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REVIEW: Keturah and Lord Death

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steeped in authentic details and true understanding of deafness and the discrimination faced by the deaf in the earlier 20th century. The layers of the story mesh beautifully as a strong link is established between the story of racial discrimination faced by Robinson and the discrimination and embarrassment felt at times by both father and son when engaged in social situations. The story begins with Opening Day for the Dodgers in 1947, Robinson's debut. A young boy who loves baseball dreams of attending a game at Ebbets Field to see Jackie Robinson play. His father arrives home one day with tickets for a game. While the boy is entranced with the crowds, vendors, music and field, he also feels ashamed when his father, while cheering, cannot pronounce Jackie's name correctly. He also feels the same when, practicing catch on the street in their neighborhood, his father cannot easily catch the ball. Father and son avidly follow Jackie Robinson in person, on the radio and in the daily newspaper; attend several games; and keep a scrapbook of Jackie's career, while the boy's father, in sign, explains to the boy the harsh realities of discrimination. In the last game of the playoffs, with them in attendance, Jackie catches a line drive for the last out of the game and throws the ball into the crowd, straight to the young boy's father! His father easily catches the ball for the first time ever, “and just like that, the baseball season of 1947 was over.” But while the season was over, the memories linger, as do the lessons. Highly recommended for grades two-five. 

— Reviewed by Candace Craig
Walton/Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School Head Librarian

Cynthia’s Attic: The Magic Medallion by Mary Cunningham

Good children’s stories are usually enjoyable and thought-provoking for adults as well as children. This time-travel adventure by Villa Rica, Ga., author Mary Cunningham includes plenty of excitement for young readers: a sinister clown, a helpful Gypsy family who can work magic, a treasure hidden in a cave, a forest fire and plenty of excitement for young readers: a sinister clown, a helpful Gypsy family who can work magic, a treasure hidden in a cave, a forest fire and discrimination. In the last game of the playoffs, with them in attendance, Jackie catches a line drive for the last out of the game and throws the ball into the crowd, straight to the young boy's father! His father easily catches the ball for the first time ever, “and just like that, the baseball season of 1947 was over.” But while the season was over, the memories linger, as do the lessons. Highly recommended for grades two-five. 

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Keturah and Lord Death by Martine Leavitt

Sixteen-year-old Keturah follows a hart into the woods of medieval England, becomes lost, and after three days, Lord Death arrives to whisk her away. Putting her storytelling skills to use, Keturah bargains with Lord Death, promising to finish her story of a young woman seeking true love if he will grant her one more day of life. In addition, Lord Death responds that if Keturah can find true love in the one day she is granted, he will not take her at all. Besides agreeing to her terms and granting the extra boon, much to Keturah’s surprise and dismay, Lord Death states that he plans to make her his bride and shares the startling news that plague will visit the town. The next day, Keturah visits the village wise woman to get a charm enabling her to identify her true love and attempts to find a way to save her neighbors from the coming plague. Keturah’s search is to no avail, but she manages to gain another day from Lord Death by weaving a different story and again withholding the ending. Throughout the course of the novel, the villagers alternately fear and revere Keturah and her unusual relationship with Lord Death. Leavitt’s lyrical style is effective for the telling of this story that closely resembles a fairy tale, containing elements of both light and dark. Though Keturah’s dilemmas combined with her sensibilities will appeal to teens, the themes explored in the book broaden its appeal to adult readers as well. Leavitt sustains the suspense of Keturah’s fate all
the way through the novel, culminating in an ending that makes the book a good candidate for a discussion. Recommended for public and high school libraries. — Reviewed by Carol Malcolm Riverside Military Academy

**Life As We Knew It** by Susan Beth Pfeffer (Harcourt Children’s Books, October 2006; ISBN 0-1520-5-8265, $17.00).

*Georgia Peach Book Award for Teen Readers Nominee*

The moon. It’s beautiful, romantic and mysterious. But never before has it been terrifying. In *Life As We Knew It*, a meteor knocks the moon out of its orbit and that much closer to earth. This has a profound effect on the climate and the tides, and the globe is plunged into a stage of unexpected emergency. Through the eyes of one family’s struggle, we see a catastrophe of global proportions unfold. In Miranda’s diary, we see a 16-year-old girl whose high school worries quickly get overshadowed in the battle for survival. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this story is the example set by Miranda that ordinary people are capable of extraordinary sacrifice, courage and heroism in times of need. The fact that global warming and subsequent climate change are part of our everyday political and social dialogue puts *Life As We Knew It* very close to the realm of possibility. This eerie realism makes the story that much more suspenseful and terrifying. After reading *Life As We Knew It*, you’ll never look at the moon the same way again. — Reviewed by Vanessa Cowie Forsyth County Public Library


What’s the best thing about Saturdays? According to the main character in *Saturdays and Teacakes*, the best thing is going to see Mawmaw who is always waiting, just for him. Lester L. Laminack’s story is a summertime account of one young boy’s weekly ritual — bicycling to his grandmother’s house to spend the day with her. The reader watches his trip, including his stop at the traffic light near the gasoline station where he remembers his mother’s stricture “You stop and look both ways … I don’t care if the light is green. I’ll hear about it if you don’t.” Once he gets to Mawmaw’s, tomatoes are picked, grass is cut so that the clippings cling to bare legs and lunch is made of juicy tomato sandwiches. Then he and Mawmaw make the teacakes of the title, enjoying their time together before he returns home with a basket of teacakes and vegetables. Lester Laminack’s words draw a picture of the special relationship between a grandmother and grandson as well as childhood in a small Southern town. Chris Soentpiet’s paintings are a charming visual telling of the story. The incredible details of the paintings, from the cars at the gasoline station to the inside of Mawmaw’s house, draw the reader further into the story and help to create an enjoyable reading experience. Grandparents will enjoy reading this story to grandchildren for the story itself and its illustrations. Children will enjoy the use of repetitive words such as pedal and criick-craaack as well as following the story through the pictures. Recommended for most children’s collections. — Reviewed by Beth Pye Gordon College