Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *The Black Flamingo*	**Synopsis** A boy comes to terms with his identity as a mixed-race gay teen - then at university he finds his wings as a drag artist, The Black Flamingo. A bold story about the power of embracing your uniqueness. Sometimes, we need to take charge, to stand up wearing pink feathers - to show ourselves to the world in bold colour. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Atta, Dean	
Copyright Year: 2020	

Professional Reviews of *The Black Flamingo*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (April 1, 2020 (Vol. 116, No. 15))
Grades 8-12. Throughout his childhood, Michael knew he was different in more ways than one; he considered himself like the black flamingo of Cyprus—anatomically the same, but a standout amongst his flock. When he comes out during high school with uncertainties about what exactly his sexual preferences are, he's faced with a lot of big questions related to his family, friends, and ultimately who he wants to be in the world as he prepares to take off to university. This British import captures its audience from the very first page, with verse poetry that grows and matures alongside its protagonist. Whereas some stories aim to tell all, Atta's writing emphasizes the importance of pauses, allowing the silences to speak just as loudly as what is being said. Michael's internal dissonances are relatable on the most human level, leaving readers in a state of ultimate euphoria when he finally finds family in the Drag Society and begins his reconciliation both with himself and with the world.

Kirkus Reviews starred (March 1, 2020)
Courage and fierceness abound in this lyrical coming-of-age story about a young boy finding his way. In his latest work, Atta flawlessly captures the pain, rage, and resilience of a boy growing to manhood while feeling like an outsider in his own life. Michael, a British boy of Greek Cypriot and Jamaican descent, feels caught between worlds: black and white, masculine and feminine, straight and gay. His story, told in verse form, allows readers to watch him grow and to experience each of the triumphs and tragedies that help him define himself on his own terms. Every moment, from asking for a Barbie for his birthday and receiving Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to legally discarding the surname of the father who walked out on him, brings Michael vibrantly to life on the page, giving readers a protagonist to cry with and cheer for. Featuring a diverse cast of supporting characters, from Daisy, Michael's mixed-race (black/white) best friend, to the red-haired drama kid whom he shyly asks out, the author uses Michael's first-person narration as a mirror to reflect the world and its brightness, humor, and horrors. Central to the narrative is Michael's loving yet complicated relationship with his hardworking single mother, who sees his talent, values his spirit, and sacrifices for him. Michael's journey of self-discovery demonstrates the importance of not allowing labels to define you. Gripping, unflinching, and unforgettable. (Verse novel. 12-18)

Publishers Weekly (April 20, 2020)
In this uplifting coming-of-age novel told in accessible verse, Atta (I Am Nobody's Nigger, for adults) chronicles the growth and glory of Michael Angeli, a mixed-race kid from London, as he matures from a child to a man. Navigating cultural identity as Cypriot and Jamaican as well as his emerging sexuality, Michael sheds the painful baggage of his absent father by taking his mother's name. He also grows from a kid who cries when he receives a Ninja Turtle instead of the Barbie of his dreams, to a teen who cries after being rejected by his crush, to a man who doesn't cry but rather shouts when a partner breaks his heart. As a teen, he discovers his love of poetry and abandons his love for song, only to fall head over heels for drag at university. Atta expounds on matters of identity and the struggle to find love and community as a gay black man in a majority-white space-Michael feels neither Greek nor black enough, nor, in his estimation, queer enough to fit in. The book's strongest asset is Atta's poetic imagery, which reflects such memorable moments as the origin of Michael's drag persona (from a news story: "a black flamingo/ has landed on the island") and "How to Do Drag" ("Remember eyebrows are sisters,/ not twins"). Atta's story uplifts as it informs and entertains as it affirms; in Michael's words, "It's about being free." Ages 14-up. (May) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (March 1, 2020)
Gr 9 Up-Atta's character-driven debut novel in verse offers readers an angst-filled look into the life of 19-year-old Mike Angeli. Mike's story is set in modern London. He shares his views and experiences with identity beginning from the tender age of six; Mike is constantly reminded how he doesn't fit in due to his mixed (Greek-Cypriot and Jamaican) background; this is exacerbated when he comes out as gay. It is not until Mike joins the Drag Society at university that he begins to accept who he is, no matter what boxes the world wants to put him in. Mike is an authentic character; his triumphs and trials feel like the reader's own. His flaws and lessons learned make him human and easy to feel close to. The secondary characters, Daisy, Lennie, and others, have background stories and connections that add even more depth to the plot and to Mike's development. Readers may be left wanting to know more about Mike's time with the Drag Society, but that doesn't detract from the deserving applause of Mike's growth, and his path to self-acceptance. VERDICT A triumphant and emotional story about standing up for and embracing oneself that readers of any orientation and ethnicity will relate to.-Kharissa Kenner, Bank Street School for Children, New York © Copyright 2020. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Magazine (May/June, 2020)
Winner of the 2020 Stonewall Book Award, this British verse novel by a poet and drag performer offers a welcome exploration of the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. In first-person narration, Michael chronicles his journey through childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. Michael is born to a Jamaican father and Greek-Cypriot mother; though his father is distant, he has support from his mother and uncle, as he figures out where he stands in terms of both ethnic identity and sexuality. His penchant for Barbies manifests itself by age six, and crushes on boys follow, but it's a few years before he comes out to his best friend. And it's not until university that he experiences his first sexual relationships and also develops his drag persona. ("When it's time to go onstage, / know that you're not ready but / this is not about being ready, / it's not even about being fierce / or fearless, it's about being free.") The verse can be pedestrian, largely serving to advance the plot, but the development of the Black Flamingo, as a symbol of Michael's queer identity ("I often feel / like a bad egg that was not meant to be...somehow / living and thriving"), is aptly woven throughout this memorable YA debut. Jonathan Hunt May/June 2020 p.117

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *The Black Flamingo*
Source: NovelistPlus
American Library Association Rainbow Book List - Young Adult Fiction: 2021
School Library Journal Best Books: 2020
Stonewall Book Awards - Children's and Young Adult Literature Award Winner: 2020
YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2021
YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers: 2021

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Burned*	**Synopsis** Seventeen-year-old Pattyn, the eldest daughter in a large Mormon family, is sent to her aunt's Nevada ranch for the summer, where she temporarily escapes her alcoholic, abusive father and finds love and acceptance, only to lose everything when she returns home.
Book Author Hopkins, Ellen	
Copyright Year: 2007	Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus

Professional Reviews of *Burned*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (June 1, 2006 (Vol. 102, No. 19))
Gr. 9-12. Full of anger at her father, an alcoholic who abuses her mother, Pattyn begins to question her Mormon religion and her preordained, subservient role within it. She is confused by her mother's acceptance of the brutal abuse, and although she is furious at and terrified of her father, she still longs for his love and approval. As the consequences of her anger become more dramatic, her parents send her to spend the summer with her aunt on a Nevada ranch. There she finds the love and acceptance she craves, both from her aunt and from a college-age neighbor, Ethan. Told in elegant free verse, Burned envelopes the reader in Pattyn's highs and lows, her gradual opening to love, and her bouts of rage, confusion, and doubt. It exposes the mind of the abused, but regrettably offers no viable plan to deal with the abuser, a reality perhaps, but a plot element that may raise eyebrows in the adult community. Still, this will easily find rapid-fire circulation among its YA audience. A troubling but beautifully written novel.

Kirkus Reviews (April 1, 2006)
In cutting free-verse, 16-year-old Pattyn offers first-person narration of religious oppression and physical violence. Her Mormon church dictates that women grow up powerless. An entrancing sexual dream and a non-Mormon boyfriend make Pattyn feel giddy but guilty. Will she burn in hell? Exiled (for punishment) to a desert ranch, Pattyn blossoms under the respectful care of Aunt J and finds storybook love with neighbor Ethan. But at summer's end, she returns home to a situation even worse than before. Alcoholic Dad now beats the children (rather than just Mom); Pattyn, badly whipped, tries to hang on until she can leave home. But a heart-sinking pregnancy (Ethan's condom broke once) prompts an escape attempt that goes horribly wrong. Bereaved and desperate with nowhere to turn, Pattyn plans a brutal revenge. Hopkins's incisive verses sometimes read in several directions as they paint the beautiful Nevada desert and the consequences of both nuclear testing at Yucca Mountain and Pattyn's tragic family history. Sharp and heartbreaking. (Fiction. YA)

Publishers Weekly (November 5, 2007)
In verse, the author of Crank and Impulse explores one girl's struggle as she tries to free herself from the religious dogmatism of her abusive family and develop her own beliefs about God, love and identity. Ages 14-up. (Oct.) Copyright 2007 Reed Business Information.

School Library Journal (July 1, 2006)
Gr 9 Up-Once again the author of Crank (S & S, 2004) has masterfully used verse to re-create the yearnings and emotions of a teenage girl trapped in tragic circumstances. Poems in varied formats captivate readers as they describe a teen's immobilizing fear of her abusive father, disgust with a church hierarchy that looks the other way, hope that new relationships can counteract despair, joy in the awakening of romance, and sorrow when demons ultimately prevail. Pattyn Von Stratten is the eldest of eight sisters in a stern Mormon household where women are relegated to servitude and silence. She has a glimpse of normal teenage life when Derek takes an interest in her, but her father stalks them in the desert and frightens him away. Unable to stifle her rage, Pattyn acts out as never before and is suspended from school. Sent to live with an aunt on a remote Nevada ranch, she meets Ethan and discovers "forever love." Woven into the story of a teen's struggle to find her destiny is the story of her aunt's barrenness following government mismanagement of atomic testing and protests over nuclear waste disposal. Readers will become immersed in Pattyn's innermost thoughts as long-held secrets are revealed, her father's beatings take a toll on her mother and sister, and Pattyn surrenders to Ethan's love with predictable and disturbing consequences. Writing for mature teens, Hopkins creates compelling characters in horrific situations.-Kathy Lehman, Thomas Dale High School Library, Chester, VA Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Burned*

Source: http://booklists.yalsa.net

ALA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults: 2012

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Clockwork Princess*	**Synopsis** When seventeen-year-old orphaned shapechanger Tessa Gray is kidnapped by the villainous Mortmain in his final bid for power, the London Institute rallies to save her, but is beset by danger and betrayal at every turn. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Clare, Cassandra	
Copyright Year: 2013	

Professional Reviews of *Clockwork Princess*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (May 15, 2013 (Online)

Grades 9-12. Oh, the angst in the final book in Clare's Victorian-era steampunk trilogy, Infernal Devices! With the cunning and dangerous Mortmain still on the loose and threatening Shadowhunters everywhere, as well as unresolved feelings still in her heart, bride-to-be Tessa finds it increasingly challenging to get excited about her upcoming nuptials. Still, life must go on, and on and on it goes for Tessa's resilient people. As Tessa finally learns what she is and what that means to both Mortmain and the world, the choices she must make will affect Shadowhunters and Downworlders forever. While there are a few surprising twists, this series conclusion seems devoted to resolving all of the loose threads and mysteries from the earlier books. Fans will feel great satisfaction in learning the answers to all of the questions from the previous volumes, but they'll likely feel sadness, too, as the exhilarating saga comes to a close. A must-read for Clare's fans, this is also highly recommended for followers of Gail Carriger's Finishing School books and Melissa de la Cruz's Blue Blood series.

Kirkus Reviews (April 15, 2013

Politics, clockworks and epic angst complete this slow but satisfying finale to The Infernal Devices trilogy. Tessa is in love with both her fiance, Jem, and his parabatai--shield brother--Will. As this Victorian trilogy draws to a close, there's politics and plotting aplenty, but the trio, each member of which adores the other two wholeheartedly, is preoccupied with its own schmaltzy romance. (Will's Byronic, self-loathing man-pain is palpable enough to practically be a character in its own right.) Despite the florid drama of their triangle, they successfully fight both internal Shadowhunter politics and the moustache-twirling villain Mortmain. Chapter epigraphs from Poe, Milton, Saint Augustine and more introduce grandiloquent prose peppered with Latin, Welsh and Mandarin, sometimes untranslated, but there's plenty of substance mixed in with the bombast. The trio's voices often make way for those of the found family comprising the Shadowhunters of the London Institute: the shamed and love-struck Lightwood brothers, Will's determined sister Cecily, maternal Charlotte, warlike former victim Sophie. This loving if dysfunctional collective comes together for Clare's trademark climactic battle, cinematic as always. Clare loyalists will be pleased by connections to the contemporary Mortal Instruments series. The unusual, satisfyingly indulgent conclusion will leave fans emotionally satiated. (Steampunk. 13-17)

Horn Book Guide (Fall 2013
Will and Tessa seek to cure Jem, who may die before he and Tessa can be wed. But the clock is running out for all the Shadowhunters, as the Magister prepares to release his army of infernal devices. In a finale as sodden with passion as with gore (and melodrama), Clare resolves the love triangle with a solution that will likely (if improbably) make everyone happy.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Clockwork Princess*

Source: https://www.cbcbooks.org/cbc-book-lists

Children's Book Council Children's & Teen Choice Book Award Finalist: 2014

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*	**Synopsis** Oskar Schell, the nine-year-old son of a man killed in the World Trade Center attacks, searches the five boroughs of New York City for a lock that fits a black key his father left behind.
Book Author Foer, Jonathan Safran	
Copyright Year: 2005	Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus

Professional Reviews of *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (February 1, 2005 (Vol. 101, No. 11))

This follow-up to Foer's extremely good and incredibly successful Everything Is Illuminated (2002) stars one Oskar Schell, a nine-year-old amateur inventor and Shakespearean actor. But Oskar's boots, as he likes to say, are very heavy--his father, whom he worshiped, perished in the World Trade Center on 9/11. In his dad's closet a year later, Oskar finds a key in a vase mysteriously labeled "Black." So he goes searching after the lock it opens, visiting (alphabetically) everyone listed in the phone book with the surname Black. Oskar, who's a cross between The Tin Drum's Oskar Matzerath and The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time's Christopher Boone, doesn't always sound like he's nine, but his first-person narration of his journey is arrestingly beautiful, and readers won't soon forget him. A subplot about Oskar's mute grandfather, who survived the bombing of Dresden, isn't as compelling as Oskar's quest for the lock, but when the stories finally come together, the result is an emotionally devastating climax. No spoilers here, but we will say that the book--which includes a number of photographs and some eccentric typography--ends with what is undoubtedly the most beautiful and heartbreaking flip book in all of literature.

Kirkus Reviews starred (January 1, 2005)

The search for the lock that fits a mysterious key dovetails with related and parallel quests in this (literally) beautifully designed second from the gifted young author (Everything Is Illuminated, 2002).

The searcher is nine-year-old Oskar Schell, an inventive prodigy who (albeit modeled on the protagonist of Grass's The Tin Drum) employs his considerable intellect with refreshing originality in the aftermath of his father Thomas's death following the bombing of the World Trade Center. That key, unidentified except for the word "black" on the envelope containing it, impels Oskar to seek out every New Yorker bearing the surname Black, involving him with a reclusive centenarian former war correspondent, and eventually the nameless elderly recluse who rents a room in his paternal grandma's nearby apartment. Meanwhile, unmailed letters from a likewise unidentified "Thomas" reveal their author's loneliness and guilt, while stretching backward to wartime Germany and a horrific precursor of the 9/11 atrocity: the firebombing of Dresden. In a riveting narrative animated both by Oskar's ingenuous assumption of adult responsibility and understanding (interestingly, he's "playing Yorick" in a school production of Hamlet) and the letter-writer's meaningful silences, Foer sprinkles his tricky text with interpolated illustrations that render both objects of Oskar's many interests and the word and memories of a survivor who has forsworn speech, determined to avoid the pain of loving too deeply. The story climaxes as Oskar discovers what the key fits, and also the meaning of his life (all our lives, actually), in a long-awaited letter from astrophysicist Stephen Hawking.

Much more is revealed as this brilliant fiction works thrilling variations on, and consolations for, its plangent message: that "in the end, everyone loses everyone." Yes, but look what Foer has found.

Publishers Weekly (January 31, 2005)
Oskar Schell, hero of this brilliant follow-up to Foer's bestselling Everything Is Illuminated, is a nine-year-old amateur inventor, jewelry designer, astrophysicist, tambourine player and pacifist. Like the second-language narrator of Illuminated, Oskar turns his naively precocious vocabulary to the understanding of historical tragedy, as he searches New York for the lock that matches a mysterious key left by his father when he was killed in the September 11 attacks, a quest that intertwines with the story of his grandparents, whose lives were blighted by the firebombing of Dresden. Foer embellishes the narrative with evocative graphics, including photographs, colored highlights and passages of illegibly overwritten text, and takes his unique flair for the poetry of miscommunication to occasionally gimmicky lengths, like a two-page soliloquy written entirely in numerical code. Although not quite the comic tour de force that Illuminated was, the novel is replete with hilarious and appalling passages, as when, during show-and-tell, Oskar plays a harrowing recording by a Hiroshima survivor and then launches into a Poindexterish disquisition on the bomb's "charring effect." It's more of a challenge to play in the same way with the very recent collapse of the towers, but Foer gambles on the power of his protagonist's voice to transform the cataclysm from raw current event to a tragedy at once visceral and mythical. Unafraid to show his traumatized characters' constant groping for emotional catharsis, Foer demonstrates once again that he is one of the few contemporary writers willing to risk sentimentalism in order to address great questions of truth, love and beauty. Agent, Nicole Aragi. 11-city author tour; foreign rights sold in 12 countries. (Apr. 4) Copyright 2005 Reed Business Information.

School Library Journal (July 1, 2005)
Adult/High School-Oskar Schell is not your average nine-year-old. A budding inventor, he spends his time imagining wonderful creations. He also collects random photographs for his scrapbook and sends letters to scientists. When his father dies in the World Trade Center collapse, Oskar shifts his boundless energy to a quest for answers. He finds a key hidden in his father's things that doesn't fit any lock in their New York City apartment; its container is labeled "Black." Using flawless kid logic, Oskar sets out to speak to everyone in New York City with the last name of Black. A retired journalist who keeps a card catalog with entries for everyone he's ever met is just one of the colorful characters the boy meets. As in Everything Is Illuminated (Houghton, 2002), Foer takes a dark subject and works in offbeat humor with puns and wordplay. But Extremely Loud pushes further with the inclusion of photographs, illustrations, and mild experiments in typography reminiscent of Kurt Vonnegut's Breakfast of Champions (Dell, 1973). The humor works as a deceptive, glitzy cover for a fairly serious tale about loss and recovery. For balance, Foer includes the subplot of Oskar's grandfather, who survived the World War II bombing of Dresden. Although this story is not quite as evocative as Oskar's, it does carry forward and connect firmly to the rest of the novel. The two stories finally intersect in a powerful conclusion that will make even the most jaded hearts fall.-Matthew L. Moffett, Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Copyright 2005 Reed Business Information.

Library Journal (June 1, 2011)
In this tender novel, nine-year-old Oskar scours New York City searching for a lock that will fit a key belonging to his father, who died in the Twin Towers. (LJ 3/1/05) (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*
Source: NovelistPlus
ALA Notable Books - Fiction: 2006
Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners: 2009
School Library Journal's Adult Books for High School Students: 2005

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*	**Synopsis** "That book. It was about two women, and they fell in love with each other. Have you ever heard of such a thing?" Seventeen-year-old Lily Hu can't remember exactly when the question took root, but the answer was in full bloom the moment she and Kathleen Miller walked under the flashing neon sign of a lesbian bar called the Telegraph Club. America in 1954 is not a safe place for two girls to fall in love, especially not in Chinatown. Red-Scare paranoia threatens everyone, including Chinese Americans like Lily. With deportation looming over her father--despite his hard-won citizenship--Lily and Kath risk everything to let their love see the light of day. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Lo, Malinda	
Copyright Year: 2021	

Professional Reviews of *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist starred (November 1, 2020 (Vol. 117, No. 5)

Grades 9-12. For 17-year-old Lily Hu, San Francisco's Chinatown during the 1950s is home to her community and culture. However, despite having friends and loving parents, she struggles with a sense of belonging. Rather than fixating on boys, like her friends, Lily dreams of working at the Jet Propulsion Lab (where her aunt works) and traveling to Mars. Slowly, Lily realizes that more than her life goals are in play here, as she recognizes that she is attracted to women rather than men. That includes Kath, the other girl in her math class, whose goal is to fly airplanes. After the two connect over an ad for a male impersonator at the Telegraph Club and begin frequenting the establishment, Lily's life changes forever. Fearful of exposing her feelings and of her family being labeled Communists (as a result of the Lavender Scare), Lily is faced with hard decisions about herself and those she loves. Writing beautifully with a knowing, gentle hand that balances Lily's unease and courage, Lo presents a must-read love story in an uncommon setting: the midcentury queer Bay Area at a time when racism, homophobia, and McCarthyism held tight grips on the citizenry. The author's notes are a wealth of historical information and discuss the seed from which this alternately heart-wrenching and satisfying story grew.

Kirkus Reviews starred (December 1, 2020

Finally, the intersectional, lesbian, historical teen novel so many readers have been waiting for. Lily Hu has spent all her life in San Francisco's Chinatown, keeping mostly to her Chinese American community both in and out of school. As she makes her way through her teen years in the 1950s, she starts growing apart from her childhood friends as her passion for rockets and space exploration grows—along with her curiosity about a few blocks in the city that her parents have warned her to avoid. A budding relationship develops with her first White friend, Kathleen, and together they sneak out to the Telegraph Club lesbian bar, where they begin to explore their sexuality as well as their relationship to each other. Lo's lovely, realistic, and queer-positive tale is a slow burn, following Lily's own gradual realization of her sexuality while she learns how to code-switch between being ostensibly heterosexual Chinatown Lily and lesbian Telegraph Bar Lily. In this meticulously researched title, Lo skillfully layers rich details, such as how Lily has to deal with microaggressions from gay and straight women alike and how all of Chinatown has to be careful of the insidious threat of McCarthyism. Actual events, such as Madame Chiang Kai-shek's 1943 visit to San Francisco, form a backdrop to this story of

a journey toward finding one's authentic self. Beautifully written historical fiction about giddy, queer first love. (author's note) (Historical romance. 14-18)

Publishers Weekly starred (January 25, 2021
The year is 1954, and American-born Chinese 17-year-old Lily Hu, a rising senior at San Francisco's Galileo High School, discovers the existence of the Telegraph Club nightclub by chance: via an ad in the Chronicle featuring a Male Impersonator. Lily secretly gathers photos of women with masculine qualities; she's drawn toward "unfeminine" clothing and interests such as chemistry, engines, and space. Dawning recognition of her lesbianism comes alongside a budding connection with Kathleen Miller, a white classmate. But openly exploring queerness isn't an option-not with her mother touting "respectability," and society's limited perception of Chinese-Americanness as either "China doll" or "real American"-adjacent, and especially not amid McCarthyism-during which Chinese people, including those within Lily's close Chinatown community, are targeted as Communist sympathizers. As Lily falls deeper in love, though, she must work to balance the shifting elements of her identity with a landscape of sociopolitical turmoil that will resonate with contemporary readers. Lo incorporates Chinese food and language, appending explanatory footnotes for romanized Cantonese and Mandarin terms and characters. Smoothly referencing cultural touchstones and places with historic Chinese American significance, Lo conjures 1950s San Francisco adeptly while transcending historicity through a sincere exploration of identity and love. Back matter includes an author's note explaining Lo's personal connection to the story. Ages 14-up. Agent: Michael Bourret, Dystel, Goderich & Bourret. (Jan.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (January 1, 2021
Gr 9 Up-It's 1954 San Francisco, and 17-year-old Lily Hu is the epitome of a "good Chinese girl": She's modest, respectful of her parents, and her most outlandish interest is rocket science. Then she finds a magazine ad for Tommy Andrews, male impersonator at the Telegraph Club, and everything changes. She befriends classmate Kathleen Miller, who's into airplanes and knows about the Telegraph Club too, and all of her unspoken feelings begin tumbling out. The pair sneak out to the club, and Lily is both overwhelmed and thrilled as she is enveloped by the San Francisco lesbian scene. But the girls' secret is dangerous; it threatens Lily's oldest friendships and even her father's citizenship status. Eventually, Lily must decide if owning her truth is worth everything she's ever known. Lo's historical novel is a meditative exploration of a young gay Chinese American girl in the 1950s. While there are many compelling tenets woven throughout Lily's journey (racism, anti-Communism, her Chinese family's relationship to their American identity), an abundance of detail weighs down the plot. The focus on world-building is at times heavy-handed, causing repetitiveness and rendering Lily and Kath's relationship the slowest of burns. Lo's prose comes alive when describing Lily's blossoming awareness of desire; readers will be enthralled with her breathless, confusing experience of seeing the long-awaited Tommy Andrews and finally expressing her feelings for Kath. The ending is devastatingly realistic for its time, but an epilogue shimmers with a gloss of hope. VERDICT A pensive, rich work of queer historical fiction that will reward patient readers.-Ashleigh Williams, School Library Journal © Copyright 2021. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Magazine (March/April, 2021
High school senior Lily Hu lives in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1954 with her medical professional parents; she behaves obediently and dreams of working at the Jet Propulsion Lab like her aunt Judy. But she hides a secret yearning. After seeing an ad featuring "Tommy Andrews Male Impersonator," she sneaks out to the performance at the lesbian Telegraph Club with Kath, a white classmate who shares Lily's longing. Soon the two are club regulars, even though Lily's parents have warned her they are being watched (after her father's citizenship papers were confiscated by the FBI) and could be deported. When an incident at the Telegraph threatens to uncover Lily's lesbian identity to her family, she is forced to make a difficult choice. This standout

work of historical fiction combines meticulous research with tender romance to create a riveting bildungsroman. San Francisco, "with its steep stairways and sudden glimpses of the bay between tall, narrow buildings," is almost a character itself. Interspersed flashbacks that detail the personal histories of Lily's parents and Aunt Judy and timelines of world events further put the 1950s Chinese American experience into context for readers. Lo's (Ash, rev. 11/09; A Line in the Dark, rev. 11/17) comprehensive author's note includes an absorbing section on "Lesbians, Gender, and Community" and a select bibliography of print and film resources. Jennifer Hubert Swan March/April 2021 p.95

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*

Source: NovelistPlus

Asian/Pacific American Award for Young Adult Literature - Winner: 2022
Michael L. Printz Award - Honor: 2022
National Book Award for Young People's Literature - Winner: 2021
American Library Association Rainbow List Top Ten Titles for Young Adults: 2022
Rise: A Feminist Book Project Top Ten List: 2022
Stonewall Book Award - Children's and Young Adult Literature Award Winner: 2022

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Out of Darkness*	**Synopsis** Loosely based on a school explosion that took place in New London, Texas, in 1937, this is the story of two teenagers: Naomi, who is Mexican, and Wash, who is black, and their dealings with race, segregation, love, and the forces that destroy people.
Book Author Perez, Ashley Hope	
Copyright Year: 2015	Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus

Professional Reviews of *Out of Darkness*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (September 1, 2015 (Vol. 112, No. 1))
Grades 9-12. Pérez's latest—following The Knife and the Butterfly (2012)—is a powerful work of historical fiction set in New London, Texas, that revolves around events leading up to the horrific 1937 school explosion that killed close to 300 people. This gripping story centers on high-school senior Naomi, a Mexican American girl who recently arrived from San Antonio with her half siblings, twins Beto and Cari, and their father, oil-field worker Henry. Naomi's struggle to learn how to take care of the household chores is complicated by her dark past with Henry and the overt racism she faces in the segregated town. She reluctantly befriends and then falls in love with an African American boy, Wash, who is both brilliant and kind to her younger brother and sister. Pérez's skillful use of multiple perspectives creates a full and well-rounded sense of place and story. Elegant prose and gently escalating action will leave readers gasping for breath at the tragic climax and moving conclusion.

Kirkus Reviews starred (June 1, 2015)
A Mexican-American girl and a black boy begin an ill-fated love in the months leading up to a catastrophic 1937 school explosion in East Texas. The powerful story opens with the legendary school explosion in New London and then rewinds to September 1936. Naomi has begrudgingly left behind her abuelitos in San Antonio for a new life with her younger half siblings, twins, and their long-absent white father, Henry. Now a born-again Christian, Henry struggles to atone for his sins. The siblings struggle to fit into the segregated oil town, where store signs boast "No Negroes, Mexicans, or dogs." The precocious twins read better than half the senior class, and dark-skinned Naomi is guilty of not only being Mexican, but also of being "prettier than any girl in school." Their one friend is Wash, a brilliant African-American senior from the black part of town. Perez deftly weaves multiple perspectives--including Henry and "the Gang," the collective voice of the racist students--into her unflinchingly intense narrative, but the story ultimately belongs to Naomi and Wash. Their beautifully detailed love story blossoms in the relative seclusion of the woods, where even stepfathers can't keep them apart. But as heartbreaking events unfold, the star-crossed lovers desperately hope that any light can penetrate the black smoke cloud of darkness spreading around them. A powerful, layered tale of forbidden love in times of unrelenting racism. (author's note) (Historical fiction. 14 & up)

School Library Journal (June 1, 2015)
Gr 9 Up-The tale's layered plot begins with a prologue set hours after an actual deadly U.S. school disaster in New London, TX in March 1937. Readers are plunged into the grief and horror of the moment long enough to meet important protagonists and wonder at the event before being transported back to September 1936. From this point, the book focuses primarily on Naomi, a 15-year-old of Mexican heritage, and her younger biracial twin half-siblings. Recent arrivals from San Antonio, the children are all living with the twins' white father, and Naomi is forced to navigate the racially divided oil-mining town, learn to run a household, and to face her increasing interest in an African American youth. This third person story, recounted in multiple perspectives, slowly discloses the origins of the teen's apprehension for the recent transition. The insertion of black-and-white photos and stark black pages interrupt the narrative much like the metaphoric explosions in the lives of the diverse protagonists. Additionally, an increased use of white space leading to the book's climax seems to slow, and almost stop time. This book presents a range of human nature, from kindness and love to acts of racial and sexual violence. The work resonates with fear, hope, love, and the importance of memory. The author's note and acknowledgements pages give more background on the disaster. VERDICT Set against the backdrop of an actual historical event, Pérez's young adult novel gives voice to many long-omitted facets of U.S. history.-Ruth Quiroa, National Louis University, IL © Copyright 2015. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Guide (Spring 2016)
Two teens, Mexican American Naomi and African American Wash, fall in love and struggle to keep their relationship secret in racist 1936 east Texas. This novel weaves in the forces that led up to the 1937 New London school explosion, a tragedy rooted in the era's violent abuse against minorities. A poignant, potent, and provocative historical drama steeped in well-researched factual details.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Out of Darkness*

Source: NovelistPlus

Américas Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature: 2016
Michael L. Printz Award Honor: 2016
School Library Journal Best Books: 2015
Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award: 2016
YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2016

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Rumble*	**Synopsis** Matthew Turner doesn't have faith in anything--not in his family, which is in shambles after his younger brother was bullied into suicide; or his so-called friends or some all-powerful creator; but when a horrific event plunges Matt into a dark, silent place, he begins to question everything he's ever disbelieved. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Hopkins, Ellen	
Copyright Year: 2014	

Professional Reviews of *Rumble*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (July 2014 (Vol. 110, No. 21)
Grades 8-12. Hopkins' wildly popular novels in verse have covered a wide range of topics, from drug abuse to eating disorders. Here she focuses on faith, through the voice of cynical high-school senior Matthew Turner, whose gay younger brother was bullied into suicide. As the marriage of his alcoholic parents dissolves, Matt turns to his beautiful and very religious girlfriend, Hayden, but finds her pulling away, drawn to her church youth group's dynamic young minister. Secondary characters and plot elements bring in the hot topic of gun control, and the violent climax returns the focus to faith and spirituality. Though set in a small, rural Oregon town, Hopkins' novel taps into common themes of contemporary teen life, with dialogue and details that will speak to teens everywhere. The resolution is tidy and hurried, but Hopkins' many fans won't complain, finding catharsis and comfort in her portrayal of teens facing and surviving myriad societal problems. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Fans wait eagerly for the next Hopkins book, and this one will be no exception.

Kirkus Reviews (July 1, 2014)
Almost six months after his younger brother's suicide, a high school senior slogs through tangled resentment and guilt. Matt's world has never been rich with happiness, what with his cold parents who retreat "to their separate alcohol-soaked / corners." Dad bitterly rues the one-night stand that created Matt and forced the marriage; their house "is a sponge, / absorbing regret until it can hold / no more and disillusionment drips // through the bloated pores." Now Matt shoulders his own crushing regret. Luke was three years younger - Matt should have protected him from the homophobic and religious bullies; he should have told adults how depressed Luke was, even sneaking Mom's Prozac, which can be dangerous for teens. He definitely shouldn't have been distracted by his girlfriend on Luke's last, desperate day. Now that very girlfriend seems to be "trading [Matt] in // for Jesus." The sturdy, fast-reading free-verse poems - which sometimes shift into elegance - give a heavy sense of Matt's anger and discomfort, as well as how he vacillates between decency and churlishness. Themes of combat-induced PTSD, Christian fundamentalist bigotry, forgiveness, and foreshadowed violence integrate deftly. The climax surprises in the best way. Brief but explicit acknowledgement of the It Gets Better campaign (and why it didn't help Luke) grounds the contemporary setting. Readers devour Hopkins regardless, but this is strong and worthy. (Verse fiction. 14-18)

Publishers Weekly (June 16, 2014)
Hopkins again tackles hot-button subjects through free verse, taking on cyberbullying, censorship, the role of

religion, and the difficulties of veterans returning from war. At the center of her overstuffed but well-constructed story is smart, opinionated 18-year-old Matt, who is struggling with anger and a disintegrating family following the suicide of his gay younger brother, Luke. Matt leans on his girlfriend, Hayden, for support, while raging against her religion and the evangelical Christians whose bullying he blames for Luke's death. When Hayden's father tries to get the school board to remove copies of The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Matt counters that "Maybe if the kids who drove [Luke] over the brink had read the right books, they would've understood that being gay doesn't make you bad or even different." A violent twist very late in the story leaves Matt with new, life-altering challenges-something that he makes peace with rather suddenly, given the circumstances. Still, Hopkins expertly documents Matt's increasing ability to accept and love others in his life, and eventually himself. Ages 14-up. Agent: Laura Rennert, Andrea Brown Literary Agency. (Aug.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (August 1, 2014)
Gr 9 Up-Matt's gay brother Luke committed suicide because he couldn't take the bullying any more. Matt blames everyone for his brother's death: his friends, his dysfunctional parents, and the middle school teachers and counselors who did nothing to halt the torment Luke experienced daily. The protagonist's temper is perpetually balanced on a knife's edge, and it takes very little to push him into a rage. Matt's only peace comes when he is with his girlfriend, Hayden. However, she seems to be pulling away to spend more time with God and her youth group, many members of whom were Luke's worst bullies. Matt has no faith in an imaginary deity and no forgiveness for those who used their theology to justify their abuse of his brother. His hatred is eating him up inside, but he can't let it go or he'll have to confront the real reason for his anger. Hopkins's latest novel in verse is timely and poignant. Matt is a wonderfully faceted character that readers will alternately sympathize with and dislike. His actions are directly related to his emotional turmoil, and teens will understand his pain and admire his intellect, even while shaking their heads over his actions. The work doesn't gloss over uncomfortable or difficult topics. Hopkins's realistic, truthful approach to bullying, religion, and homosexuality make this a powerful story for even the most reluctant readers.-Heather Miller Cover, Homewood Public Library, AL (c) Copyright 2012. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Guide (Spring 2015)
"I'm pacing. A big ol' / simmering pot of pissed. / I consciously lower / my boiling point / before I detonate." After his younger brother commits suicide, eighteen-year-old Matthew Turner struggles with grief, anger, faith, forgiveness, and fear of losing anything else, especially control. Told in Hopkins's distinctive gritty free verse, the melodramatic story has an abrupt, dramatic turn that helps Matthew find (fairly pat) peace.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Rumble*

Source: n/ahttps://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/reading-lists/choices-2015-reading-lists.pdf

International Literacy Association Young Adults' Choices Reading List: 2015

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Smoke*	**Synopsis** After the death of her abusive father and loss of her beloved Ethan and their unborn child, Pattyn runs away, desperately seeking peace, as her younger sister, a sophomore in high school, also tries to put the pieces of her life back together. Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus
Book Author Hopkins, Ellen	
Copyright Year: 2013	

Professional Reviews of *Smoke*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (July 2013 (Vol. 109, No. 21))
Grades 9-12. In her poetic sequel to Burned (2006), Hopkins pays homage to the old adage "The truth shall set you free." In haunting memories, Pattyn and younger sister Jackie return to the horrifying scene of their father's murder: Caleb's rape of Jackie, their father's discovery of the crime and his brutal beating of his violated daughter, and Pattyn's gunpoint threat. Now Pattyn is on the run, disguised as a California migrant farm worker, while Jackie is a pariah in church, at school, and in her mother's eyes. Hopkins' riveting story line is full of the perpetual premonition of danger, and the simple free-verse format belies the complexity of both plot and craft. The poems are sparse, each word and phrase carefully chosen, each line and stanza designed to convey both girls' desperation and resilience. Each sees herself as damaged and unlovable; each harbors guilt and hate for the father who physically beat her and the mother who emotionally betrayed her. Hopkins also tackles issues of immigration, homosexuality, bullying, Mormon extremism, and America's shadowy antigovernment militia, making for a compelling and thought-provoking read.
HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Hopkins is a number-one New York Times best-selling author, and her fan base is huge, huge, huge.

Kirkus Reviews (April 15, 2013)
Two sisters wrestle with guilt and fear after one kills the father who battered them. Readers last saw 17-year-old Pattyn at the cliffhanger ending of Burned (2006), immediately after her beloved boyfriend and their unborn baby were killed in a car wreck. Stunned with grief and fury, and with nothing left to lose, Pattyn vowed to shoot her long-abusive father, whom she blamed for the accident. This much-desired sequel begins two weeks later--and Dad's dead. Escaping town, Pattyn meets a warm, welcoming family of mostly undocumented farm laborers. They find her a ranch job, where she hides from law enforcement. Meanwhile, 15-year-old Jackie is stuck at home, narrating her own half of the story. Through free-verse poems thick with the weight of trauma, the shooting's details emerge. A schoolmate raped Jackie; blaming Jackie, Dad broke her ribs and loosened her teeth; Pattyn's gun stopped Dad forever. Now Pattyn faces "blood-caked nightmares," while Jackie fights a mother and two LDS church leaders who insist she forget her rape. Waiting for the past to "tackle [them] from behind," both girls struggle toward fragile new connections and inner strength. The lives of undocumented Americans, a renegade hate movement and a wild horse wary of trust are all organic to the plot. A strong, painful and tender piece about wresting hope from the depths of despair. (author's note) (Verse fiction. 13-17)

Publisher's Weekly (January 6, 2014)
In this sequel to Hopkins's Burned, the story of Pattyn Von Stratten continues as she struggles to start anew after the deaths of her abusive father; her lover, Ethan; and their unborn child. On the run, Pattyn winds up in California and takes work on a ranch as she works to overcome her isolation and rebuild her life. Hopkins's novel comes to life here thanks to the team of LaVoy and Thaxton. Each narrator ably captures the essence of the book, infusing the prose with emotion and providing unique and appropriate voices for the characters.

School Library Journal (September 1, 2013)
Gr 9 Up-Readers last left Pattyn in Burned (S & S, 2006), where she was mourning the loss of her love, Ethan, and their unborn baby. Smoke starts with a bang-literally. Pattyn walks in on her father beating her sister Jackie (whom he'd interrupted mid-rape by a boy from their LDS church). When he won't stop attacking her, Pattyn presumably shoots him dead, though only Jackie and Pattyn know the truth. Clearly this is not light fare. The book, told in the author's signature verse, alternates between the girls' voices. The narrative follows Pattyn as she befriends an immigrant family and anonymously seeks refuge as a housekeeper for a family with looming problems of its own. Jackie, the one left behind, must deal with their six siblings, a weak-willed mother, and the fallout from their father's death. Hopkins's popular novels are typically a chorus of downward spirals, and, at times, character development can get lost in the cacophony. Perhaps because Smoke focuses finely on only two voices, it doesn't suffer such a fate. Pattyn and Jackie are given the time and space for full-bodied development. Both have overcome (and are still living in) horrific circumstances, but neither is a victim. They are strong, sympathetic characters for whom readers will root as new love sweetly weaves its way back into their lives. Though some will likely take issue with the extremist portrayal of the Mormon church, Hopkins's fans should and will clamor for this sequel. While certainly enhanced when read in conjunction with Burned, Smoke can more than stand on its own.-Jill Heritage Maza, Montclair Kimberley Academy, Montclair, NJ (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Horn Book Guide (Spring 2014)
Fear and guilt drive sisters Pattyn and Jackie to keep silent about the violence and rape they experienced in Burned. Only when new threats emerge and the girls begin to fear for others do they speak up. Even when apart, the dueling sets of first-person poems sustain the dialogue between the sisters. Per usual, Hopkins lards her plot with extreme characters and melodrama.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Smoke*

Source: https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Smoke/Ellen-Hopkins/9781416983293

International Literary Association Young Adults' Choices Reading List: 2014
CBC Children's Choice Book Awards Teen Book of the Year - Finalist: 2014

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *The Truth About Alice* **Book Author** Mathieu, Jennifer **Copyright Year:** 2014	**Synopsis** Everyone knows Alice slept with two guys at one party. When Healy High star quarterback Brandon Fitzsimmons dies in a car crash, it was because he was sexting with Alice. Ask anybody. Rumor has it Alice Franklin is a slut. It's written all over the "slut stall" in the girls' bathroom: "Alice had sex in exchange for math test answers" and "Alice got an abortion last semester." After Brandon dies, the rumors start to spiral out of control. In this remarkable debut novel, four Healy High students tell all they "know" about Alice-and in doing so reveal their own secrets and motivations, painting a raw look at the realities of teen life. But in this novel from Jennifer Mathieu, exactly what is the truth about Alice? In the end there's only one person to ask: Alice herself. Source: Publisher Website

Professional Reviews of *The Truth About Alice*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (August 2014 (Vol. 110, No. 22))

Grades 9-12. The text that changed everything: tommy and me banged alice franklin upstairs. Nearly overnight, Alice's status as a popular junior is destroyed, as students, parents, and seemingly everyone else in Healy, Texas (population 3,000), gasp about the scandal. Debut novelist Mathieu assigns storytelling duties to the side characters: queen bee Elaine, who has an old grudge to exploit; bestie Kelsie, who uses Alice's misfortune as a way to climb the social ladder; Josh, best bud of Brandon, the star quarterback who sent the text; and Kurt, the brainy weirdo who offers Alice her only solace. When Brandon dies in a road accident supposedly brought on by Alice's distracting texts, the ostracism kicks into overdrive. If the plot and cast of characters feel familiar, well, they are, but Mathieu's telling is done with plenty of caustic panache, with the characters betraying their own failings and insecurities—each is a ticking bomb that Alice sets off by chance. Relevant to college readers, too, this is a tough, unapologetic look at slut-shaming from a promising new voice.

Kirkus Reviews (May 15, 2014)

Jealousy, rumors and lies can ruin a teen girl's life. In the summer before junior year at Healy High School, Alice Franklin was one of the girls popular enough to be invited to Elaine O'Dea's party. That night, Alice supposedly slept with both high school quarterback Brandon Fitzsimmons and college guy Tommy Cray. Just after homecoming, Brandon dies in a car accident, allegedly while texting with Alice. Debut author Mathieu brings new life to a common mean girls' narrative through her multiple first-person narrators. Readers first hear Alice's story from Elaine, the queen bee of the junior class. Then Kelsie Sanders enters as Alice's best friend, who is willing to cast her aside to maintain her own tenuous place in the social hierarchy. Two boys also get to tell their sides of the story: Josh Waverly, Brandon's best friend, who has secrets of his own, and Kurt Morelli, nerd extraordinaire, who's been secretly obsessed with Alice for years. Due to the novel's short length, the rotating narrators and a few questionable word choices, some characters border on caricatures in places. When readers finally hear directly from Alice in the book's last chapter, they may wonder why the author took

so long to introduce arguably the most interesting voice in the book. A quick if unoriginal read saved by a realistic ending. (Fiction. 13-18)

Publishers Weekly Annex (July 14, 2014)
Four high-school juniors-Elaine, Kelsie, Josh, and Kurt-narrate the eponymous Alice's story in turns. A callous jock named Brandon starts a rumor that Alice slept with him and another boy at Elaine's party. Shortly afterward, he dies in a car crash, and Josh suggests that texts from Alice distracted Brandon. These rumors take on a life of their own, transforming Alice from a well-liked girl into a cafeteria pariah with a "Slut Stall" dedicated to her in the girls' bathroom. Mathieu's well-crafted debut portrays all the teens sympathetically, revealing the insecurities that motivate their actions; for example, Kelsie thinks the popular girls "could smell my old middle school nerdiness on me like it was some kind of disease," and would rather betray her best friend than lose her newfound popularity. Their accounts unintentionally reveal Alice's decency, emphasizing the cruelty of the ostracism and underscoring the integrity of the one boy who dares to befriend her. Alice gets the final word, yet Mathieu avoids reducing her story to a revenge narrative, instead offering a quietly powerful testament to perspective and personal resilience. Ages 12-up. Agent: Sarah LaPolla, Bradford Literary Agency. (June) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (May 1, 2014)
Gr 9 Up-Healy, Texas, is a small town where everyone knows each other's business, and the scandals that unfold around Alice Franklin are no exception. The book is told from alternating points of view, and four of Alice's classmates provide accounts of heavy drinking and rumors about Alice's promiscuity. Readers are told that the title character had sex with two boys at the same party, sent obsessive texts that led to the death one of the boys, and had an abortion. As the story unfolds, Alice is called a slut and a skank, is abandoned by her best friend, is ostracized by everyone, and endures a "slut stall" in the girl's bathroom filled with derogatory graffiti. As more is revealed, each narrator shares elements of culpability for the rumors and mistreatment of Alice, and teens are introduced to the potential damage that rumors and lies bring. Though certain participants in the rumor mill feel bad and readers get the sense that Alice heals from the horrible events while developing a meaningful relationship, the treatment of such serious topics is cursory at best. Mathieu skims the harmful topics of slut-shaming, rumors, and lies in a way that places this title in the ranks of books like the "Gossip Girl" series by Cecily von Ziegesar (Little, Brown) as opposed to more thought-provoking titles like The Mockingbirds by Daisy Whitney (Little, Brown, 2010).-Adrienne L. Strock, Chicago Public Library
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Horn Book Guide (Fall 2014)
After supposedly having sex with two boys at a party, Alice's bad reputation is perpetuated through text messages, bathroom graffiti, and other forms of rumor-mongering. For most of the novel, we learn about Alice through what others allege about her; salacious details and Alice's eventual romance with a sympathetic boy distract from the serious issues at the heart of the story.

Library Media Connection (November/December 2014)
Alice Franklin has a bad reputation; rumors claim that Alice slept with two guys at a party, and then sent inappropriate sexual texts to one of them. Alice goes from a popular girl to one who is shunned. Although Alice continues to attend high school, she exists in complete isolation. Only Kurt, the nerdy genius, knows the truth about Alice and befriends her in her time of need. This book is an excellent portrayal of the fragility of reputation. Words are powerful, and once a reputation is damaged, it is almost impossible to repair. Mathieu very successfully captures the teenage voice as her characters tell their view of Alice and reveal the truth about their own lives. The Truth About Alice will appeal to those who are fans of Jay Asher's Thirteen Reasons

Why (Razorbill, 2007). This book, covering an important and timely topic, is worthy of discussion. Jennifer Regel Parker, NBCT Librarian, Magee (Mississippi) High School [Editor's Note: Available in e-book format.] HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *The Truth About Alice*

Source: http://booklists.yalsa.net/book/13059/the-truth-about-alice; https://www.cbcbooks.org/cbc-book-lists/2015-finalists/

Children's Choice Book Awards' Teen Choice Debut Author Award Winner: 2015
YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers: 2015

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: *Water for Elephants*	**Synopsis** Ninety-something-year-old Jacob Jankowski remembers his time in the circus as a young man during the Great Depression, and his friendship with Marlena, the star of the equestrian act, and Rosie, the elephant, who gave them hope.
Book Author Gruen, Sara	
Copyright Year: 2006	Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus

Professional Reviews of *Water for Elephants*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (April 15, 2006 (Vol. 102, No. 16))
Life is good for Jacob Jankowski. He's about to graduate from veterinary school and about to bed the girl of his dreams. Then his parents are killed in a car crash, leaving him in the middle of the Great Depression with no home, no family, and no career. Almost by accident, Jacob joins the circus. There he falls in love with the beautiful performer Marlena, who is married to the circus' psychotic animal trainer. He also meets the other love of his life, Rosie the elephant. This lushly romantic novel travels back in forth in time between Jacob's present day in a nursing home and his adventures in the surprisingly harsh world of 1930s circuses. The ending of both stories is a little too cheerful to be believed, but just like a circus, the magic of the story and the writing convince you to suspend your disbelief. The book is partially based on real circus stories and illustrated with historical circus photographs.

Kirkus Reviews (March 15, 2006)
Gruen (Riding Lesson, not reviewed) brings to life the world of a Depression-era traveling circus. Jacob Jankowski, a retired veterinarian living out his days in an assisted-living facility, drifts in and out of his memories: Only days before graduating from vet school in 1931, young Jake learns his parents have died and left him penniless. Leaving school, he hops a train that happens to belong to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. When the circus's owner, Uncle Al, learns Jake's educational background, he quickly hires him as the circus vet. This position allows Jake access to the various strata of circus society, from lowly crewmembers who seldom see actual money in their pay envelopes to the performers and managers who drink champagne and dress in evening wear for dinner. Jake is soon in love, both with Marlena, an equestrienne married to the head animal trainer, August, and with Rosie, an elephant who understands only Polish (which Polish-American Jake conveniently speaks). At first, August and Marlena seem happily married, but Jake soon realizes that August's charm can quickly turn to cruelty. He is charismatic but bipolar (subtle echoes of Sophie's Choice). Worse, he beats Rosie, and comes across as having no love for animals. When August assumes Marlena and Jake are fooling around-having acknowledged their feelings, they have allowed themselves only a kiss-he beats Marlena, and she leaves him. Uncle Al tries blackmailing Jake to force him to reunite Marlena with August for the sake of the circus. Jake does not comply, and one fatality leads to another until the final blowup. The leisurely recreation of the circus's daily routine is lovely and mesmerizing, even if readers have visited this world already in fiction and film, but the plot gradually bogs down in melodrama and disintegrates by its almost saccharine ending.

Despite genuine talent, Gruen misses the mark.

Publishers Weekly (March 6, 2006)
With its spotlight on elephants, Gruen's romantic page-turner hinges on the human-animal bonds that drove her debut and its sequel (Riding Lessons and Flying Changes)-but without the mass appeal that horses hold. The novel, told in flashback by nonagenarian Jacob Jankowski, recounts the wild and wonderful period he spent with the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth, a traveling circus he joined during the Great Depression. When 23-year-old Jankowski learns that his parents have been killed in a car crash, leaving him penniless, he drops out of Cornell veterinary school and parlays his expertise with animals into a job with the circus, where he cares for a menagerie of exotic creatures, including an elephant who only responds to Polish commands. He also falls in love with Marlena, one of the show's star performers-a romance complicated by Marlena's husband, the unbalanced, sadistic circus boss who beats both his wife and the animals Jankowski cares for. Despite her often clichéd prose and the predictability of the story's ending, Gruen skillfully humanizes the midgets, drunks, rubes and freaks who populate her book. (May 26) Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

Library Journal (March 15, 2006)
When his parents are killed in a traffic accident, Jacob Jankowski hops a train after walking out on his final exams at Cornell, where he had hoped to earn a veterinary degree. The train turns out to be a circus train, and since it's the Depression, when someone with a vet's skills can attach himself to a circus if he's lucky, Jacob soon finds himself involved with the animal acts-specifically with the beautiful young Marlena, the horse rider, and her husband, August. Jacob falls for Marlena immediately, and the ensuing triangle is at the center of this novel, which follows the circus across the states. Jacob learns the ins and outs of circus life, in this case under the rule of the treacherous Uncle Al, who cheats the workers and deals roughly with patrons who complain about blatant false advertising and rip-off exhibits. Jacob and Marlena are attracted to each other, but their relationship is fairly innocent until it becomes clear that August is not merely jealous but dangerously mentally deranged. Old-fashioned and endearing, this is an enjoyable, fast-paced story told by the older Jacob, now in his nineties in a nursing home. From the author of Riding Lessons; recommended for all libraries.-Jim Coan, SUNY Coll. at Oneonta Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Water for Elephants*

Source: NovelistPlus; Young Adult Library Services Association Book Finder Database

Alex Award: 2007
Indies' Choice Book Awards - Adult Fiction Winner: 2007
Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners: 2009