

BEST BETS

2007

Reading for Young Adults

**The OLA's Canadian Materials
Committee picks this annual list.**

**Books are selected on the basis of their
literary merit as well as their appeal for
young adults.**

FICTION

Aker, Don. *The Space Between.*

Harper Collins.

Jace, a 17 year old Halifax boy, goes to Mexico with his aunt, mother, and nine-year-old autistic brother to fulfill one mission: to lose his virginity. As this humorous and touching story reveals the secrets of his “perfect” brother’s death a year ago, Jace enjoys the stunning scenery, takes in the local attractions, and makes friends with a hockey player who likes to party and seems to attract girls by the dozen. When Jace’s relationship heats up with the blond ponytail girl, he learns a thing or two about intimacy.

Bennett, Holly. *Warrior’s Daughter.*

Orca Book Publishers.

As the only daughter of the famous Irish warrior, Cuchulainn, Luaine seems likewise destined for greatness. When her father is killed and her mother commits suicide leaving her orphaned, Luaine has to use all her knowledge, wits, training, and inner strength to survive.

Brooks, Martha. *Mistik Lake.*

Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press.

Odella, coping with her parents' divorce and her mother's subsequent death, slowly takes on the maternal role of caregiver to her younger sisters as she comes to terms with her mother's own personal sorrows. Woven through the story is the setting of Mistik Lake, a Manitoba cottage town and scene of both the great tragedies, and the great loves and joys of Odella's life. This is a multi-layered and beautifully constructed coming of age tale.

Friesen, Gayle. *For Now.*

Kids Can Press.

They say you can't choose your family, but apparently no one ever told Jes's parents. Her dad lives alone now and some guy with his own daughter has moved in with her newly-pregnant mother.

Heneghan, James. *Payback.*

Groundwood Books.

It's one thing to fear bullies, quite another to let them know. Charlie thinks he can handle the goons at his school and doesn't sympathise with a friend who can't -until it is too late.

Jocelyn, Marthe. *How it Happened on Peach Hill.*

Tundra.

Is Annie's mother a famous clairvoyant, or an infamous dilettante? That depends on whether she's already milked your town. As for Annie, nobody can decide whether she's an idiot, a savant, both or none of the above.

Juby, Susan. *Another Kind of Cowboy.*

HarperTrophyCanada.

Alex has always known he was different. For as long as he can remember he has dreamed of learning to ride horses and competing in dressage tournaments. When he gets a chance to secretly take lessons from a couple of dressage experts, he is overjoyed, even though he knows his father would be furious if he found out. At the lessons, Alex meets Cleo, a wealthy girl who is attending a private all-girls boarding school and riding academy, who feels doomed to make mistakes because of her history of "poor judgment".

MacIntyre, R.P. and Wendy MacIntyre. *Apart.*

Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press.

A novel in letters, this is the correspondence of Jessica and Sween, two teens who have great struggles in their home lives and who find solace in writing to each other. The writing is honest and realistic, and the characters' struggles feel real. The reader is drawn into their tumultuous lives.

Ravel, Edeet. *The Secret Journey of Pauline Siddhartha.*

Raincoast Books.

Pauline is writing her third novel, and we are reading it first-hand. In this, her third adventure, she visits her grandmother in London and learns the ways of Buddhism. Not all is well though, as her mother may remarry, her boyfriend is acting oddly, and her best friend has moved to Toronto. This is a highly amusing tale of adventure told by an innocent and naïve narrator who doesn't always quite understand what is actually happening.

Toten, Teresa. *Better than Blonde.*

Puffin Canada

Sophie and the blondes return in this sequel to 2006's *Me and the Blondes*. Sophie is a year older, but her deceptions have caught up with her. Her father has been released from prison, but everyone at school thinks he is dead. And that is just the beginning of her problems! This is a delightful follow-up that may just surpass the original in brilliance and entertainment value.

The OLA's annual Best Bets evolved from a list put out by the Canadian Material's Committee of the Children's Services Guild. This Canadian Materials Committee is now under the wing of the OPLA Children and Youth Committee.

The OLA's Canadian Materials Committee selects books on the basis of their literary/artistic merit as well as their appeal for children and young adults. Text and illustrations are of equal importance in picture books and information books.

OLA'S CANADIAN MATERIALS COMMITTEE

We are a long standing committee with a strong voice in promoting Canadian literature for children and young adults. Our goal is to highlight excellence in literature for children and young adults for the OLA membership and others with an interest.



National Book Service

The Committee thanks National Book Service for their ongoing support with providing a place to meet and copies of books to review.

Meetings are held a minimum of four times a year at National Book Service (25 Kodiak Crescent in North York). Members discuss and evaluate recent publications by Canadian authors and illustrators. The books evaluated are suitable for children and young adults from birth to nineteen years old. From these discussions, the Committee produces "Best Bets" lists, annual annotated lists of recommended titles. These lists are released each year at the OLA Super Conference.

OLA's Canadian Materials Committee Members:

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Sarah Hart, Brampton Library
Sandy Laird, Mississauga Public Library
Sheilah O'Connor, Toronto Public Library
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