Vanished

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ments he endured involving Evans one month before. To further his surprise, it is not Evans who flies in on the helicopter to retrieve him but Don Mundie, CIA, who instantly arouses King's suspicions by calling him William. Upon their arrival at the hotel, Blake is clueless as to Mundie's identity, so King knows what he has to do. Together the three boys overpower Mundie, make a run for it, and run straight into Evans at the door. Mundie attempts to convince the boys that Evans is conning them but the boys place their faith in Evans and exit with him. King and his friends must make a choice, and the choice leaves them nowhere to hide. This fast-paced thriller full of unexpected twists, addressing deception, identity struggle, and inner peace, deserves its place on the shelf. VERDICT For fans of plot-driven conspiracy-theory fiction.--Susan Harris, Ridgeway High School, TN


Gr 7-10—In Rock the Boat, 17-year-old Webb is a Canadian songwriter trying to land a record deal in Nashville. He runs into financial trouble when he places his trust in an unscrupulous record producer. When Webb buys lunch for a vegan who turns out to be no more than meets the eye, the young man’s fortune begins to change. In Learning the Ropes, despite her father’s misgivings, Mandy attends a camp that trains young people to be professional circus performers. She needs to stay focused on her rope climbing to beat the competition, but an accident resulting in the death of a local aerialist threatens Mandy’s drive. Does she have the guts to pursue this dangerous occupation, or should she follow her dad’s advice and set her dream aside? Both of these novels will hook readers from the first chapter. Even though the ambitions of the main characters are specialized, Webb and Mandy are relatable to any young teen in pursuit of a dream. The specifics of the characters’ interests—music and circus performance—are described in a way that is true to life and easy to grasp. VERDICT Suspensful plots, fascinating details, and likable protagonists make these titles wonderful additions to high school collections.--Alyson O’Reilly Poage, Seminole of the Southwest Lib.


Gr 9 Up—“It was a fine night for an execution...” but the Red Rook has other plans. Eighteen-year-old Sophia Bellamy, with the help of her older brother Tom and their trusted friend Spear, has freed the prisoners before the Razor could sever their heads. This retelling of The Scarlet Pimpernel (a story unlikely to be familiar to most teens) is set in a far-future England and France, when magnetic pole shifts have rendered technology a distant memory. Candlelight, penned letters, and escapes on horseback are the order of the day, and shards of plastic can fetch a pretty price. A political atmosphere similar to the French Revolution has taken hold, and the Rook is determined that innocent lives will not be lost. When not wielding her sword (and a red-tipped feather as a calling card), Sophia is juggling her betrothal of convenience to handsome Frenchman René Hazard, meant to save the Bellamy estate from forfeiture. René is more intriguing (and smarter) than she expected, and though uncomfortable sparks initially fly between them, they soon find they are on the same side, despite René kinship to the Ministre of Security—the very man who has vowed to see the Red Rook brought down. Sophia and René are well matched, and Cameron’s atmospheric writing keeps the novel moving. A good choice where Robin LaFevers’s Grave Mercy (Houghton Harcourt, 2012) or Jennifer Donnelly’s Revolution (Delacorte, 2010) are popular. VERDICT This dashing story line combines a technology-free dystopia with swashbuckling romance.--Maggie Knapp, Trinity Valley School, Fort Worth, TX


Gr 8 Up—Near the end of Phoebe’s sophomore year, her family abruptly moves from San Francisco to her stepfather’s sprawling ancestral home in England. Phoebe is convinced the move is a result of something awful she did back in California, but her tense family won’t talk about it—or much else, for that matter. The house itself seems to send out a dark and hungry vibe, putting the teen on high alert. The secret history of the estate constantly arouses King’s suspicions by calling him William. Upon their arrival at the hotel, Blake is clueless as to Mundie’s identity, so King knows what he has to do. Together the three boys overpower Mundie, make a run for it, and run straight into Evans at the door. Mundie attempts to convince the boys that Evans is conning them but the boys place their faith in Evans and exit with him. King and his friends must make a choice, and the choice leaves them nowhere to hide. This fast-paced thriller full of unexpected twists, addressing deception, identity struggle, and inner peace, deserves its place on the shelf. VERDICT For fans of plot-driven conspiracy-theory fiction.--Susan Harris, Ridgeway High School, TN


Gr 9 Up—Sadie, Darcy, and Rosanna are roommates in New York City the summer before their college freshman year. Sadie, a native New Yorker, is interning at the Department of City Planning and hopes to pursue a career in urban design. Darcy, from Southern California, has unlimited financial support from her parents, which she uses to pursue her carefree social activities and adventures. Rosanna leaves Chicago with the hopes of starting over in a new city but is plagued with constant worry over her living expenses. Despite their differences, the girls enjoy one another’s company and support one another through their budding romances. They each have secrets that are alluded to but will likely be revealed in the planned sequel. Each chapter is told in the alternating, indistinguishable voices of the three girls. Though slow at times, the plot moves along at an even pace. The strength of this work lies in its reverence for New York City culture and its ability to capture the excitement of embarking on a new adventure. Readers with a love of made-for-TV romances will enjoy this series opener. VERDICT Recommended for those who have exhausted most of Sarah Dessen’s titles.—Lynn Rashid, Marriott Ridge High School, Marriottsville, MD


Gr 9 Up—Kalahl is lucky to have best friends like Brit and Beth. Seniors and co-captains of the field hockey team, Brit and Beth took Kalahl in when she transferred to Northside, introducing her to their world of high school popularity and drama. But Kalahl is falling for Beth, and before she can talk to her about her feelings, Beth vanishes. According to the school’s administration, her disappearance is tied to a secret relationship with Brit’s boyfriend, and soon after the gossip begins, Brit commits suicide, leaving Kalahl without either of her two friends. Following Brit’s death, Beth finally contacts Kalahl, but when she does, Kalahl realizes that something is very wrong. This novel tackles themes of friendship, deception, obsession, and love. However, Kalahl encounters the same set of
problems and reacts the same way over and over again, coming across as a bit static and at times tiresome. The pace picks up about two-thirds of the way through, which brings about a welcome change in Kalah, although the secondary characters remain underdeveloped. VERDICT With early hints of John Green’s Paper Towns (Dutton, 2008) that slowly morph into Gillian Flynn’s Gone Girl (Crown, 2012), this work is recommended for dedicated readers of realistic fiction.—Maggie Mason Smith, Clemson University R. M. Cooper Library, South Carolina

CROSS, Julie & Mark Perini. Halfway Perfect. 384p. Sourcebooks Fire. May 2015. pap. $9.99. ISBN 9781402297199. Gr 10 Up—Eve Nowakowski knows all about the ups and downs of the modeling lifestyle. Just a few years ago, she was internationally known cover girl Eve Castle—but the life became too much to bear, and she slipped into anonymity. Now a freshman at Columbia University, she discovers that photography is her passion, and through a twist of fate she becomes an assistant to a famous fashion photographer, which puts her right back in the world she tried so desperately to escape. At her first fashion shoot, Eve meets rising modeling star Alex, and sparks immediately develop.

ENGLISH, Catherine. Emerald Green. 384p. Scholastic. May 2015. pap. $9.99. ISBN 9780545511167. Gr 8 Up—At the end of Exile (HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen Bks. Apr. 2015) Gr 9 Up—As long as Cal can remember, he has been part of a trio: Cal, Spencer, and Lizzie. Cal and Spencer have known each other since preschool, and Lizzie came into their lives in first grade. It was obvious even then that Lizzie needed protecting and the boys took the job seriously, often helping Lizzie escape her drunken mother and her string of abusive boyfriends. Now in high school, they are still close, but the dynamic is different; they love one another, but Lizzie is in love with Spencer, even though she knows Spencer is gay. Lizzie’s late night admission that she and Spencer slept together once makes Cal feel like an outsider for the first time, although he tries to hide it. Everything changes one afternoon when Cal’s car is hit at a high speed by a distracted driver. Spencer only receives superficial bumps and bruises, Lizzie is thrown from the car and killed, and Cal is injured severely enough to require a heart transplant. He is given Lizzie’s heart and starts hearing her voice in his head. He also has dreams that he is sure are of Lizzie’s life, and he finds himself with some of her artistic talent. It is his inability to overcome his fear of driving that convinces him to start seeing a psychotherapist, and he slowly starts healing and learning to forgive himself. VERDICT This novel will appeal to readers who enjoy Lurlene McDaniel’s and Gayle Forman’s books.—Stevie L. Pett, Westhills Secondary School, Mississauga, ON

FARRAR, Stella. The 100-Meter Freestyle. 232p. Delacorte. Apr. 2015. pap. $17.99. ISBN 9780385389938. Gr 9 Up—Danielle and Abby are twins; one has been part of a trio: Cal, Spencer, and Lizzie. Cal and Spencer have known each other since preschool, and Lizzie came into their lives in first grade. It was obvious even then that Lizzie needed protecting and the boys took the job seriously, often helping Lizzie escape her drunken mother and her string of abusive boyfriends. Now in high school, they are still close, but the dynamic is different; they love one another, but Lizzie is in love with Spencer, even though she knows Spencer is gay. Lizzie’s late night admission that she and Spencer slept together once makes Cal feel like an outsider for the first time, although he tries to hide it. Everything changes one afternoon when Cal’s car is hit at a high speed by a distracted driver. Spencer only receives superficial bumps and bruises, Lizzie is thrown from the car and killed, and Cal is injured severely enough to require a heart transplant. He is given Lizzie’s heart and starts hearing her voice in his head. He also has dreams that he is sure are of Lizzie’s life, and he finds himself with some of her artistic talent. It is his inability to overcome his fear of driving that convinces him to start seeing a psychotherapist, and he slowly starts healing and learning to forgive himself. VERDICT This novel will appeal to readers who enjoy Lurlene McDaniel’s and Gayle Forman’s books.—Stevie L. Pett, Westhills Secondary School, Mississauga, ON
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