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Stone Cove Island

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MCKINNEY-WHITAKER, Courtney. *The Last Sister.* 232p. (Young Palmetto Books). ebook available. Univ. of South Carolina. 2014. Tr \$39.95. ISBN 9781611174298; pap. \$19.95. ISBN 9781611174304; ebk. ISBN 9781611174311. LC 2014008465.

Gr 7 Up—This historical novel is set in the Carolinas during the Cherokee Wars, concurrent with Thomas Jefferson and John Adams writing the Declaration of Independence and George Washington navigating the Delaware River. Seventeen-year-old Catie Blair is forced to conjure up maturity and responsibility when tragedy strikes her family. She relies on the kindness of strangers as she makes her way on the frontier with danger everywhere (soldiers, Indians, and wild animals), not to mention meager food and shelter. Even as daily challenges abate, she finds herself embroiled in a love triangle that pushes her to reckon with what she believes and what she wants for her future. The novel is noteworthy for its setting, circumstances germane to Colonial American history yet little known. The spotlight shifts south to a geopolitical conflict that deadlocked the British and French and also drew in innocent bystanders. There are several conflicts in this tale, including battles involving the Scots, the colonialists, and Native Americans. Unfortunately, there was a missed opportunity to include more details about Cherokee culture and motivations. Excellent character development is showcased in the narrative with its portrayal of the protagonist's struggle under difficult circumstances when facing tough choices in the crossfire. A unique historical fiction title with a compelling plot and unique backdrop, taking place during a little-known skirmish in a pivotal time of American history.—*Amy Thurow, New Glarus School District, WI*

MONIR, Alexandra. *Suspicion.* 368p. Delacorte. Dec. 2014. lib. ed. \$20.99. ISBN 9780375991363; Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9780385743891; ebk. \$10.99. ISBN 9780385372503.

Gr 8 Up—When Imogen was a child, she and her family spent the summers at Rockford Manor. At age 10, she accidentally conjured a flower out of nothing. That night, still troubled by her supernatural power, she wakes to a fire in the garden—one that traps her parents and her cousin's parents, leaving the girls orphans. After returning to New York to live with friends, Imogen cuts off contact with Cousin Lucia. Now, right before her high school graduation, Imogen's grandfather and cousin have both died, and Imogen inherits the estate—and the title of Duchess. Rockford Manor holds many secrets—ghostly whispers, strange winds, and a return of Imogen's elemental powers. The first half of the book is more reminiscent of Meg Cabot's "The Princess Diaries" (Harp-

erCollins) than it is of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, on which this story is based; the supernatural elements are hardly necessary to the plot. Teens may get frustrated with plot points that don't make sense, but a hinted-at sequel might offer clarification in future installments.—*Brandy Danner, Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, MA*

MYERS, Suzanne. *Stone Cove Island.* 280p. Soho Teen. Nov. 2014. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9781616954376; ebk. ISBN 9781616954383.

Gr 9 Up—Eliza Elliot has always lived on Stone Cove Island, a tourist destination off the coast of Massachusetts. The island is small; year-round residents know each other and as in most small towns, change does not happen easily or often. When the island is hit by a devastating hurricane, Eliza organizes a day of clean up, volunteering to tackle the lighthouse herself. While there, Eliza finds a strange and unsettling letter, which she later learns is directly connected with a murder—an incident she has never even heard mentioned before, and which she cannot get anyone to tell her about now. The townspeople may not be talking, but Eliza is determined to find out what happened to Bess. Myers's debut has an in-

teresting plot, is written in a language appropriate for its intended audience, and has an important theme, change, at its center. The mood and the pacing are a little off in some places, however. The characters overreact at times and the plot skips ahead now and then, creating gaps that break the flow of the work. Additionally, there is more than one loose end at its conclusion. This is a supplementary work for any strong realistic fiction collection, but avid mystery/thriller readers may find it unsatisfying and predictable.—*Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson University R. M. Cooper Library, South Carolina*

★ **NAPOLI, Donna Jo.** *Hidden.* 384p. bibliog. S. & S./Paula Wiseman Bks. Dec. 2014. Tr \$17.99. ISBN 9781442483002.

Gr 7 Up—Readers who enjoyed Donna Jo Napoli's *Hush* (S. & S., 2007) and wondered about the fate of eight-year-old Brigid finally have their answers. The author uses her amazing ability to find the bare bones of an old story and flesh them out into a rich, living tale. This time, it is the story of Alfhild, feared female pirate of 10th-century Norse lore. Brigid survives her plunge into icy waters when escaping the slave ship she and her sister Melkorka were aboard. Upon realizing that Mel did not escape with her,

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— *Booklist*

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