2-2015

Seed

Maggie Mason Smith
Clemson University, mason5@clemson.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://tigerprints.clemson.edu/lib_pubs

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Please use publisher's recommended citation. http://www.slj.com/tag/ya-reviews/

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact awesole@clemson.edu.
Jacob’s faith is tested as he struggles to reconcile what he knows to be The Truth and what is happening around him. Hauk delivers a captivating character study, skillfully demonstrating the reasons why some people are drawn into cults and quietly revealing how unquestioned power turns rotten. Jacob is a realistic and relatable protagonist and his complex relationships with those around him—and himself—are ring true. Eden West is both quiet and loud, understanding and judging, and absolutely engrossing. Readers will be quick to judge the Grace but may find themselves looking inward to their own beliefs as they move through the story. **VERDICT** A heartbreakingly uplifting, and fantastic read. —Emily Moore, Camden County Library System, NJ


**Gr 9 Up—**Seed is at the center of 15-year-old Pearl’s life: it is the isolated family of which she is part, it is the house in which she lives, and it is the remote patch of land around that house where she sows and gathers crops for her family’s sustenance. Pearl is happy at Seed. She does not often leave because according to Papa S., the leader of Pearl’s family, Seed is pure and leaving risks contact with poisoned Outsiders who may taint Pearl’s spiritual core. The teen knows Papa S. is truthful, but when three Outsiders unexpectedly join the family, the patriarch’s word—and Pearl’s entire reality—is challenged. Heathfield’s debut novel is the first in a two-book series. Pearl’s development over the course of the novel is realistic and relatable, and readers will become attached and even frustrated with the heroine. The smooth pacing and sophisticated yet age-appropriate style of the novel will keep readers’ attention as the story’s mood slowly changes and the work builds to an ultimately stunning conclusion. **VERDICT** A strong read for girls just coming out who want to see their own experiences reflected back at them.—L. Lee Butler, Hart Middle School, Washington, DC


**Gr 9 Up—**After her older brother almost kills someone in a bar fight and disappears, Frances, a promising young artist, starts seeing strange things in her drawings. They materialize out of nowhere after she blacks out. She can’t figure out why these images are hazy and imprecise—until she puts one of them under a scanner, and learns with the help of her mentor Peter, another “messenger,” that each one reveals where and when someone is going to die. Peter’s convinced that they’re just a couple of killers, but Frances might have a plan to change all that, using their premonitions to save lives rather than end them, and maybe find her brother, presumed dead, in the process. But do they have the power, or the right, to change fate? That’s only one of the weighty questions explored in this clever page-turner. **VERDICT** A mash-up of philosophy, mystery, and horror, this haunting YA novel takes on all of these subjects with satisfying results.—Georgia Christgau, Middle College High School, Long Island City, NY


**Gr 7 Up—**In this dark thriller by a first-time British author, a sadistic self-appointed messiah leads his brainwashed cult in murdering boys born on New Year’s Day of 2000. Now 2013, only a few remain, including protagonist Adam, who runs, fights, and kills for his life, aided by his love interest and neighbor, Megan. Interpersed with Adam’s action-packed running around are various scenes of gruesome murders, torture, and cinematically threatening posturing by the cultist leader, Coron, and his fit teenage disciples. Hoyle removes Coron’s mystery fairly early by explaining that the “Master” he serves is merely a “shadowy production, a sort of echo, in Coron’s sick mind.” He also ends the novel with a list of real-life cults gone bad. Descriptive passages (“Gasoline was spilled carefully, thoughtfully, arteries linking to veins”) and well-formed chapters, which almost all end in dramatic single-sentence cliff-hangers, keep this work thrilling, if readers can keep track of the very large cast of dispensable bad guys. **VERDICT** Through characterization and dialogue are a bit weak, this gruesome survival story will most likely garner a readership among violence-craving, action-loving anglophiles.—Rhora Campbell, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC


**Gr 9 Up—**The conclusion to the thrilling “Twelve-Fingered Boy” trilogy (Carolrhoda Lab) has it all: explosions, romance, mental telepathy, hellish creatures comprised of living humans, and a crazy religious cult. This final installment opens immediately after its predecessor ends with little summation of what has lead up to the opening scene. The nation is being attacked by horrifying creatures made up of swarms of terrified humans, controlled by the Conformity: an evil, bodiless entity that feeds on the psychic energy of those with special abilities. Shreve and a small band of “extranaturals” are faced with the task of saving humanity. Like the first two books, there is plenty of action, mature language, and a darkness that pervades the work. The narration is told from several perspectives, which enhances the storytelling and help develop the lead characters (particularly giving insight as to why the young adults have become so jaded). This conclusion wraps up quickly and is not as concrete as the previous entries. For the story to work, readers must be willing to embrace the notion of Shreve using his astral body to perform supernatural feats. **VERDICT** Fans of the series will be satisfied.—Sherry J. Mills, Hazelwood East High School, St. Louis, MO
in 2008, McGann’s novel sometimes feels dated, but makes for an entertaining pick for mature readers. In her second year at university, Amina Mir lands an internship at the Chronicle. Her mother is a well-known and respected journalist, but Amina intends to make her own way. She expects the internship to start out as making coffee and keeping the copier working. When she is asked to do a human interest story on a veteran who has won the lottery but is not spending any of the money, she is glad just to have received a story assignment. What she does not expect is to find herself in the middle of a huge government conspiracy.

Ivor McMorris, the veteran, tries to convince Amina that someone has manipulated his memories of how and why he lost an eye in Sinnostan. Then Chi Sandwith, a conspiracy investigator, gives her even further reason to believe it just might be true. Has Ivor concocted his story of brainwashing or could it really be true? The characters are well developed and believable. Hovering UFOs, a rogue surgeon, and mindwashed schoolchildren are just a few of the pieces that readers will need to put together to figure out what is really going on in this suspenseful tale. Those who are ready to move on from present to past tense for effect. Some plotlines and clearly drawn characters are delivered in digestible pieces. The themes reinforce the idea that love does not have to be the undoing of any young female character. VERDICT A refreshing and dramatic tale with a fearless and fragile protagonist.—Colleen S. Banick, Westport Public Schools, CT


Gr 9 Up—The complex rivalries and alliances among humans, gargoyles, demons, angels, and fallen angels come to a complicated head in the final volume of this paranormal series for those already invested in the Wonder.

—Allison Tran, Mission Viejo Right Library.

106 School Library Journal FEBRUARY 2015