

VOYA's Perfect Tens are those rare books that win our reviewers' highest ratings: 5Q for literary quality plus 5P for popularity (see *Book Review Code* on page 124). Since 2001 when we began compiling Perfect Tens lists, they have obligingly organized themselves into ten top "hits" each year—roughly one percent of all titles reviewed. That ratio still holds in these uneven eleven Perfect Tens reviewed in the 2004 calendar year. Few books combine top quality with strong teen appeal—and **VOYA** is the only venue to measure both. Therefore our Perfect Tens appear infrequently in other lists or awards. This year, only Curtis's **Bucking the Sarge** made the Best Books for Young Adults list—no Printzes, Quick Picks, or Teens' Top Tens. You'll find few patterns in this list except wide age-range recommendations (including two adult books that junior high readers will like) and a mix of contemporary YA fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, one graphic novel, and two self-help nonfiction books. Curtis and Korman are acclaimed YA authors, but others are hardly known. For the second year in a row, a title from Jinks's *Pagan* series made our list. May these selections remind you what makes **VOYA**—and our reviewers—unique.—Editor.

The PERFECT TENS

THE TOP ELEVEN BOOKS REVIEWED IN VOICE OF YOUTH ADVOCATES 2004



Curtis, Christopher Paul. **Bucking the Sarge**. Wendy Lamb Books/Random House, 2004. 240p. \$15.89. 0-385-32307-7. PLB \$17.99. 0-385-90159-3. **VOYA** October 2004. 5Q 5P J S

Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults 2005.

This Newbery Award-winning author hits the bulls-eye with a superbly crafted story for older readers, populating his tale with memorable quirky characters and lessons about determination and staying true to one's values.



Earls, Nick. **48 Shades of Brown**. Graphia/Houghton Mifflin, 2004, ©1999. 288p. \$6.99 Trade pb. 0-618-45295-8. **VOYA** April 2004. 5Q 5P S
Older teens will not be able to put down this enchanting, too-true, coming-of-age novel as their smiles become belly laughs that lead them to new perspectives.

Girlsource: A Book by and for Young Women About Relationships, Rights, Futures, Bodies, Minds, and Souls. GirlSource Editorial Team. Ten Speed Press, 2003. 96p. \$12.95 Trade pb. 1-58008-555-5. Index. Illus. Photos. **VOYA** February 2004. 5Q 5P M J S

Young women everywhere will thank librarians who shelve multiple copies of this book that takes every question that they might have—about sex, STDs, drugs, teen rights, and more—and answers them in a no-holds-barred fashion.



Harder, Jens. **Leviathan**. Comics Lit/NBM, 2004, ©2003. 144p. \$34.95. 2-84856-015-0. **VOYA** December 2004. 5Q 5P J S AYA G
Harder's astonishing art and wordless story leaves this graphic novel's depiction of the whale wide open for interpretation, a virtual visual buffet from which the reader never wants to turn away.

Jinks, Catherine. **Pagan in Exile**. Candlewick, 2004. 336p. \$15.99. 0-7636-2020-3. **VOYA** April 2004. 5Q 5P M J

In a medieval setting, young Pagan Kidrouk—funny, sarcastic, and often touching—deals with issues that have twenty-first century parallels in a tour de force of young adult prose.



Karras, Erika V. Shearin. **Mean Chicks, Cliques, and Dirty Tricks: A Real Girl's Guide to Getting Through the Day with Smarts and Style**. Adams Media (57 Littlefield St., Avon, MA 02311), 2004. 144p. \$8.95 Trade pb. 1-58062-933-4. Biblio. Further Reading. Appendix. **VOYA** December 2004. 5Q 5P M J S

Girls will love this book that sets out in print for everyone to see the not-so-nice things that girls and women do to each other through backstabbing, gossip, exclusion, and downright "witchiness."



Korman, Gordon. **Son of the Mob: Hollywood Hustle**. Hyperion, 2004. 272p. \$15.99. 0-7868-0918-3. **VOYA** December 2004. 5Q 5P J S

Mixing deft touches of reality with a clever comedy of errors, Korman's second book about Vincent Luca is filled with brilliant characterizations, sneaky plot twists, and humor that will make teens fall off their chairs with laughter.

Lisle, Janet Taylor. **The Crying Rocks**. Atheneum/S & S, 2003. 208p. \$16.95. 0-689-85319-X. **VOYA** February 2004. 5Q 5P M J S

Sure to attract readers of all ages, historical intrigue, adolescent exploration, and mystery combine as thirteen-year-old Joelle finds surprising answers to the questions raised by the secrets of her past.

Nimmo, Jenny. **Charlie Bone and the Time Twister**. Orchard, 2003. 416p. \$9.95 Trade pb. 0-439-49687-X. **VOYA** February 2004. 5Q 5P M J S

Unique characters shine as they twist through time, using their abilities to create storms, fly, and converse with people in portraits, while Charlie searches for his "missing-in-plain-sight-although-no-one-realizes-it" father.

Rucker, Rudy. **Frek and the Elixir**. Tor, 2004. 476p. \$27.95. 0-765-31058-9. *Voyages*, **VOYA** October 2004. 5Q 5P J S AYA

Frek's mythic adolescent odyssey to explore his roots and find his self is told with enchanting ingenuity and brilliantly conceived new creatures and characters—some elfin, some grass, and others just funny.

Zeises, Lara M. **Contents Under Pressure**. Delacorte, 2004. 256p. \$15.95. 0-385-73047-0. PLB \$17.88. 0-385-90162-3. **VOYA** June 2004. 5Q 5P M J S

Strong female role models carry readers through an entire range of emotions in Zeises's engrossing, fast-paced, and funny novel about Lucy as she seeks to make sense of her complicated world. ■

