

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: C. Williams/L. Gore Grade: 8 School: OMS

Book Title: The Creek Genre: mystery

Author: Jennifer L. Holm Pages: 288

Publisher: HarperCollins Copyright: 2003

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.)

"Caleb Devlin is a legend, the boy who terrorized an entire town before being sent away, before Penny and her family moved there. Now he's back, older and more dangerous than ever, and terrible things have begun to happen again. The whole town knows he's responsible, but the police can't do anything without proof. So Penny and her friends try to stop him themselves. Except now he's after them." -back cover

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)

This novel is a good middle-grade example of the horror subgenre of mysteries.

10. Examine author's purpose and style.

10RALG

11. Determine purpose for reading and strategies needed for comprehension.

12. Compare and contrast literary elements in similar literary works.

13. Analyze plot, character, theme, point of view and setting in varied genres. 10RALA,B, 12RALA

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 Booklist

Gr. 6-8. Holm, author of several historical novels about girls grappling with puberty, gives the theme a contemporary twist, adding trappings of a creepy thriller that pushes the story well beyond the wan child-plays-detective stuff so prevalent in youth mysteries. Penny, almost 13, is content to spend her summer hanging out with the boys on her block. But this year, their games are charged by rumors about exciting, sexy, Caleb Devlin, who gives Penny strange, shivery thrills. When increasingly disturbing things happen in the neighborhood, culminating in the vicious murder of a young child, Caleb is the prime suspect. Taut, well plotted, and with a smooth arc of suspense, this does more than deliver a good story; it also addresses some of puberty's difficult emotional changes and raises challenging questions about moral issues. To Holm's credit, everything isn't necessarily resolved, Caleb is a "bad boy," (though not in the expected way), and despite the dead child, there's no over-the-top violence. What stands out most, perhaps, is Holm's chipping away at the literary taboo Robert Cormier cracked open in his *Rag and Bone Shop* (2001); child murder and young

children as murderers are not the province of children's books. Kids often see worse on the evening news, but this skillful, surprising novel may raise some adult eyebrows. Stephanie Zvirin
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Review #2

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up-This Stephen King-esque thriller has potential, but is torpedoed by sloppy writing. Penny, 12, spends her time hanging out with a gang of boys down at the local creek. Enter Caleb Devlin, a legendary teenage terror whose criminal behavior had him sent away years ago. When pets begin vanishing in the neighborhood, it seems obvious to most residents that Caleb is behind the disappearances. Penny's dreams are haunted by visions of this young man who both fascinates and repels her. As she and her friends investigate, they have numerous close scrapes with menacing characters, yet their parents and the police are inexplicably unhelpful. In the final chapters, Penny works through a ludicrous, shifting roster of suspects, until the highly improbable culprit is found. The story misses the mark on several levels. The writing is weak, relying on contrived phrases, absurdly inapt similes, and jarring lapses in logic. Upon completing this novel, readers will be as clueless about some of the characters' motivations as when they began.

Douglas P. Davey, Guelph Public Library, Ontario, Canada

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

Title: I Know What You Did Last Summer Author: Lois Duncan

Title: Don't Scream Author: Joan Lowery Nixon

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Not much controversial language (one instance of "demon from hell" and one of "boobs"), but novel does deal with vandalism, pet cruelty, and the murder of a neighborhood child.

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): 4.9

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 10/3/07

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