

## READ FOR A LIFETIME 2007-2008 Booklist

### **Across Five Aprils**

**Irene Hunt**

**224 pages**

The events of the Civil War unfold across five Aprils in this moving story by set in southern Illinois. Jethro Creighton, an intelligent, hardworking boy, is growing into manhood as his brothers and a beloved teacher leave to fight in the Union and Confederate armies. Of course, Abraham Lincoln is a frequent topic of conversation, and Jethro even receives a letter from his fellow Illinoisan.

### **Alice on Her Way**

**Phyllis Naylor**

**352 pages**

Alice, now almost 16, has a new boyfriend, goes to New York with her school, and participates in a program at her church. At first, she bristles when her dad signs her up for "Our Whole Lives," but is won over by its open exploration of sex, commitment, and responsibility. Sam, attentive to a fault, tests Alice's feelings about intimacy. Her relationship is contrasted with that of Faith, whose boyfriend is abusive, and Pam, who has oral sex with a boy she doesn't know well and regrets her impulsiveness when they get back to school and he ignores her. Homosexuality and interracial dating are given brief and accepting mentions. Alice faces all challenges with her trademark mix of confusion and maturity.

### **Armageddon's Children**

**Terry Brooks**

**384 pages**

Logan Tom is doomed to remember the past and determined to rescue the future. Far behind him lies a boyhood cut violently short by his family's slaughter, when the forces of madness and hate swept our world after decadent excesses led to civilization's downfall. Somewhere ahead of him rests the only chance to beat back the minions of evil that are systematically killing and enslaving the last remnants of humanity. Navigating the scarred and poisoned landscape that once was America and guided by a powerful talisman, Logan has sworn an oath to seek out a remarkable being born of magic, possessed of untold abilities, and destined to lead the final fight against darkness.

### **American Born Chinese**

**Gene Yang**

**240 pages**

As alienated kids go, Jin Wang is fairly run-of-the-mill: he eats lunch by himself in a corner of the schoolyard, gets picked on by bullies and jocks and develops a sweat-inducing crush on a pretty classmate. And, oh, yes, his parents are from Taiwan. This much-anticipated, affecting story about growing up different is more than just the story of a Chinese-American childhood; it's a fable for every kid born into a body and a life they wished they could escape. The fable is filtered through some very specific cultural icons: the much-beloved Monkey King, a figure familiar to Chinese kids the world over, and a buck-toothed amalgamation of racist stereotypes named Chin-Kee.

### **Body of Christopher Creed, The**

**Carol Plum-Ucci**

**331 pages**

When class freak Chris Creed suddenly disappears, his fellow students are not so much worried but abuzz with speculation: Is he a runaway, a suicide, a crime victim? Through a complicated but believable turn of events, narrator Torey Adams, a popular 16-year-old, starts to feel some concern and resolves to find the truth. His unlikely allies are two kids of dubious social status: Ali, who is Chris's neighbor, and Ali's boyfriend, Bo, a "boon" (someone from the boondocks) with a juvenile record. Convinced Chris's mother is to blame for Chris's disappearance, they plan to break into his house to steal his hidden diary in hopes of finding evidence. The plan backfires: Bo is caught, Torey is implicated and all three are the subject of malicious gossip that proves to have dangerous consequences.

### **Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee**

**Dee Alexander Brown**

**512 pages**

Beginning with the Long Walk of the Navajos in 1860 and ending 30 years later with the massacre of Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, it tells how the American Indians lost their land and lives to a dynamically expanding white society. During these three decades, America's population doubled from 31 million to 62 million. Again and again, promises made to the Indians fell victim to the ruthlessness and greed of settlers pushing westward to make new lives. The Indians were herded off their ancestral lands into ever-shrinking reservations, and were starved and killed if they resisted.

### **Chicago Poems**

**Carl Sandburg**

**88 pages**

Pulitzer Prize winning poet Carl Sandburg, was virtually unknown to the literary world when, in 1914, a group of his poems appeared in the nationally circulated Poetry magazine. His work found beauty and glory in the simple America that surrounded him: the farms, industry, landscape, culture, and most importantly, the people.

**Dreams from My Father:****Barack Obama****464 pages****A Story of Race and Inheritance**

In this memoir, the son of a black African father and a white American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a black American. It begins in New York, where Barack Obama learns that his father—a figure he knows more as a myth than as a man—has been killed in a car accident. This sudden death inspires an emotional odyssey: first to a small town in Kansas, from which he retraces the migration of his mother's family to Hawaii; then to Kenya, where he meets the African side of his family, confronts the bitter truth of his father's life, and at last reconciles his divided inheritance.

**Elsewhere****Gabrielle Zevin****304 pages**

Although Liz is maturing, coping with disappointments, and controlling her anger, she is getting younger. Having been killed by a hit and run driver, she now lives in Elsewhere with the grandmother who died before she was born. After death, the residents get younger until they become babies and are reborn onto Earth again. Initially mad at the driver and sad that she will not have a boyfriend and attend the prom, Liz misses her family and is sullen and depressed. Gradually, she begins to realize that life is not so bad in the hereafter.

**Fair Weather****Richard Peck****160 pages**

Three farm children take on the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. 13-year-old Rosie Beckett, isn't quite sure what inspired her mother to allow Rosie and her two siblings to visit rich Aunt Euterpe in a "place with a million or so people, most of them criminals," but she suspects it has something to do with her wanting to separate Rosie's older sister, Lottie, from her suitor, "a drifter and probably a grifter." In any case, Lottie, Rosie and their younger brother, Buster, accompanied by their flamboyant grandfather, nearly burst with excitement as they embark on the biggest adventure of their lives. The Becketts' boisterous spirits prove to be a little overwhelming for their widowed aunt (who still dresses in black after being a widow for four years). During the first 48 hours in Chicago, the Beckett clan manages to run off the household help and embarrass their aunt in front of some of Chicago's most prominent ladies. Luckily, things take a turn for the better, and later experiences riding a Ferris wheel, seeing Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and discovering Granddad Fuller is old pals with Buffalo Bill himself are as thrilling for Aunt Euterpe as for her less sophisticated kin.

**Harry Potter and the Deadly Hallows****J.K. Rowling****784 pages**

Harry has been burdened with a dark, dangerous and seemingly impossible task: that of locating and destroying Voldemort's remaining Horcruxes. Never has Harry felt so alone, or faced a future so full of shadows. But Harry must somehow find within himself the strength to complete the task he has been given. He must leave the warmth, safety, and companionship of The Burrow and follow without fear or hesitation the inexorable path laid out for him. In this final, seventh installment of the Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling unveils in spectacular fashion the answers to the many questions that have been so eagerly awaited.

**Heart of a Soldier****James B. Stewart****320 pages**

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and best-selling author Stewart aims to capture the enormity of the World Trade Center attack by retracing one of the lives lost in the disaster: that of Rick Rescorla, head of security for Morgan Stanley. From the late 1980s on, Rescorla tried to warn Port Authority officials that the World Trade Center was an easy target for terrorists. On September 11, after safely evacuating the Morgan Stanley offices in the south tower (he kept people calm by singing into his megaphone), Rescorla went back into the building minutes before it collapsed to search for stragglers.

**I'll Always Remember You...Maybe****Stella Pevsner****181 pages**

The Last thing in the world she wanted was somebody new. For Darien, the thought of Paul going off to college and leaving her to finish senior year alone was unbearable. But then suddenly it was their last few days together, and Paul was talking about dating other people. It was like a nightmare come true.

**Jungle, The****Upton Sinclair****416 pages**

Perhaps one of the most significant and influential American novels written, The Jungle by Upton Sinclair reveals the flipside to the American Dream. Jurgis Rudkus, the main character, is a Lithuanian immigrant who is at first gleeful and awed by his new homeland, America. Jurgis and his family travel to Chicago and settle in Chicago's Packingtown, one of the largest meat packing cities in the United States. As Jurgis and most of his family are employed in their inhospitable jobs, their ignorance about the American Dream is agonizingly chipped away as they experience first hand the abuses of a capitalistic, greedy, and monopolistic society. And, as they pack the rotting and rat infested meat, they revealed what Americans were really eating. Through their harrowing experiences, Capitalism is portrayed as man's enemy that viciously exploits and manipulates its workers for a profit. Jurgis eventually understands after losing his job, losing his family, being arrested, and becoming a criminal and political crook that Capitalism must be eliminated and that Socialism must be established for the betterment of man.

**Mergers****Stephen Layne****208 pages**

Four "deviant" teenagers, each with a special power, struggle to survive in a future where the Legion for World Alliance has merged all the earth's peoples into one combined race. One is psychic, another empathic, another can morph into other forms, and the final one can travel through and control time. They live in a society in which their very faces will get them killed, a merged world where race has been eliminated and all people are the same combination of races. When the teens are caught and crazed Senator Broogue murders their caregiver, they are rescued from a similar fate by four adults who are also of different races and have similar powers. The adults train the young people to strengthen their powers in order to travel back in time and reverse the merged races

**Motherland: Beyond the Holocaust:****Fern Schumer Chapman****208 pages****A Mother- Daughter Journey to Reclaim the Past**

In an attempt to repair a fragile mother-daughter relationship, Fern Schumer Chapman agreed to accompany her mother, Edith, on an unexplained journey to Germany in 1990. The voyage took them to Edith's hometown from which she had escaped at the age of 12 in 1938. After a lifetime of silence and secrets, Fern had the sudden opportunity to discover her own family history. An extraordinary healing process began as Fern and her mother explored the power of sharing, forgiveness, and motherhood itself. *Motherland: Beyond the Holocaust - A Daughter's Journey to Reclaim the Past*, tells a story that speaks to all parents and children about the effect of war and the resilience of the human spirit.

**Native Son****Richard Wright****544 pages**

Bigger Thomas is a 20-year-old black man, living in Chicago's South Side ghetto. Unemployed, Bigger hangs out with his pals; they occasionally commit petty crimes to get spending money and prove their manhood. Bigger expresses his pent-up feelings mainly through violence. He gets a chance for a better life when the Daltons, a family of rich white liberals, hire him as a chauffeur. Disaster strikes on his first night on the job. He carries the Daltons' drunken daughter, Mary, to her bedroom, where, to prevent being caught, he accidentally smothers her with a pillow. He burns Mary's body in the furnace, and then conceives a kidnap scheme for which he recruits the help of his alcoholic girlfriend, Bessie. When Mary's bones are discovered, Bigger kills Bessie to keep her quiet.

**Of Beetles and Angels:****Mawi Asgedom****176 pages****A True Story of The American Dream**

In 1983, at age seven, Asgedom and his family arrived in this country under the sponsorship of World Relief, a U.S.-based Christian organization that helps refugees from all over the world resettle here. Having fled the Eritrean and Ethiopian conflict, Asgedom, his parents and three siblings, had spent the previous three years in a refugee camp in Sudan, then in the throes of a civil war. This is the true story of a young boy's remarkable journey from a refugee camp in Sudan to an affluent Chicago suburb where his family survives on welfare. Following his father's advice to "treat all people — even the most unsightly beetles — as though they were angels sent from heaven," Mawi Asgedom overcomes racial prejudice, language barriers, and financial disadvantage, eventually realizing his dream of a full-tuition scholarship to Harvard University.

**Raisin in the Sun, A****Lorraine Hansberry****160 pages**

The Younger family dreams of leaving the run-down tenement apartment where they have lived for many years. The son Walter, a chauffeur, dreams of making a fortune by investing in a liquor store but foolishly gives his money to a con artist. His sister Beneatha, a somewhat flighty college student, tries to find her identity and embraces the "back to Africa" philosophy of a Nigerian friend. The family's matriarch, dreams of buying a home, and does so with her late husband's insurance money, but the house is in an all-white neighborhood. Their racist future neighbors hire a man named Karl Lindner as a "welcoming committee" to try to buy them out to prevent the neighborhood's integration. However, Walter takes a stand and refuses to be intimidated or bought out.

**Shortcut in Time, A****Charles Dickinson****288 pages**

Would you travel in time if you knew that your entire life might be altered? What if you could prevent a tragedy from happening to someone you love? Josh Winkler's settled life changes when he chooses a shortcut to town and ends up 15 minutes in the past. On the same path, he meets Constance, another bewildered time traveler from the year 1908. No one believes them, especially Josh's doctor wife, who orders neurological tests. To validate their experiences, Josh researches Constance's disappearance in the local library's newspaper archives and discovers that Constance's boyfriend, a suspect in her disappearance, was hanged by an angry mob; Constance needs to find her way back to 1908 to prevent his death. The suspense builds further when Josh's daughter disappears on the same path, and Josh finds her name listed in a 1918 newspaper.

**Something Wicked This Way Comes****Ray Bradbury****272 pages**

Story of two young boys, Jim Nightshade and William Halloway, who have a harrowing experience with a nightmarish carnival that comes to their Midwestern town one October. The carnival's leader is the mysterious "Mr. Dark" who bears a tattoo for each person who, lured by the offer to live out their secret fantasies, has become bound in service to the carnival. Mr. Dark's malevolent presence is countered by that of Will's father, Charles Halloway, who harbors his own secret desire to regain his youth.

**Squared Circle, The****James Bennett****247 pages**

The seamier side of big-time college athletics and the painful maturation of a young man are portrayed through the experiences of Sonny Youngblood, high school All-American. As he enters Southern Illinois University on full scholarship, his sole focus is on basketball. His cousin Sissy is an art professor at SIU and becomes reacquainted with Sonny when she helps him get an independent credit he needs to stay eligible for the team. Though she is totally cynical toward the University's basketball program, a strong bond begins to form between them. While getting national publicity as one of the nation's top scoring freshman, Sonny is starting to see the bigger picture due to an NCAA investigation into SIU's basketball program and Sissy's perspective on the situation. After he works through a number of unresolved issues in his past, including confronting his uncle about receiving a large payoff for steering him to SIU, his life is forever altered by an accident that costs Sonny a major portion of his right hand.

**Story of My Life, The:****Farah Ahmed****256 pages****An Afghan Girl On The Other Side Of The Sky**

"I was late to school, and that's all I could think about. I started across the field. And then suddenly a fire flashed in my face and the earth seemed to move beneath my feet. I remember a shower of soil and then nothing. I woke up on the ground, surrounded by a crowd, men and boys...no women. They were all staring down at me with huge eyes. Their lips were moving, but I could hear no voices. All I heard was a loud ringing in my ears." When Farah, now a 17-year-old high school senior living just outside Chicago, was a 7-year-old living in war-torn Afghanistan, she used to daydream about climbing a towering ladder to see what was on the other side of the sky. She loved going to school to learn about the sun and sky and stars. That's why when she woke up late one morning, she decided to take a shortcut to school. She didn't want to miss a moment of class. What happened along the way would change her life forever.

**Touching Spirit Bear****Ben Mikaelson****320 pages**

Cole Matthews is angry, defiant and smug--in short, a bully! His anger has taken him too far this time, though. After beating up a ninth-grade classmate to the point of brain damage, Cole is facing a prison sentence. But then a Tlingit Indian parole officer named Garvey enters his life, offering an alternative called Circle Justice, based on Native American traditions, in which victim, offender, and community all work together to find a healing solution. Privately, Cole sneers at the concept, but he's no fool--if it gets him out of prison, he'll do anything. Ultimately, Cole ends up banished for one year to a remote Alaskan island, where his arrogance sets him directly in the path of a mysterious, legendary white bear. Mauled almost to death, Cole awaits his fate and begins the transition from anger to humility.

**Where the Sidewalk Ends****Shel Silverstein****192 pages**

Shel Silverstein's world begins where the sidewalk ends. In this collection of humorous poetry illustrated with the author's own drawings, you'll meet a boy who turns into a TV set, and a girl who eats a whale. The Unicorn and the Bloath live there, and so does Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout who will not take the garbage out. It is a place where you wash your shadow and plant diamond gardens, a place where shoes fly, sisters are auctioned off, and crocodiles go to the dentist.