ treatment of WASP? Do you think people still stereotype women in the military this way?
11. Why do the WASP and other characters disagree over the proper role of women during WWII? How do you feel about roles women currently serve during wars? In what ways might women’s current war roles affect women you care for?
12. What qualities must a successful WASP in *Flygirl* have? How does each of these help the women succeed? Are any of those qualities universal to success? What qualities do you have that might help you to reach your life goals?
13. In *Flygirl*, many of the WASPS have nicknames. How did they get them and what makes them important to the characters? Do you think their nicknames are more accurate than their given names? How have people you’ve known received nicknames? Are these names important to them?
14. Although Patty and Lily don’t know Ida Mae’s deepest secret, she considers them to be good friends. Can they truly be her close friends if they don’t know this very important thing about her? How is their friendship different from Jolene’s friendship? What make on page 167, Ida Mae says: “All I could think of was wanting to fly. The war was just an opportunity. It wasn’t real. But it’s real now. It means my brother is missing. It means my mother has lost her husband and now maybe her son. And she came all this way, letting me treat her worse than a dog, just to tell me.” How does Ida Mae’s participation in the war change her perception of it? Does her changed view of war influence her feelings about participating in it? What about her experience makes it worth continuing her involvement in the war?
15. Two characters in particular, Patsy and Thomas, sacrifice a great deal for WW II. Are their sacrifices worth what they and America gains? Why or why not? Would you be willing to make similar sacrifices?
16. Two songs become important to Ida Mae: “Shoo Fly” and the WASP song about zoot suits. How do these songs aid her in difficult times? What songs have most helped you through difficulties and why? Why are songs so important to people when they’re troubled?
17. What risks would Ida Mae be taking if she decides to pass as white long-term? How might these risks affect her future relationships, both romantic and with friends? What do you think of her choices in regards to “passing” and Walt? What alternative choices might she have made? What choice would you have made if you were her and why?
18. How is Ida Mae’s relationship with each of her family members changed by her experiences as a WASP? Were the changes for the better, for the worse, or both?

Discussion questions from the author’s website @ http://www.sherrilsmith.com/flygirl_guide.pdf.

The Forest of Hands and Teeth by Carrie Ryan

1. Why does Mary want to see the ocean? What does the ocean represent to her?
2. What role do the Sisters play in the life of the village?
3. What secrets do the Sisters have? Why do you think the sisters keep things secret from the villagers?
4. Setting - What time period (year) do you think this book is set in? Where is the village located? How does this impact the story
5. Does the image on the book dust cover match with the way you view the contents of the book?

Hold Still by Nina LaCour

1. Why did Ingrid commit suicide? Could Caitlin have done anything to prevent it? Could anyone have? How does suicide affect those left behind?

2. Caitlin is an artist. How is art therapeutic to Caitlin?
3. The book is a journey. How does Caitlin change over the course of the school year?
4. Both Ingrid and Caitlin deal with grief and trauma in different ways. How does each character express emotion?
5. What roles do Taylor and Dylan play in Caitlin's life? What about the art teacher?

If I Stay: A Novel by Gayle Forman

1. How did you like the technique of moving back and forth between Mia's present coma state and the events of the past?
2. Did you find the relationship between Mia and Adam realistic and believable? Why or why not?
3. How did Mia's grandparents impact her life? How did their visits to the hospital affect her decision?
4. How did you think of Mia's parents? Do you think their relationship influenced that of Mia and Adam?
5. What did you think of Mia's decision? Did you like the ending?

Jerk, California by Jonathan Friesen

1. When we first meet Sam, Tourette's syndrome controls him. What do you see as the biggest challenge to living with this condition?
2. We all attempt to hide the obvious, and like Sam who attempts to draw attention away from his Tourette's, we all fail. Have you caught yourself trying to conceal something that might just need to be accepted?
3. Sam desperately wants to be with Naomi, yet he can barely look her in the eye. Is it possible to have a deep relationship with another before accepting one's own unattractive features?
4. In the beginning of the novel, Naomi calls Sam her hero. How do Sam's actions throughout the story live up to your definition of a hero? In what ways does he fail?
5. Why was it necessary for Sam/Jack to return and face Old Bill?

Questions from Teacher's Guide at TeacherVision.com

King of the Screwups by K.L. Going

1. Do you think Liam's attempts to be unpopular are believable? Why? Why not?
2. How would you react to your father's behavior if you were Liam?
3. How do you think Liam's mother's behavior affects her son?
4. Do you think the characters in this novel are authentic – particularly Aunt Pete and his friends? Why? Why not?
5. What do you think Liam's relationship with his mom and dad will be like going into the future?

Muchacho: A Novel by LouAnne Johnson

What is your opinion of alternative schools and special programs for students who don't do well in the traditional school setting?

What kind of person is Eddie? Give an example from the book to support your opinion.

Why do you think Lupe "picked" Eddie?

If you could give yourself a total makeover, what would you do?

What do you think of Eddie's three plans for avoiding fights?

What do you think will happen to Lupe and Eddie? Will they stay together? Do you think they *should* stay together? Why?

Which adult in this book do you think sets the best example for young people? Why? Give examples of things this person says or does.

Taken from Teacher's Guide for the Novel Muchacho by LouAnne Johnson

North of Beautiful by Justina Chen Headley

1. What physical imperfections annoy you most about yourself, and what do you do to try and hide them from others? Do you think anyone else notices them as much you do?
2. Compare and contrast Terra's relationship with Erik and then with Jacob. What is the basis for the connection between Terra and each boy, and what does Terra get from the two? What do they seek and get from her?
3. How damaging is the verbal abuse in the Cooper household? Do you believe that words can be just as powerful and hurtful as fists, or not? How have Terra's mom, her brothers Claudius and Merc, and she herself found different ways to deal with her father's temperament and treatment of them all?
4. How is Terra's art related to her voyage of self-discovery and expression? How does her medium fit her outlook on life, and where does she find support and inspiration in her endeavors?
5. What do each of the characters who travel to China expect and end up finding on the trip to China? What do they gain from the trip, and what fears did they overcome to make it? How can going far away provide us new perspective on our own backyards?

The Orange Houses by Paul Griffin

Meet Tamika Sykes—Mik to her friends (if she had any). She's hearing impaired and way too smart for her West Bronx high school. She copes by reading lips and selling homework answers, and looks forward to the time each day when she can be alone in her room drawing. She's a tough girl who never gets close to anyone, until she meets Fatima, a teenage refugee who sells newspapers on Mik's block. Both Mik and Fatima unite in their efforts to befriend Jimmi, a homeless vet who is shunned by the rest of the community.

The events that follow when these three outcasts converge will break open their close-knit community and change the lives of those living in the Orange Houses in explosive and unexpected ways.

Review from goodreads.com

Shiver by Maggie Stiefvater

1. Grace and Sam are both products of their upbringing, Grace of her neglectful parents, and Sam of his "pack." How do you think they would have been different with different parents? Do you believe that Sam's generosity and introspection is a product of his parents or of his natural personality? What about Grace's stoicism and kindness? Nurture or nature?
1. Sam regards becoming a wolf as the worst possible outcome, while Beck seems to be more pragmatic about it and Olivia seems to even embrace it. Why do you think they feel differently? How would you feel?
2. Beck changed three teens into werewolves to continue the care of the pack after he and Sam became wolves for good. Sam is horrified by his decision; Grace slightly less so, especially once she finds out that he had their consent. Do you think Beck was justified in taking such drastic steps to ensure caretakers for the wolves? What other options did he have?
3. The werewolfism in *SHIVER* can be a metaphor for many things: losing your identity in a suburban world, cancer, addiction. What else can it stand for?
4. Grace's parents are extremely neglectful: more interested in their own relationship than in a relationship with their daughter. Do you think they cross the line to abuse?
5. There are many different kinds of love in *SHIVER*: that between Grace and Sam, Grace and her friends, Isabel and her brother, Beck and Sam, Beck and Ulrik. What do you think draws each of these groups together? Do you think Grace and Sam's love is healthy or not? Where do you draw the line with obsession? How long does it take to fall in love?

Taken from author Maggie Stiefvater's website <http://www.maggiestiefvater.com/shiver-guide.php>

Skinned by Robin Wasserman

1. Do you think Lia's parents made the right choice?
2. If a student at your school, whether a friend or just someone you knew casually, were in a situation like this, would you react the way Lia's friends and acquaintances did?
3. Do you feel Lia was still human? Why or why not?
4. Even with its futuristic setting, did the story feel realistic to you?
5. What is your reaction to the group of Skinners and their lifestyle?
6. What did you think of the ending?

Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson

1. What does the title, *Wintergirls*, mean? Why was it chosen for this book?
2. Often in this book, Lia's thoughts are crossed out and replaced with different wording. For example: "...twelve ounces of hot chocolate = 400, but I am freezing. I need to ~~gulp the whole thing down and ask for more~~ drink one mouthful and ignore the taste." Chapter 40.00 consists entirely of three one-word "sentences," repeated 209 times. What do these techniques tell you about Lia? Are they effective in making Lia a believable and/or sympathetic character? Why or why not?

3. Even after Cassie's death and funeral, Lia continues to see and communicate with Cassie. How do you explain this? Are the encounters with Cassie positive for Lia? Why or why not?
4. Why is Cassie's "see-glass" important to Lia? What does it represent?
5. What kind of person is Elijah? How do you know? How does he influence Lia?
6. What do you think will happen to Lia in the future?

Book Club Discussion Guide from Penguin Point of View Books can be found here:

<http://www.pointofviewbooks.com/>

The Year We Disappeared: a Father-Daughter Memoir by Cylin & John Busby

One day your neighbor is there, the next the house is empty—and everyone that lived there is gone! This is the story written by a father and daughter that leave just such an empty house.

In 1979, tough cop John Busby spent the day in court and is tired as he drives to his night shift at the Falmouth, Massachusetts police department. As he drives, a car pulls up beside him, two shots explode, the window shatters, and he looks over to the passenger seat to see blood, teeth and bone.

Badly hurt, he drives to a lighted house. Rushed to the hospital, doctors work to save his life and do what they can for the missing lower half of his face. John survives but is unable to speak and eat. Doctors insert a tube into his stomach and slowly start reconstructing his face.

Nine-year-old Cylin, her two brothers, and their mother are thrown into a chaotic and frightening situation. Besides coping with John's injuries, the whole family may possibly be in danger.

Everyone knows who the attempted murderer is, but he is a powerful man—and both the police department and the City Hall are corrupt. Would he ever be brought to justice? For a year the family lives in fear.

And then they disappear.

From Mackin Booktalk! <http://www.mackinbooktalk.com>