

SALVATORE, R.A. *Child of a Mad God*. 496p. (The Coven: Bk. 1). Tor. Feb. 2018. Tr \$25.99. ISBN 9780765395276.

Salvatore creates a dark world full of strife, vicious creatures, and intriguing magical abilities. Aoleyn was orphaned at a very young age and left to fend for herself in a patriarchal society full of monstrous men and inflexible traditions. She wants nothing more than to start a new life, but the only way she can is to learn to wield the magic of her tribe's coven, known as the Song of Usgar. Aoleyn's magical abilities might be the most potent of all time. They aren't overlooked, however; she's now the main focus of her tribe's merciless leader and the demon of the mountain, who wants to destroy all who hold the power of the Song of Usgar. With the magic she now possesses, Aoleyn has to use it to save herself. This fantasy novel is exquisite. Salvatore pays close attention to character development, and scene transitions flow smoothly throughout. Though the pace is slow, readers will be immersed in Aoleyn's world and root for the strong female lead from beginning to end. Fans of Salvatore will be pleasantly surprised with this new take on the world of Corona, the setting of his "Saga of the First King" series and the "DemonWars Saga." **VERDICT** Public and high school libraries will want this novel on their YA fantasy shelves.—Amanda LeMay, Neptune Township Public Library, NJ

TELLER, Danielle. *All the Ever Afters: The Untold Story of Cinderella's Stepmother*. 384p. HarperCollins/Morrow. May 2018. Tr \$26.99. ISBN 9780062798206.

Teller's debut novel is a more realistic addition to the ever-growing genre of fairy-tale retellings. It's told from the point of view of Cinderella's stepmother, Agnes, beginning with her childhood. There is nothing romantic about this adaptation; Agnes's life is full of turmoil as she bounces around fulfilling different servant roles. Though she is granted a reprieve from servitude after the birth of her children, she quickly finds herself back in service as a wet nurse for Ella, who will eventually become her stepdaughter, Cinderella. There is much more warmth between Ella and Agnes than in the usual retellings. However, Agnes is still harsh; she despises Ella and lashes out at her because she feels that Ella is ungrateful. Ultimately, Agnes understands that she has projected much of cruelty she has endured onto Ella. The narrative makes up for its lack of magical whimsy by exploring the complexities of relationships. **VERDICT** A solid addition to any collection where fractured fairy tales are popular, but not an essential purchase.—Melanie Leivers, Palm Beach Country Library System, FL

Graphic Novels

BROWN, Box. *Is This Guy for Real?: The Unbelievable Andy Kaufman*. illus. by Box Brown. 272p. bibliog. websites. First Second. Feb. 2018. pap. \$19.99. ISBN 9781626723160.

Brown tells the story of actor and comedian Andy Kaufman in this biography. Teens may not be aware of Kaufman, who's best known for his character on the TV series *Taxi*, but his story makes for good reading. Inspired by the over-the-top wrestling villains he loved as a child, he created despicable characters in his comic acts to goad audiences into hating him. After appearing on *Saturday Night Live* and starring in *Taxi*, Kaufman found his way into the world of wrestling by challenging female opponents. Brown did extensive research on Kaufman's life, including several in-person interviews with those who knew him well—truly necessary to get through the layers of the actor/comedian's public personas. The black-and-white art is simple but gives life to the humor and situations. **VERDICT** A sympathetic tale about a challenging subject. Hand to teens interested in pro wrestling or the entertainment industry.—Allison McLean, Elkhart Public Library, IN

Nonfiction

★ **KAUR, Rupri.** *The Sun and Her Flowers*. 256p. Andrews McMeel. Oct. 2017. pap. \$16.99. ISBN 9781449486792.

Kaur, author of the immensely popular *Milk and Honey*, writes and sketches in the same plain, honest, and shattering style about healing. Her fresh, poignant metaphor of a broken relationship as an abandoned construction site sets the stage for the structured volume, divided into sections ("wilting," "falling," "rooting," "rising," and "blooming"): "it isn't what we left behind/that breaks me/but what we could have built/had we stayed." Kaur then asks, "do you think flowers will grow here/when you and i are off/building something new/with someone else." The author frames several longer prose poems graphically as books within a book in which she digs into the root causes of her mistakes and her inspiration, such as her cultural upbringing to never speak up and the sacrifices of her mother, an East Indian immigrant, respectively. Kaur exudes a wisdom and reverence for life that she melds with the social justice ideals of feminism and equity. She speaks to teens' struggles to accept, to forgive, and to love with intensity and respect: "when i stopped searching for home within others and lifted the foundation of home within myself...there were no roots more

intimate." **VERDICT** A must-buy for poetry collections.—Sara Lissa Paulson, City-Asschool High School, New York City

★ **KHAN-CULLORS, Patrisse & Asha Bandele.** *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*. 272p. St. Martin's. Jan. 2018. Tr \$24.99. ISBN 9781250171085.

Khan-Cullors, one of the founders of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, was raised in a family and community impacted by poverty. Her parents worked multiple jobs, and the family struggled with job, housing, and food insecurity. At age nine, she saw the police beat and arrest her brother Monte. Although Monte has schizoaffective disorder, he was placed in solitary confinement without access to necessary medication. This interaction, as well as her time at a predominantly white school, forced Khan-Cullors to see the different ways blacks and whites experience the world. She contrasts Monte's story with the police's treatment of white mentally ill inmates who receive better treatment. The brutality her brother endured, along with the acquittal of George Zimmerman, Trayvon Martin's killer, made her realize that the fight for change needed to begin within her own community. This insightful firsthand account of the creation of BLM deftly exposes the injustices of the United States' social structures and calls for an end to a judicial system that leaves black men and women unprotected and their families broken. **VERDICT** An excellent look at the history of this movement, especially for those who appreciated the social commentary of Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*.—Desiree Thomas, Worthington Library, OH

LAM, Dickson. *Paper Sons*. 246p. Autumn House. Mar. 2018. pap. \$17.95. ISBN 9781938769283.

Lam's life has not been predictable. A disinterested student more dedicated to graffiti than homework, he later taught at alternative education schools. The Chinese American son of immigrants, he straddled the culture of his parents and that of his neighbors in the San Francisco housing project where he was raised. His father, who wasn't around long enough for Lam to get to know, sexually assaulted Lam's sister. This memoir weaves these disparities together with themes of Chinese history and the U.S. civil rights movement, the shooting death of one of Lam's students, and a reckoning with his father. The author casts a wide net and relies upon a time line that isn't strictly chronological, but his insightful and at times poetic writing connects the past to the present seamlessly. Teens will immediately trust Lam, who is unflinch-

ingly honest about his missteps. Though the book contains plenty of curriculum tie-ins to Chinese culture and history, Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, graffiti art and culture, and poetry, it's never didactic. **VERDICT** This authentic tale of self-discovery is a strong option for classroom assignments and is sure to spark discussion. Hand to mature readers interested in reconciling their own lives with history.—*Lindsay Jensen, Nashville Public Library*

MANE, Gucci with Neil Martinez-Belkin. *The Autobiography of Gucci Mane*. 304p. index. photos. S. & S. Sept. 2017. Tr \$27. ISBN 9781501165320.

Atlanta has always played a significant role in shaping the sound and culture of rap and hip-hop, and the influence of Gucci Mane (né Radric Davis) can't be overstated. But he almost didn't get to experience the success because of his frequent stints in jail. Most recently released in 2016, Gucci Mane has been on a tear since then, putting out albums and mixtapes and collaborating with others. This autobiography, written while he was serving time in a federal prison for possession of a firearm, paints a rich portrait. Gucci Mane was born in rural Alabama. As a young teen from very limited means, he began petty drug dealing and moved on to bigger deals to earn money fast. In 2001, he met record producer Zaytoven (with whom he still works) and music became his passion even as the drug dealing greatly funded it. Gucci Mane briefly discusses how he was accused of murder in 2005 (which was ruled an act of self-defense) but is very frank about his use of lean (a mix of prescription cough syrup, soft drinks, and fruit-flavored candy) and the tolls of addiction. Several full-color photographs enhance the stories. The book name drops frequently, as Gucci Mane has influenced and worked with almost every rapper out of Atlanta in the last decade. **VERDICT** An engaging addition for fans of the artist or music lovers in general.—*Jamie Watson, Baltimore County Public Library*

★ **OLUO, Ijeoma.** *So You Want To Talk About Race*. 256p. notes. Perseus/Seal. Jan. 2018. Tr \$27. ISBN 9781580056779.

"You are going to screw this up royally. More than once," notes writer and editor Oluo in this slim but potent guide to discussing race. Nevertheless, she urges readers to push past their discomfort; to do otherwise is to accept a society entrenched in systemic racism. The author knows all too well the consequences of ignorance about race. A black queer woman, she not only experiences prejudice but also endures the additional burden of educating those who are skeptical about her oppression.

Precise, poignant, and edifying, this primer gives readers much-needed tools, explaining academic concepts such as privilege and intersectionality, debunking harmful myths, and offering concrete ways to confront racism. Blending personal accounts and meticulously cited research, Oluo demonstrates how racism permeates every aspect of society, from education to the police force. She writes with empathy for her readers yet laudably refuses to let those who haven't grappled with their white privilege off the hook—"Don't force people to acknowledge your good intentions," she advises those who have inadvertently offended a person of color. **VERDICT** Profound yet deeply accessible, this is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand and combat institutional racism.—*Mahnaz Dar, School Library Journal*



PERKOWITZ, Sidney & Eddy Von Mueller, eds. *Frankenstein: How a Monster Became an Icon; The Science and Enduring Allure of Mary Shelley's Creation*. 384p. bibliog. filmog. notes. photos. Pegasus. Jan. 2018. Tr \$28.95. ISBN 9781681776293.

Coinciding with the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley's legendary science fiction novel, *Frankenstein*, this anthology contains 13 essays that celebrate and investigate the work and its cultural legacy. Penned by scholars, artists, filmmakers, scientists, and others, the entries are grouped into three broad subject areas: Shelley's original text and its thematic roots, contemporary media interpretations of the story, and how *Frankenstein* explores science and ethics. One of the collection's strengths is its examination of visual iconography of various media adaptations, including Mel Brooks's 1974 comedy *Young Frankenstein* and James Whale's classic 1931 film, which starred Boris Karloff as the monster. Indeed, the volume gives equal attention to Shelley's novel and Whale's movie, which is arguably more firmly embedded in popular culture as the "true" *Frankenstein* narrative. While this title is a fine example of the ways in which multiple layers of meaning can be parsed

from a single text, it is disappointing that the views represented are overwhelmingly male and Western. A broader diversity of voices and/or cross-cultural and feminist analysis would have been welcome. **VERDICT** Of interest to advanced students of literature, media, popular culture, and especially film.—*Kelsy Peterson, Forest Hill College, Melbourne, Australia*

SANTANA, Deborah, ed. *All the Women in My Family Sing: Women Write the World; Essays on Equality, Justice, and Freedom*. 366p. Nothing But The Truth. Jan. 2018. Tr \$16.95. ISBN 9780997296211.

Expansive in scope, the essays within this collection, all penned by women of color, will provide much for readers to reflect on. The contributors come from a range of backgrounds, writing on personal and

political events, families and strangers, the past and present—resulting in one finely crafted work. An endless number of creative nonfiction writing prompts could be developed from this anthology; the essayists demonstrate a mastery of form, imagery, turn of phrase, theme, and so much more. Included are Mercy L. Tullis-Bukhari's excellently structured examination of the Kenneth and Mamie Clark doll experiment through experiences with her young daughter in "Black Dolls for Everyone"; an adapted version of America Ferrera's "We Are America" speech from the 2017 Women's March; and Porochista Khakpour's snapshotlike "Home," in which she flies round trip from LaGuardia airport in New York City to Bangor, ME, following President Trump's attempt to ban immigration from predominantly Muslim countries. The many ways one can receive an education is a running thread throughout and will comfort students unsure of their own future and underline the necessity of voicing their experiences—or, as Hope Wabuke writes in "What Is Said": "There are some moments in history when, if you are a writer and have been gifted with this uncanny ability to observe and make meaning in harmonious forms, you have