

## Unit 7-2: Bravery

### Novel Previews

My Brother Sam Is Dead by Collier -- All his life, Tim Meeker has looked up to his brother Sam. Sam's smart and brave -- and is now a part of the American Revolution. Not everyone in town wants to be a part of the rebellion. Most are supporters of the British -- including Tim and Sam's father. With the war soon raging, Tim knows he'll have to make a choice -- between the Revolutionaries and the Redcoats . . . and between his brother and his father.

Johnny Tremain by Forbes -- Johnny, a young apprentice, is caught up in the dramatic events involving the leaders of the American Revolution. As Johnny is forced into an adult role in the face of his new country's independence, he finds that relations with those he loves improve as well.

The Killing Sea by Lewis -- Drawing from his own experience as a rescue worker, Lewis creates a powerful fictional tale of survival and cooperation in the wake of the 2004 tsunami that killed nearly a quarter of a million people and devastated much of the Southeast Asian coastline. Set on the western coast of Sumatra where the waves first hit land, the story centers on Ruslan, a local teenager searching corpse-strewn ruins for his father, and Sarah, a young American tourist desperately seeking medical help for her little brother. Falling in with a small group of other survivors, the three young people wander through shattered villages, seeing bodies dumped into hastily dug mass graves and people fired upon as suspected rebels, but also witnessing much kindness. Although many of Lewis' descriptions are horrifyingly vivid, Ruslan's resilience and Sarah's emotional numbness will give readers some shielding.

The Acorn People by Ron Jones -- Even though he knows the camp is for disabled children, Ron Jones anticipates sunny days of hiking, swimming, and boating as a counselor at Camp Wiggin. But he arrives and realizes how severely disabled the children are, it seems too much to bear. Until he meets his campers—The Acorn People. A group of kids who teach him that, inside, they are the same as any average kid, and with encouragement, determination, and friendship, nothing is impossible.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea by Verne -- In this 1870 science-fiction classic, obsessed Captain Nemo and his prisoners descend beneath the sea in his secret submarine, the Nautilus, for nonstop adventure and suspense.

Shadow of a Bull by Wojciehowska -- Manolo Olivar has to make a decision: to follow in his famous father's shadow and become a bullfighter, or to follow his heart and become a doctor. A quiet style caps the explosive tension of this situation, making it more intense. . . . excellent writing and a story with both strength and depth.

The Year of the Hangman by Blackwell -- The author of *The Shakespeare Stealer* (Puffin, 2000) guides readers through a might-have-been America in this suspenseful alternative history set during the Revolutionary War. In Blackwell's imagined 1777, the upstart colonists have been routed by superior British forces. George Washington awaits execution and the rebel leaders who have escaped capture are in hiding or have fled. Dashing Benedict Arnold has become a privateer operating out of French-controlled New Orleans, where Benjamin Franklin runs a printing shop and distributes an illegal newspaper, *The Liberty Tree*. Enter 17-year-old Creighton Brown, an upper-class English wastrel who arrives in Louisiana as Arnold's captive, after an earlier abduction from London that had been arranged by his mother. Lodged with Franklin, Creighton becomes a

reluctant publishing assistant, and, as he begins to admire the Americans and their principles, an even more reluctant British spy. Creighton's lazy, spoiled ways undergo a revolution of their own when he is caught between dangerous plots and counterplots and is forced to take risks that threaten more than one life. Packed with action, convincing historical speculation, and compelling portrayals of real-life and fictional characters, this page-turner will appeal to fans of both history and fantasy.

Traitor: The Story of Benedict Arnold by Fritz -- A study of the life and character of the brilliant Revolutionary War general who deserted to the British for money. "This book about Benedict Arnold told of his heroic deeds as well as his betrayal of our country. The book shows how Benedict Arnold's need to prove that he was courageous, and his desire to be a great hero and receive recognition, led to his downfall. It is a well written book which provided both historical information and entertainment."

The Fifth of March by Rinaldi -- Historical events aren't as neat and tidy as they appear in history books, as the author ably demonstrates in this painstakingly researched tale told by a young servant in colonial Boston. Rachel is 14, bound as a nursemaid to the children of John and Abigail Adams, at whose house she sees many of the town's "movers and shakers" (one of the book's few faults is its jarringly anachronistic language). When British troops are sent to Boston to keep order, Rachel--despite her increasingly anti-Royalist sentiments--takes pity on Matthew Kilroy, the young sentry posted at the Adamses' door. Their relationship gradually blossoms, but Rachel, who has embarked on an ambitious program to educate herself and who rightly fears "getting into circumstances," refuses to demonstrate her affection in more than verbal terms. Lonely, frustrated, underpaid and reviled by the citizenry he was sent to protect, Matthew explodes during a riot on March 5, 1770, after which he and his fellows are tried for murder and manslaughter in the deaths of five colonialists. How Rachel acts according to her newly awakened social conscience and sense of self-worth makes for engrossing and educational reading.

Fever 1793 by Halse Anderson -- The sights, sounds, and smells of Philadelphia when it was still the nation's capital are vividly re-created in this well-told tale of a girl's coming-of-age, hastened by the outbreak of yellow fever. As this novel opens, Matilda Cook, 14, wakes up grudgingly to face another hot August day filled with the chores appropriate to the daughter of a coffeehouse owner. At its close, four months later, she is running the coffeehouse, poised to move forward with her dreams. Ambitious, resentful of the ordinary tedium of her life, and romantically imaginative, Matilda is a believable teenager, so immersed in her own problems that she can describe the freed and widowed slave who works for her family as the "luckiest" person she knows. Ironically, it is Mattie who is lucky in the loyalty of Eliza. The woman finds medical help when Mattie's mother falls ill, takes charge while the girl is sent away to the countryside, and works with the Free African Society. She takes Mattie in after her grandfather dies, and helps her reestablish the coffeehouse. Eliza's story is part of an important chapter in African-American history, but it is just one of many facets of this story of an epidemic. Mattie's friend Nathaniel, apprentice to the painter Master Peale, emerges as a clear partner in her future. There are numerous eyewitness accounts of the devastation by Dr. Benjamin Rush and other prominent Philadelphians of the day. Readers will be drawn in by the characters and will emerge with a sharp and graphic picture of another world.