9-2015

The House on Stone's Throw Island

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Recommended Citation
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scribes the words was a complete fool after the name. Now, each time she opens the book, new lines of text appear. At the same time in Pakistan, Leila, who reads far too many romantic novels and is hoping for an “authentic cultural experience” in her father’s land, discovers the very same text in her great-uncle’s library. After an encounter with a beautiful moth, Leila is astounded to see new sentences appearing in her book. Back in Texas, Kai meets Doodle, a young girl out to catch the Celestial Moth, a creature rumored to be almost extinct. Her adventures with Doodle and their subsequent search for the elusive moth, as well as Leila’s cultural gaffes, lead readers on a rollicking adventure, complete with a suspiciously operated casket company, a (sort of) pet goat, and an obsession with the TV show Pakistani Idol. In the meantime, the story of The Exquisite Corpse unfolds, telling a tale of forbidden love and magic. Engaging and appealing, especially to those who have never quite fit in, this novel is sure to satisfy. VERDICT Hand this to readers who enjoy light fantasy and ample humor.—Carol Connor, Cincinnati Public Schools, OH

PARENTEAU, Shirley. Dolls of Hope. 336p. Candlewick. Sept. 2015. Tr $16.99. ISBN 9780763677527. Gr 3–6—Set in 1927 Japan, this companion book to Ship of Dolls (Candlewick, 2014) continues with the story of the Friendship Dolls project, an international exchange of dolls intended as a gesture of peace between America and Japan. When 11-year-old Chiyô disobeys her parents and sneaks along on a visit to see her sister’s wealthy fiancé, she is sent by him to an exclusive boarding school in the city to learn “poise and dignity.” Chiyô misses her rural home and family and struggles with issues of class and economic status at her new school. She is also bullied by Miyamoto, the entitled daughter of a prestigious military general, who vigorously opposes the doll exchange as a sign of weakness. When Chiyô, Miyamoto, and a few other girls are selected to sing at the doll welcoming ceremony in Tokyo, Miyamoto’s bullying escalates, culminating in the destruction of Emily Grace, the American doll meant for their school. When Chiyô is blamed for the incident, her expulsion from school immediately follows.

VERDICT A purchase with kid appeal that should be balanced with offerings that provide broader perspectives.—Laura Simeon, Open Window School Library, WA

POBLOCKI, Dan. The House on Stone’s Throw Island: A Ghost Story. 272p. Scholastic. 2015. Tr $16.99. ISBN 9780545645560; ebk. $16.99. ISBN 9780545645584. Gr 6 Up—Even before the wedding party reaches remote and isolated Stone’s Throw Island, peculiar things begin to happen. Once there, the appearance—and disappearance—of a girl, followed by disembodied words whispered in German, quickly convinces Josie Sandoval and Eli Barker, strangers before meeting on the way to the island, that something about Stone’s Throw is odd. When a storm unexpectedly blows in, cutting off all connection to the mainland, it isn’t just Josie and Eli who are uneasy; the entire wedding party is on edge. Eli has a theory about the island, but Josie
is determined to ignore anything extraordinary. Her resolve weakens, however, when she stumbles upon a hidden room and a long-forgotten diary, which may contain an explanation for the increasingly dangerous phenomena. This latest in a string of paranormal mysteries from Poblocki is as well written as it is eerie. As the realistic setting slowly morphs into something more nightmarish, the main characters are fleshed out through inner dialogue and snap decisions, sustaining the tense mood while progressing the plot. Short chapters divided into sections and peppered with plot twists drive the pace, vivid descriptions clearly depict even the strangest occurrence, and start-to-finish suspense keeps readers on edge for the entirety of the work.

**VERDICT** Perfect for readers who enjoy mysteries with a paranormal twist.—Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson University R. M. Cooper Library, South Carolina

POUNDER, Sibéal. *Witch Wars*. illus. by Laura Ellen Anderson. 272p. Bloomsbury. Jan. 2016. Tr $16.99. ISBN 9781619639256. Gr 3-6—Tiga Whicabim doesn’t know she’s a witch until Fran the fairy shows up in her tiny shed of a home, shows her that her name is an anagram for I Am A BIG WITCH, and takes her down the sink pipes to Ritzy City. There she discovers that witches’ hats are only pointy due to the journey up the pipes to our world, that witches love jam, and that she is one of nine girls slated to battle it out in the Witch Wars. The winner of Witch Wars gets to rule Ritzy City as Top Witch, but the stakes are higher for Tiga. If she loses, she’ll have to go back to her shed with her horrible caretaker, who feeds her only cheese water. Not to mention the fact that she doesn’t know a single spell. She’ll have to work hard to outsmart mean girl witches Felicity Bat and Aggie Hoof, but luckily her new friend Peggy vows to help. The young witches, along with the sassy little fairies, make for a colorful and unpredictable cast of characters. Whimsical black-and-white illustrations throughout help readers envision this fantastical locale.

**VERDICT** Silliness, riddles, puns, and many magical mishaps make this a great choice to help fill the elusive “funny book” hole that exists in many collections.—Mandy Laferriere, Fowler Middle School, Frisco, TX

HARASS, Laura. *The Lightning Queen*. 356p. Scholastic. Oct. 2015. Tr $16.99. ISBN 9780545800846; ebk. $16.99. ISBN 9780545800860. Gr 3-6—If books were written in black and white, *The Lightning Queen* would be written in color. Esma, a young Romani girl, meets Teo, a young Mixteco living on the Hill of Dust in the mountains of Mexico, when her traveling caravan makes a stop in Teo’s small village. The Romani bring with them the magic of cinema films, and after the loss of Teo’s father and sister, Esma gives him a reason to feel alive again. When Esma’s grandmother, the Mistress of Destiny, reveals Teo’s true fortune—that he and Esma will be lifelong friends and will save each other—Esma and Teo work hard to make sure their fortune comes true. Esma gives Teo the courage to save others and ultimately helps him to save himself. In return, Teo lifts Esma up just when she believes that her own dream is an impossibility. Esma and Teo go their separate ways; she becomes a shining star admired by the world, while he becomes a healer like his grandfather—and it is not until they are both in old age that they meet again. With the help of Teo’s grandson Mateo and Esma’s granddaughter Ruby, Teo and Esma rekindle their lifelong friendship. Like surviving a lightning strike, this book is rare