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Awake

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tic and handled well. Flo turns to religion, joining a youth group and finding peace at church. Renée, who has her own questions about faith and loss, assumes this is a “Flo fad” (Flo has taken up—and dropped—many hobbies). Further separating the friends is a relationship Renée has with a guy in his 20s; he slut-shames her (“Women can’t behave like men when it comes to sex,” he says), an occurrence unfortunately not dated for this book set in the 1990s. A tragedy meanwhile reminds the girls what’s important, and readers are again left hoping that O’Porter writes more about the pair. This smart, touching, and often funny book will appeal to teens, especially those on the cusp of adulthood. **VERDICT** While it’s not essential to have read *Paper Airplanes* in order to enjoy *Goose*, this book will be most appreciated by those familiar with the characters. —*Amanda Mastrull, Library Journal*

PANITCH, Amanda. *Damage Done.* 304p. Random. 2015. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9780553507492.

Gr 9 Up—In the vein of E. Lockhart’s *We Were Liars* (Delacorte, 2015) and Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl* (Crown, 2012), Panitch’s novel delivers a heart-pounding, emotionally charged story that proves that not everything is what it seems. Julia Vann faces unmentionable consequences when her twin brother, Ryan, brings a gun to school and kills 11 people in the band room. Ryan, after shooting himself, remains in a coma, and Julia’s family moves to a different city to escape the whispers and outright hatred. As Julia, now called Lucy, realizes her brother’s psychologist is following her, she must confront buried memories that threaten her daily existence. The slow trickle of reminiscences unveils a dark truth, one that Julia/Lucy wants hidden forever, and one in which she will go to extreme lengths to protect. **VERDICT** The latest author to tackle unreliable narrators, Panitch combines heart-twisting realities with a good old-fashioned mystery. —*Amanda C. Buschmann, Atascocita Middle School, Humble, TX*

PERRY, Jolene. *Has to Be Love.* 272p. Albert Whitman. Sept. 2015. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 9780807565575.

Gr 7 Up—Senior year is a confusing time for most teens, but Clara has extra challenges to deal with. She got into her dream university, but it would take her thousands of miles away from everything she knows in her small Alaska town. Her boyfriend is talking more seriously about their future, but there is a new student teacher who is making her doubt everything she thought she knew. And overshadowing it all are the scars that mar her face and remind her of the violent grisly attack that took her mother. This book breathlessly captures that

adolescent moment of being torn between an old life and the possibility of the new as well as romance and the dangers and exhilarations of physical contact. There is a persistent thread of Mormon faith throughout the book, but Perry integrates it with a light touch that reads as integral to the characterizations rather than an attempt at evangelizing. The characters are well developed and engaging, occasionally falling into familiar tropes (the forbidden older lover being one), but are well drawn and likable enough to overcome that. While the Alaskan setting is true to life, even that pales compared to the authentic, dynamically portrayed interior setting: a senior year in high school and all the transitions that entails. What at first glance appears to be a romance novel featuring a stock girl character with two love interests is revealed to be much more multilayered coming-of-age tale about finding one’s own way in the world. **VERDICT** Teens who identify as Latter Day Saints will certainly gravitate to this novel, though the rich writing, strong female protagonist, and faith message will help it find wider readership. —*Elizabeth Nicolai, Anchorage Public Library, AK*

PIERSON, Katie. *‘89 Walls.* 240p. ebook available. further reading. glossary. Wise Ink. 2015. pap. \$12.99. ISBN 9781940014555.

Gr 9 Up—Pierson packs AIDS, abortion, suicide and more in her message-heavy 1989 romance. Quinn and Seth have different viewpoints on most things, as evidenced by their heated classroom debates. They’ve met their match in each other, and a mature and respectful first love story follows—although the plot is secondary to the setting. The author’s passion for the period is clear. The narrative is built around the events of the decade, instead of starting with a compelling story and then setting it in a specific time frame. Instead of delving deeply into a few issues, numerous big themes are only touched upon at a surface level. Stylistically, Pierson makes curious choices as to what details she provides in the story line and pacing and which ones are left out. Quinn’s pregnancy reveal and the internal conflict that ensues on whether she should have an abortion is given short shrift while a sex scene with Seth gamers pages of excruciating detail. Also, Quinn’s breakup with her best friend seems rather abrupt. Politics, not the personal, drives the story. Pierson’s novel reads like a primer on the 80s through the eyes of likable, although unmemorable, characters. **VERDICT** An exploration of the recent past with uneven pacing and ill-defined characters. —*Laura Falli, McNeil High School, Austin, TX*

PRESTON, Natasha. *Awake.* 352p. ebook available. Sourcebooks Fire. Aug. 2015. pap.

\$9.99. ISBN 9781492618522.

Gr 8 Up—Scarlett Garner has a gap in her memory. She can’t remember anything before her fourth birthday and because she always develops a headache when she tries, she is starting to accept that her memories are likely lost for good. When Scarlett meets Noah, the new guy at school, she falls hard and fast; Noah is just as smitten as she and quickly begins helping Scarlett work toward regaining her memory. But when Scarlett is in a car accident and starts to have flashbacks, she isn’t sure that she wants to remember after all. Fortunately, Noah is the very definition of emotional support. Unfortunately, his motives may not be as pure as they seem. Although centered on Scarlett, if it weren’t for the love interest, the novel’s interesting but far-fetched plot—can anyone really remember their first four years?—would fall completely flat. Noah dictates the pace of the work and Noah creates and sustains the mood; readers quickly learn that he isn’t as he seems and as each chapter reveals just a little more of who Noah really is, readers will find themselves questioning every minute he spends with his would-be victim. Although the progression of Scarlett’s relationship with Noah is unrealistic and the thoughts of both characters are repetitive at times, Noah’s internal crisis and ultimate decision will keep readers intrigued. **VERDICT** An engaging but flawed thriller. —*Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson University R. M. Cooper Library, South Carolina*

SAKURABA, Kazuki. *Red Girls: The Legend of the Akakuchibas.* tr. from Japanese by Jocelyne Allen. 300p. ebook available. Viz Media/Haikasoru. 2015. pap. \$15.99. ISBN 9781421578576.

Gr 10 Up—Manyo, abandoned by the mythical “Mountain People,” is adopted by the Tadas, whom she affectionately refers to as the “young couple.” Not only is Manyo an “outlander,” she is also illiterate, making her the target of ridicule and bullying. Blessed (or cursed, depending upon perspective) with clairvoyance, Manyo is chosen by an elite family (the Akakuchibas) to become the family matriarch and give birth to the heir of the family business. What follows is a tragic mystery reminiscent of Cassandra from Greek myths (except Manyo remains mostly silent about her prophecies). Told from the perspective of her granddaughter, this volume is the story of the Akakuchiba family’s dominance in Japan during the post–World War II industrial boom and the trials of their offspring in the years of civil unrest, technology upsurge, and the end of the Cold War that followed (1953–92). Part mystery, drama, and supernatural, this title is full of characters and intertwining stories that occasionally get lost in one another.

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