

Teen Librarian Picks 2015

***The Hired Girl* By Laura Amy Schlitz --- “Best for Lovers of Historical Fiction”**

Joan Skraggs is a fourteen year old farm girl who is a domestic slave to her family in 1911. A book lover with dreams for an education, after her father burns all her books one night in a fit of rage, Joan runs from her family’s quiet farm to Baltimore. Soon employed as a servant to a wealthy Jewish family, *The Hired Girl* follows her hopes and dreams to be something more, in a world where women do not choose their own destiny.

***Illuminae* By Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff ---“ For the next big thing in YA”**

One of the most interesting science fiction novels of the year! Written as a found novel in emails, transcripts, and journal entries, the action features a psychotic AI, Zombies, space ships, corruption, deadly viruses and a hacker trying to save them all. Join Kady, as she escapes aboard a spaceship into the galaxy. The most deadly thing in space doesn’t need a heart to kill.

***Dumplin* By Julie Murphy ---“Best for ‘I’ve read every John Green and Rainbow Rowell book! Now what?!’”**

Willowdean Dickerson has always been ‘Dumplin’ to her former beauty queen mom. Tired of being the ‘fat’ friend and the ‘fat’ girl to everyone, she confronts her body image, yet doesn’t need crazy diets to gain self-confidence. She enters the local beauty pageant to show the world she belongs. What begins as an act of defiance against the beauty standards of today, starts a revolution among her peers. Girls deemed not pretty enough, thin enough, or graceful enough enter the pageant, too -a laugh out loud tale about self-confidence and self-worth.

Mary Lou’s Picks:

***Echo* by Pam Ryan**

3 novellas weave together the life experience of 3 narrators during the rise of the Nazis and World War II. In Germany, a young boy is horrified by his father’s imprisonment for associating with Jewish musicians. A Pennsylvania boy strives to free himself and his brother from an orphanage exploiting the children as indentured laborers. In California, a girl and her Mexican family move to care for a farm belonging to a family now living in a Japanese internment camp after Pearl Harbor.

An enchanted harmonica ties the three characters together. I have never read anything quite like this beautiful and complex novel.

***Orbiting Jupiter* by Gary Schmidt**

Thirteen year old Joseph is running out of chances. He has already fathered a child and tried to kill one of his teachers. When he comes to sixth grader Jackson's home as a foster son, he encounters a healing love unlike anything he has every experienced. *This book is handled with great sensitivity, and most suitable for middle school readers.* An excellent choice for someone who reads at a younger level but is looking for more serious and complex subject matter.

***Mosquitoland* by David Arnold**

Lexington author David Arnold takes a traditional road trip storyline and stuffs it beyond reason with action, angst and a little romance – producing one of my favorite books of 2015.

16 year old Mim is distraught when her divorced father marries a ditzy waitress from a family restaurant, moving the family to “Mosquitoland” – otherwise known as Mississippi. Mim, separated from her beloved mother, learns her mother is ill, steals her stepmother's money and runs away. The trip features a deadly bus crash in Kentucky, a horrific encounter in a gas station bathroom, a campout in the woods, and an assortment of characters making this book crackle and burn. I laughed and cried with her, and rooted the whole way for her to get her feet solidly planted on the ground. I was not disappointed!

***Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War* by Steve Sheinkin**

Daniel Ellsberg, started his government career as a Cold War hawk, but as an employee of the Rand Corporation, a think tank advising the Pentagon on international policy and military strategy, his visits to Vietnam transform him. Witnessing first hand how continuing escalation of the war is not creating the victory hoped for, his decision to inform the American public about the realities of this seemingly endless war and his brilliant scheme to accomplish this – by stealing, copying and releasing the twenty year history of deception, lies and failed strategy to the public, is an excellent read for anyone interested in this piece of American history. (*Recommended for ages 12 and up-some profanity.*)