

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Mills	School:	OLMS
Book Title:	Hero	Genre:	Realistic Fiction
Author:	S. L. Rottman	Pages:	144
Publisher:	Peachtree Publishers	Copyright:	2007

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Befriended by a WWII veteran, Sean begins his transformation from lost adolescent to confident, hopeful young adult.

Heroes are hard to find, especially for Sean. Estranged from his father and abused by his mother, Sean has been sentenced to community service at Mr. Hassler's horse farm, where he's forced to confront his fears and take charge of his own life. When Sean is faced with a dangerous situation that tests his true character, he learns just what it means to be a hero.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

- Hero by S.L. Rottman, students cite examples of setting and character including how a setting influences a story and the development of a character throughout a story. Students also make inferences within text, monitor their own reading comprehension through notes and organized writing response. We also add new vocabulary to aid in writing.

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up. This earnest first novel tackles a topical subject—the emotional effects of child abuse and abandonment—and gives readers both a realistic picture of the damage done and reason to hope. Hot-headed, confused, and fiercely defensive, 15-year-old Sean is easily drawn into fights at school and then tangles with the law. What he is not telling anyone is that his alcoholic mother has been taking out her frustrations on him, physically as well as emotionally. Sean is sentenced to community service at a horse farm. Under Mr. Hassler's steady hand, the boy experiences, and sometimes resists, the structure and guidance for which he has hungered. When he assists at the birth of a foal that bonds with him, Sean discovers the rewards of attachment and trust, as well as the responsibility of caring for a young creature. However, patterns of distrust, violence, and

isolation cannot be overcome in one week of community service. Sean is tested, fails, and emerges to try again, all the while gaining a sense of personal responsibility for his future. In places the plot is contrived; the foal is rejected by its mother, providing an oh-so-obvious substitute on which Sean vents his rage. Also, a concerned teacher keeps showing up at all the right moments to cheer the young man on. Nonetheless, Rottman avoids the expected ending. Through Sean, she gives readers a convincing and difficult protagonist and a fresh perspective on what it means to be a hero. Carolyn Lehman, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA

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### Review #2

From Kirkus Reviews

Rottman's first novel pits a bitter teenager against some caring adults and levels his defenses with the prospect of a secure future. Sean, nine years after his parents' divorce, has never recovered from their separation, which left him in the care of his alcoholic, abusive mother. His father sends support payments but, according to Sean's first-person narration, takes no other interest in his son. When Sean, after misbehaving at school, is assigned to perform community service at a ranch, he is confronted by the outwardly gruff Dave Hassler, a veteran of WW II and all-around old-timer. Called upon to help deliver a foal, muck out stalls, and spread manure over gardens and fields left fallow for the winter, Sean finds himself enjoying the hard work, sense of accomplishment, and security of Dave's environment. When a former best friend, Rick, comes to settle an old score, Sean strikes back, definitively. Convenient encounters (a teacher, Mrs. Walker, shows up at the oddest times), information-laden incidents of eavesdropping, and over-extended parallels between a mare who rejects its foal and Sean's home life mar this debut. A homework assignment about heroes forms an awkward bracket around the main story, in which Sean's surly, snarling mother is a caricature cast among other more realistically drawn adults, and Dave's shining heroism is a transplant from another era entirely. (Fiction. 12-16) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

### **What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

<u>Title:</u> <b>My Brother Sam is Dead</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>James Lincoln Collier</b>
<u>Title:</u> <b>Heroes</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Robert Cormier</b>
<u>Title:</u> <b>Monster</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Walter Dean Myers</b>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

### **Document any potentially controversial content:**

Divorce, physical abuse, alcohol abuse by a parent, mild profanity, gang issues and violence

### **Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6  7  8  9  10  11  12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** 12+

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** December 16, 2011

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults