

2009 (cont)

Absolute Brightness by James Lecesne (YA Lecesne)

When Phoebe's flamboyant, effeminate cousin, Leonard, moves to her New Jersey town, he brings a confusing mix of beauty and irritation as he inserts himself into the day-to-day running of her mother's beauty parlor business and Phoebe's life at school. When Leonard disappears, seemingly without a trace, Phoebe embarks on a mission to uncover the truth, and confronts first-hand the price Leonard paid for being different.

Madapple by Christina Meldrum (YA Meldrum, LNJ)

Fifteen-year-old Aslaug was raised in isolation by a mother who was both strange and ill. Her mother's death brings an onslaught of new experiences as Aslaug must learn to cope with the unwanted attention of the police, relatives she never knew she had, and multiple charges of murder.

Me, the Missing, and the Dead by Jenny Valentine (YA Valentine)

Sixteen-year-old Londoner Lucas Swain, on a whim, decides to take a cab home and happens upon an urn with the ashes of Violet Park in the taxi office. He feels the spirit of Violet leading him through a maze of layered clues, as he bit by bit solves the puzzle of his father's disappearance more than five years ago.

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2010-2009

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2010

Winner

Flash Burnout by L.K. Madigan
(YA Madigan)

Blake's life is way too complicated. He's a sophomore in high school with a girlfriend and a friend who is a girl. One of them loves him. One of them needs him. Can he please them both?

Finalists

Ash by Malinda Lo (YA Lo)

Consumed with grief after the death of her father, Ash's only escape from her harsh life and cruel stepmother comes from re-reading the fairy tales that her mother once told her and hoping against hope that the fairies will appear to her. When the fairy Sidhean appears, Ash hopes that he will steal her away to his enchanted world; but when she meets the King's Huntress, Kaisa, she realizes that staying in her own realm can also lead to beauty, romance, and perhaps even love.

Beautiful Creatures by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl
(YA Garcia)

Sixteen-year-old Ethan has lived all his life in Gaitlin, South Carolina, a town that hasn't changed much since the Civil War. While coping with the loss of his mother, a father who spends all of his time in his study, and high school, his world turns

upside down with the arrival of Lena, a new girl with whom he seems to share a psychic connection. As they grow closer, Ethan discovers that Lena and her family share a dark secret and that she is headed for doom on her sixteenth birthday.

The Everafter by Amy Huntley
(YA Huntley)

Maddy is a ghost, surrounded by things she lost when she was alive. By touching these objects, she relives the episodes in her life where she lost them. Even though Maddy's dead, she explores the lessons these objects hold - and why are they still important.

hold still by Nina LaCour
(YA LaCour)

After Caitlin's best friend Ingrid commits suicide, Caitlin has a hard time making sense of the loss. She finds Ingrid's journal and slowly allows herself to read it and learn about why Ingrid felt the need to end her life. Caitlin also grapples with allowing herself to find another friend, to let in a boyfriend, and to understand why her favorite teacher is ignoring her. It is the haunting story of dealing with loss, moving on, and finding peace and hope.

2009

Winner

A Curse Dark As Gold by Elizabeth C. Bunce (YA Bunce)

This supernatural novel retells the story of Rumpelstiltskin, setting it at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution and centering it around the life of Charlotte Miller. When the bank wants to repossess her mortgaged mill, Charlotte strikes a bargain with the mysterious Jack Spinner, (a creature who knows the art of turning straw into gold), but then discovers she must free her loved ones from a generations-old curse. At the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, Charlotte Miller strikes a bargain with the malevolent Jack Spinner, who can transform straw into gold, to save her family's mill. With masterly writing and vivid characterization and setting, Bunce weaves a powerfully seductive tale of triumph over evil.

Honor Books

Graceling by Kristin Cashore
(YA Cashore, LNJ)

In the Seven Kingdoms, those born with eyes of two different colors are Gracelings who develop intense and powerful skills. Katsa's Grace is killing, and she serves as King Randa's enforcer until she and Prince Po join forces to solve the riddle of his grandfather's kidnapping. The closer they get to the answer and to each other, the more dangerous their quest becomes.