

Zero Tolerance by Claudia Mills - Middle school setting, strong early teen voice, excellent use of details.

Sierra Sheperd is the consummate lawyer's daughter, so when she accidentally brings her mother's lunch instead of hers to school, she immediately tells a teacher. The reason she confesses her mistake is because her mother always packs a paring knife to peel her apple with, and Sierra knows her school has a zero tolerance policy. Unfortunately, this zero tolerance policy is the business and she ends up being assigned in-school suspension with a bunch of weirdos and losers. Instead of working on her leadership club banner, now Sierra has to report to a weird meeting room that's been repurposed as a place to warehouse the kids in trouble - and in her middle school, this means becoming a pariah. When the national media gets hold of her story, Sierra inadvertently fans the flames of her situation... but also discovers a way out of her mess (maybe). Instead of crushing on hot golden boy Colin, Sierra is thrown together with a burnout named Luke, whom she gets to know and starts to realize she has more in common with than she thought. A school secretary plays a pivotal role in her drama, as Sierra and the suspension room kids are not even supervised on a regular basis due to cutbacks in staffing. Sierra gets the chance to make a difference - but should she take it?

Texting the Underworld by Ellen Booraem ([Booklist review](#) 10/13)

Middle school/late elem, great use of setting & wordplay, perfect for advanced readers who want a challenge mixed w/ magical realism. (Readalikes: *The Lightning Thief* by Riordan, *Artemis Fowl* by Colfer, and *The Flame of Olympus* by O'Hearn)

Ask my Mood Ring How I Feel by Diana Lopez- late elem/middle school; excellent use of family dynamics, great depiction of a Latino family, definitely the right book for bibliotherapy to use with kids whose family members are going through medical issues (or midlife crises) Readalikes: *Rules of the Road* by Joan Bauer, and *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* by Ann Brashares.

([Booklist review](#) 7/13)

Haunted short story collection ([Booklist Online review](#) 8/12/13)

Recommend this one to kids who tore through Alvin Schwartz's *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* or Barry Yourgrau's *NASTYbook* (April, 2005). Just remember to warn them of an occasional "long, slow, almost thoughtful scrape of claws."

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library by Chris Grabenstein ([Goodreads](#)) Kyle has always been a fan of the Lemoncello game empire, but when the enigmatic puzzle-creator builds a new library in town, he struggles with an entry to win a spot in the lock-in for twelve of the town's twelve-year-olds. Against the odds, Kyle squeaks in to discover that the only way out is through the most fiendish game he's ever faced... designed by an unexpected expert. Blending the outsize personality of Willy Wonka, unexpected alliances a la **The Westing Game**, and a determined young hero to rival Anthony Monday from **The Treasure of Alpheus Winterborn**, *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* will charm young readers.

Money Run by Jack Heath ([Booklist review](#) 5/13)

Great for reluctant readers, this will appeal to fans of Heist Society, Alex Rider, and Spy High books.

Brianna on the Brink by Nicole McInnes ([Booklist Online review](#) 6/17/13)

Everybody will want to talk about the hook: teen has one-night stand with (married!) man who falls down dead after knocking her up... but the real story is Brianna's development into a strong, determined young woman who always gets back up one more time than she falls.

Takedown by Allison van Diepen

(Readalikes: also recommend Street Pharm by van Diepen & Blank Confession by Pete Hautman)

Darren is a whole teen living a half life - just when he'd rather be writing lyrics and dropping beats with his best friend White Chris, hanging with his little brother Kiki and girlfriend Jessica, Darren is wrapped up in Diamond Tony's turf war. Fresh from juvie, where he took the rap as one of Diamond Tony's lookouts, now Darren is one of DT's foot soldiers slinging drugs on street corners. But Darren's only getting close to exact his revenge. He's flipped and now he's informing on DT. Darren is in too deep - when his cop contact gets waxed and Jessica is caught in an ambush orchestrated by the thirsty Bloods, Darren knows the stakes have gotten too high. van Diepen's tight plotting and pacing reign supreme here, with every scene building incredible tension and every bit player reveals themselves to be a critical thread in a tangled, menacing web. Darren's motivations are wholly believable, and the setting - cold, snowy, and desolate - keeps readers shivering on the streets of Toronto with him, as if you've taken a hit of Diamond Tony's signature product yourself. This will win van Diepen new and dedicated fans.

Adorkable by Sarra Manning ([Booklist Online](#) review 4/13)

"Londoner Jeane Smith might have her own anti-consumerist lifestyle brand (Adorkable), write for foreign teen magazines, keynote trendy conferences, live independently in her own apartment while her family travels the world, and have a ton of Twitter followers... but she is deeply lonely, insecure, and uses her hipster thrift shop outfits to distract from her restlessness."

Reality Boy by AS King ([blog entry](#)) Amy's done it again. This was hands down the most compelling galley I brought home with me from ALA - the story of a kid who is dogged through adolescence by his childhood "participation" in a (fake) reality TV show not unlike Supernanny. Gerald is the "Crapper," who defecated on tables, in handbags, and various Barbie accessories when he was a preschooler/elementary schooler. The British nanny (who isn't who she seems) is brought to help Gerald & his two sisters when his mother writes a desperate letter to the show. Gerald's dad is just as unhappy as the rest of them, and the whole family is miserable. We see Gerald's mother struggle with a son she considers "retarded," a younger sister who feels completely out of

place, and an older sister whose behavior grows more and more erratic and disturbing with time.

We join Gerald long after the cameras were packed away and the lighting dismantled, but the show haunts him at every turn. His therapist has recommended boxing, but this is only encouraging Gerald's violent tendencies. He's invented a fantasy world called Gersday, where he can spend time doing only the nicest things with characters who are kind and sweet to him, but escaping to Gersday is getting harder and harder. As if that wasn't enough, Gerald has met a compelling young lady at his afterschool job slinging hot dogs at the local coliseum. He figures that nobody's going to want to date The Crapper – who'd want to be associated with that?

Through flashbacks mixed with present-day scenes, Gerald invites us into his world and shows us what it's like to drown in the misconceptions of others. And honestly, that's really what this book is about – the hidden stories behind carefully crafted narratives, public personas vs. private ones, and what happens when your expectations are shattered by a reality you didn't want and didn't ask for. Like Gerald's therapist reminds him, we all project our own experiences and expectations on other people to a certain extent – whether it's making assumptions about a reality TV show family or the new coworker in the next cube. As Gerald peels back the curtain on his experience, the reader starts discovering more and more of the truth behind the screen – and it's both more and less shocking than you may expect. This is a book right in step with our times, perfect for an age in which we grow closer and simultaneously further apart using screens and social media with the ability to edit our stories down to a version of the truth that skims the surface of our lives like a fancy veneer atop particle board furniture.

I anticipate many reality TV memoirs in the next ten years, as kids like the Duggars, Gosselins, SuperNanny families, and others age up to the point where they feel compelled to share their stories in another medium. Some will do it for money, sure, but others will do it so that people can hear more about what their shows *didn't* show. I won't be surprised if their stories are as compelling as Gerald's.

Etiquette & Espionage by Gail Carriger ([blog entry](#))

If you delight in a bit of steampunky girl fun, then new student Sophronia's misadventures at Mademoiselle Geraldine's Finishing Academy for Young Ladies of Quality will definitely suit. Sophronia is fourteen, and just not all that interested in keeping a clean hanky on her person – she'd rather tear apart a bit of machinery or dirty her hands, and that simply won't do. So her mother sends her off to a most unorthodox finishing school, where the girls learn how to turn their feminine wiles into intelligence-gathering, mechanical servants contrive to prevent dashing adventures, and the students dream fondly of the day they are able to poison their first husbands! Of course Sophronia is not able to simply apply herself to her studies. An unpleasant encounter with a group of flywaymen (highwaymen who use dirigibles, of course) on the way to school leads to an alliance between Sophronia & Dimity, both new students, and a suspicion that failing student Monique is not what she seems – a missing communications prototype is

linked to Monique, and the twosome persist in attempting to discover the snooty older girl's secret.

Filled with delightful puns and funny, light details about life in an alternate Victorian England filled with fascinating devices and mysterious alliances, you can recommend this book to fans of similar books like *Fever Crumb*, *Sorcery & Cecelia*, or *A College of Magics*. Fans of the Parasol Protectorate series (Carriger's books for adult readers) will like this as an expansion of that world.

Allegra by Shelley Hrdlitschka ([Booklist Online review](#) 7/13)

Allegra believed the move to a performing arts high school would bring her friends and the ability to devote herself totally to dancing, but instead she found herself craving a totally unexpected and forbidden fruit: her music theory teacher. Hrdlitschka allows Allegra to tell her own story, and her fine ear for teen emotion is well displayed as we see Allegra's social anxiety and panic attacks when forced to interact with her peers, the sorrow and disbelief at her parents' crumbling marriage, and the resistance to that unfamiliar feeling of love as handsome and young Mr. Rocchelli begins to fill the emptiness in her life. Allegra turns from dancing to composition as Mr. Rocchelli challenges her to write a full score from a melody he composed, and the metaphor is apt as Allegra runs with the assignment, sinking herself into a new obsession. Teens with a passion for the arts will see themselves in Allegra, whose flaws make her perfectly relatable.

Indelible [gr.10-12; also recommend *City of Bones* by Cassandra Clare]

Like most girls, Joy thought love would steal her breath away. Little did she suspect that it would try to cut her eye out instead! Indelible Ink and his sister, Invisible Ink, are otherworldly beings called Scribes who mark humans with the Sight for their particular clans. Joy has the dubious honor of being able to see them where nobody else can - and now she's been marked by Ink, and their connection goes deeper than mere skin. Joy is being pulled between this world and Ink's Twixt, but their love may be less powerful than the threats that stand in their way. Metcalf's lush descriptions make the world of the Twixt burst with sensory details, and readers will identify with Joy's head-in-the-clouds reaction to Ink's intoxicating effects. First in a new series, Indelible will appeal to romance and fantasy readers who prefer their attraction peppered with mysterious lore. Give this one to readers who couldn't get enough of Karou and Akiva in Laini Taylor's *Daughter of Smoke and Bone*.

Confessions of an Almost-Girlfriend

Rose Zarelli 2.0 is not taking crap from anyone, not the Swim Jocks or the anonymous nitwit who made her #2 on the school Slut List or her almost-boyfriend Jamie Forta. Especially not Jamie, who won't commit to loving or hating Rose but falls somewhere in that nebulous in-between. Since her dad died and her love life is up in the air, Rose spends her time trying new things like singing in the school musical, helping her BFF Tracy start an uber-successful fashion blog, and basically rebooting her life to Rose 2.0, where she's smarter, wiser, and better able to protect herself from the things life pushes in her way (harassment at school, her psychoanalyst mother, and a brother who might be doing more than just a little pot). Rozett maintains her pacing through the

rhythms of Rose's school year, and gives the reader diamond-bright flashes of insight through Rose's inner dialogue, as when she reminds herself that a random compliment from a friend can "fill up all the empty spaces I haven't known what to do with lately." This is an exceptional follow up to *Confessions of an Angry Girl*, with a control of language and characterization that catapults Rose into the leagues of Ruby Oliver from *The Boyfriend List* (4/1/2005, E. Lockhart) and Jessica Darling of *Sloppy Firsts and Second Helpings* (4/2003, Megan McCafferty). Thematically, Rose's journey will appeal to fans of Sarah Dessen (6/2009, *Along for the Ride*, *This Lullaby*). It's clear that there's more forthcoming in the *Confessions* series, so crank up Rose's playlist (back matter) and mark Rozett as an author to track.

Dare You To

Beth lives on the edge of her mother's addiction and abusive relationships when her uncle rescues her and whisks her off to tony Bullitt County High, where Ryan is a star athlete whose family is socially and politically prominent. When the two collide, sparks fly. Using the same setting from her previous book *Pushing the Limits* (9/1/2013) and including some of the same characters, McGarry recycles the concept of star-crossed love with teens that have vastly different secrets to hide (Ryan's Instagram-perfect life is darker than it seems). The gritty details of Beth's mom and her drug/alcohol addiction will draw in readers of *Ellen Hopkins* (*Glass*, 10/1/2007) while those who love tangled romance. While the titular dare that draws Ryan and Beth together was fleeting, their connection is anything but. Recommend this one to fans of Simone Elkeles' *Perfect Chemistry* series.

Still Star-Crossed by Melinda Taub ([Booklist](#) 7/13)

Rosaline Capulet must wed Benvolio Montague to cease the warring in Verona after Romeo & Juliet's deaths. The two band together to outwit the feuding families- will it work? Fun references to other Shakespeare characters (who appear in bit parts) will appeal to witty, literate teen readers; romance and mystery will capture fans of genre lit. Readalikes: Fans of this might enjoy *The Luxe* (Godbersen), but for more wit and humor try *The Princess Bride* (Goldman). Also consider Bruce Coville's retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Tarnish by Katherine Longshore ([Booklist](#) 7/13)

The court of Henry VIII flares back into life in this follow-up to *Gilt* (2012). Anne Boleyn is torn between Thomas Wyatt & King Henry. Great use of language; accessible for even non-history buffs. Give to romance fans who love reality TV - nobody did love & intrigue better than the Tudors!

Unwholly by Neal Shusterman ([blog entry](#))

The misfit trio from *Unwind* (2007) is back, and the Juvey Cops are on their tails. Shusterman does a great job of suffocating the reader with the same sort of tension that, one imagines, teens in this dystopian future feel. As an excellent source of healthy tissue

and organs, rebellious teens (and volunteer Tithes) are the perfect raw material for building a brave new world. The trial and tribulations of the runaways are nothing compared to a new character, Cam, who is slowly awakening to his reality as the most perfect human ever created - a rewind, a new sort of human made completely from the best parts of the best Unwound teens. Their memories are his memories; their experiences echo throughout him. But history is catching up to Connor, Risa, and Lev in ways they never anticipated, and the suspense is ratcheted up higher with each page. It's been a wait, but this sequel will hook in teen readers who missed *Unwind* the first time. Recommend with *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* for teens who are into the medical and ethical questions, or *Divergent* for those who like their teens on the run from the law.

Thanks to Connor, Lev, and Risa—and their high-profile revolt at Happy Jack Harvest Camp—people can no longer turn a blind eye to unwinding. Ridding society of troublesome teens while simultaneously providing much-needed tissues for transplant might be convenient, but its morality has finally been brought into question. However, unwinding has become big business, and there are powerful political and corporate interests that want to see it not only continue, but also expand to the unwinding of prisoners and the impoverished.

Cam is a product of unwinding; made entirely out of the parts of other unwinds, he is a teen who does not technically exist. A futuristic Frankenstein, Cam struggles with a search for identity and meaning and wonders if a rewound being can have a soul. And when the actions of a sadistic bounty hunter cause Cam's fate to become inextricably bound with the fates of Connor, Risa, and Lev, he'll have to question humanity itself.

Rife with action and suspense, this riveting companion to the perennially popular *Unwind* challenges assumptions about where life begins and ends—and what it means to live

When We Wake ([Goodreads](#))

Tegan is a normal Aussie teen, except for that whole waking up 100 years later because she was cryogenically frozen after being randomly killed thing. She wasn't the intended target of the assassin's bullet, but in this new future she's definitely the target of politically motivated factions that believe the "Living Dead Girl" has no soul, is a crime against humanity, and is not entitled to citizenship because she comes from another time. Large, meaty political issues abound but are tempered by Teagan's well-rounded life, including pangs from her past history, new friendships, and her love of music (each chapter is the title of a Beatles song). Quick, compelling read.

The Cydonian Pyramid ([Goodreads](#))

Even better than the first installment - Tucker discloses the the story of the time traveling diskos to a stranger in a strange land, while we learn the complete

background of Lah Lia, who becomes Yar Lia after trials and tribulations. Raised as a Pure Girl to be sacrificed for peace and harmony, she learns survival strategies from the Yar sisters in the convent connected to the palace near the Cydonian Pyramid. Lah Lia knows that her blood moon will arrive soon and she must keep her wits about her to avoid certain death at the hands of the priests. But which disko will she be thrown through? And what will she find on the other side? Tucker and Lah Lia have radically different pasts, but their future definitely depends on the choices of the other. Riveting sequel, can't wait for more.

RUSH (The Game #1) ([Booklist review](#) 6/13)

Ender's Game-a-like book, first in new series. Miki has a near-death experience and is flung together with a group of other teens in an alternate universe where they must battle the alien Drau or lose their lives. Romance + action = winner for many reluctant readers!

Twinmaker ([Booklist starred review](#); 9/15/13)

Readalikes: *Feed* by MT Anderson, *The Prestige* by Christopher Priest.

IF YOU READ ONLY ONE BOOK FROM MY LIST MAKE IT THIS ONE!!!

Sean Williams returns to the world he created in his adult novel, *The Resurrected Man*.

Life After Life ([Goodreads](#))

All of Ursula Todd's lives branch out, like a bizarre plant, from the night she is born in 1910, in the middle of a blizzard. The reader is led through instance after instance where Ursula dies, but then we are brought back to a point in the forks where she didn't die after all, by chance or by fate, and we see what lies in store for every version of Ursula. She seems to be living for a purpose; to encounter injustices large and small, and the plot mires in World War II as Ursula discovers there are thousands of ways to die and only a few chances to escape her own fate in the panic of the London Blitz. Of course, the most interesting interaction is the one in which she encounters Hitler... It's hard to talk about this book in terms other than the plot machinations because the artistry is so focused on that technique, but it's a helluva technique. Recommend to intellectually curious, history-loving older teens who can stick with the twisting, twining storylines. Guaranteed to make you want to stay up all night talking about what the heck just happened!

Mr. Penumbra's 24 hour bookstore ([Goodreads](#))

Best book I've read so far in 2012. The digital world collides with pen and ink in this quirky debut featuring an underemployed young hero who lucks into a new job at a mysterious bookstore with an even more mysterious clientele. Cross Google with a

secret society with a legendary puzzle, hidden clues, and a budding romance, and you get a remarkable book about the (faux) history of the printed word, problem-solving 21st century style, and ultimately the power of friendship.

Where'd you go, Bernadette? ([Goodreads](#))

Told entirely in letters, emails, evidence, and other written pieces, this is a quasi-epistolary voyage through the crazy streets of yuppie Seattle, where Bernadette Fox has pulled a runner after discovering that her husband Elgin is ready to commit her to the psych ward. Bernadette's anti-social ways reach a crux when the outside world insists on colliding with the perfect inner world she strives (and fails) to create. This novel from *Arrested Development* writer Semple is at its most compelling when her daughter, Bee, is involved with her mother's madness. Hilarious satire of modern life & parenthood ("The first stop on this crazy train is Kindergarten Junction, and nobody gets off until it pulls into Harvard Station") that teens will appreciate as much as adults.