

# PENGUIN'S **brain candy**

TREAT YOURSELF TO A GOOD READ

For teens who need to feed their appetites for reading, Brain Candy is a tasty feast of satisfying books by today's best new writers.

Plus, you'll find quizzes, questionnaires, and behind-the-scenes author info that'll give you food for thought about what to read this summer!

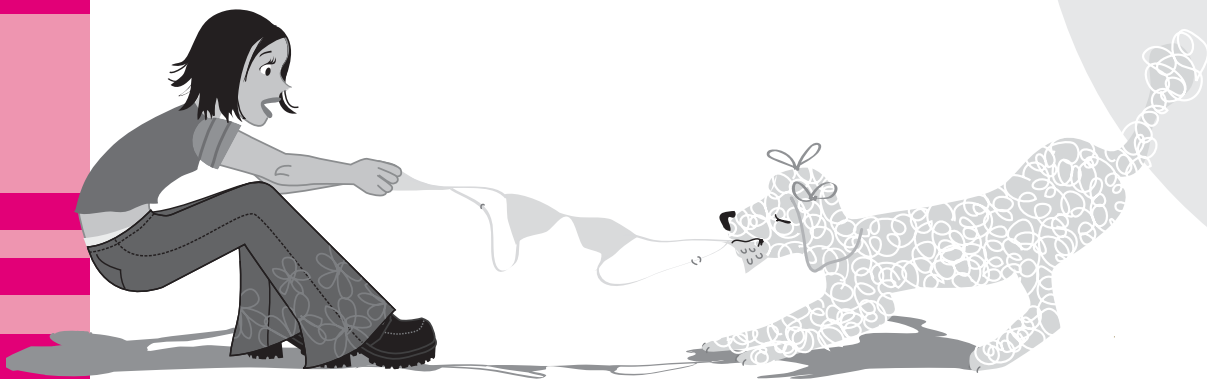
## WHAT'S INSIDE...

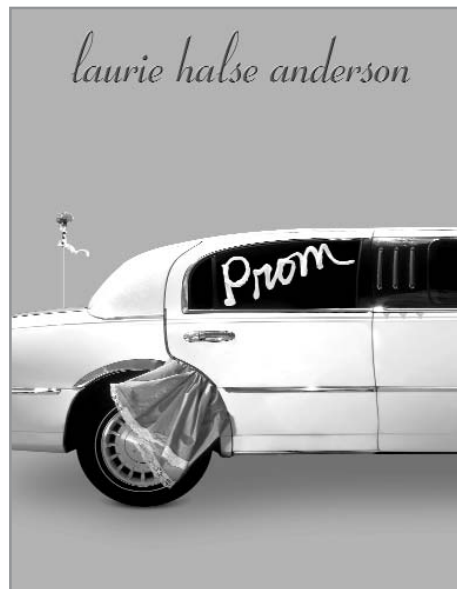
The books  
YOU NEED TO READ  
before you go to  
PROM

YOUR GUIDE to BLOGS

Famous LAST words

Sneak Peeks  
of HOT READS for  
SUMMER





# PROM

by *laurie halse anderson*

High school senior **ASHLEY HANNIGAN** doesn't care about **prom**, but she's the **exception**. It's pretty much the only good thing at her urban Philadelphia high school, and everyone plans to make the most of it—especially Ash's best friend, Natalia, who's the head of the committee. Then the faculty advisor is **busted** for taking the prom money, and Ash suddenly finds herself **roped into** putting together a gala dance

*out of absolutely nada.*

## An excerpt from the pages of **PROM**

**THE FIRST DRESS** I was handed one that came from somebody named Stacey Wiggins, whose mother worked for Aunt Joan. I never met Stacey Wiggins, but I'll know her if I see her on the street. She has boobs the size of Alaska.

I zipped it up and stepped into the living room. Ma took one look and said, "I can see all the way to your belly button. Take it off."

Next was a blue polka-dot disaster, then came something that looked like bedspread, then a gold shimmery thing that wouldn't go over my hips, and then a dark purple beaded strapless that was pretty except that it fell down every time I raised my arms.

"Again with the boobs," sighed Aunt Sharon.

A black dress with white stripes around the hem made me look like a lounge singer. The brown and gold thing made me look like a

stripper. The pink one that came with matching gloves reminded me too much of a confirmation dress. There were two skintight dresses that looked like mermaid costumes, without the tails. I refused to touch Aunt Joan's collection from the seventies. You looked at the dresses and you thought "bonfire."

Ma unzipped a garment bag. "This one," she said. "The color is right for you."

She was right. It was a soft shade of dark green, the color of the leaves in the park when the sun is going down. The fabric was lightweight velvet. I stepped into it and held my breath as I worked it up over my thighs (should not have eaten ice cream for the last month) and my butt (too much pizza). It was tight, sexy tight.



### *laurie halse anderson*

is the award-winning author of **Speak** and **Catalyst**. Ms. Anderson didn't attend her prom as she was shoveling manure on a farm in Denmark at the time. Visit her at [www.writerlady.com](http://www.writerlady.com).

### Q&A with author **Laurie Halse Anderson**

**Q: Where were you born?**

**A:** Potsdam, NY way up in Northern New York state.

**Q: Where did you go to high school?** **A:** Fayetteville-Manlius High School in Manlius, NY and the Høng Studenter og HF Kursus in Høng, Denmark.

**Q: Were you a good student?**

**A:** Ha. Oh, ha.

**Q: What were you like when you were growing up?** **A:** Quiet.

**Q: What were your favorite books?**

**A:** Science fiction and fantasy.

**Q: What was your family like?**

**A:** Struggling. My parents loved us, but they had many, many complications in their lives from their jobs and other painful personal stuff going on. My sister and I were on our own a lot.

**Q: Are any of your other characters based on you or your family?**

**A:** I think the sense of humor is like that of my family. We are very good at laughing.

**Q: Did you go to your prom?**

**A:** I went to my junior prom, and to the junior prom of my boyfriend. He went to a different school. The theme at mine was, no joke, "Stairway to Heaven." It was the '70s. For my senior prom, I was in Denmark. No proms there, just a lot of pigs and great pastry.

**Q: How much do you think proms have changed over the years?**

**A:** People pour way more money into them, but I think the overall experience is the same. It can be a blast or a nightmare. A lot of it has to do with having realistic expectations, and making sure you hang out with people you like, instead of being somebody that you're not.

**Q: If you could take any president/celebrity to the prom, which one would you choose and why?**

**A:** I'd take Ashton Kutcher because he looks like he'd be a lot of fun.

**Q: If you went to the prom this year, what would you wear?** **A:** Something that shows off my biceps.

**Q: Did you do anything special to gear up for writing about *Prom*?**

**A:** Went back to my favorite research spot—the food court at the mall.

**Q: What's your advice for making prom the most memorable night?**

**A:** Stay sober. Nothing says "Prom Loser" quite like vomit on a four hundred dollar dress.

**Q: Do you have a favorite place to write?** **A:** I can write pretty much anywhere. Listening to my iPod helps me write in crazy places like airports.

**Q: What's on your iPod?** **A:** You're kidding, right? I have 2 days' worth of music and a collection of David Sedaris essays. The artists who are played most often include Joan Osborne, Natalie Merchant, Pachelbel, Sting, Nirvana, the Allman Brothers, Dave Matthews and U2. Oh, and Bruce. This gadget qualifies as my number favorite toy of the century. I would rather have an iPod than a microwave, I swear.

**Q: Do you have plans to write any more books?**

**A:** Oh, yeah!!!! I've got a million of them!

### *Girls' prom to-do list:*

- 1. FIND A DATE.** No worthy partners? Put an ad in the school newspaper, hawking your stellar date-ability.
- 2. FIND A DRESS.** Note: Your aunt's dress from 1979 might not be the best choice.
- 3. MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR DINNER.** Not the sit-down dinner type of gal? Grab a booth for as many as will fit at the local ice cream parlor.
- 4. MAKE SALON APPOINTMENT FOR HAIR AND MAKEUP** (nails optional). Unless you really are wearing your aunt's dress from 1979, big hair and blue eyeshadow is not the way to go.
- 5. ARRANGE A BIG GROUP PHOTO-OP WITH YOUR FRIENDS.** Don't be the one that forgets film or batteries!
- 6. GET A BOUTONNIÈRE FOR YOUR DATE.** And don't trust the corsage to the guy—make sure his mom is taking care of it.
- 7. CALL A LIMO SERVICE FOR DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE.** Or pile into a friends car for a more up close and personal ride to the dance.
- 8. BE PREPARED:** throw lipstick, money, mints, and extra film in your purse before the big event.
- 9. STRETCH OUT BEFORE THE DANCE.** There's nothing cute about getting a charley horse in the middle of the Macarena.
- 10. HAVE A GREAT TIME!** If your date turns out to be a dud, ditch him!!

## Guys' prom to-do list:

### 1. SET A BUDGET

Prom ain't cheap, but you don't have to spend a fortune to have a good time. Maximize your money by making sure you're only spending for the things that really matter to you.

### 2. PLAN EARLY

We're talking 3 to 4 months ahead of time—you'll get the best choice for everything and won't be stressing about where to rent a tux at the last minute.

### 3. EXPRESS YOURSELF

Tuxes are standard fare, but that doesn't mean you need to look like a mannequin. Add your own flair with cufflinks, a cool hat, retro sneakers, or a vintage tie. But remember: confidence is your best accessory for the prom.

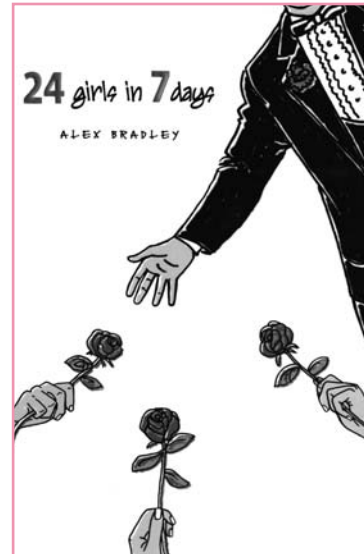
### 4. GET A CORSAGE FOR YOUR DATE

...and be sure to find out what color dress she's wearing (this is critical because you don't want the flowers to clash with the dress).

### 5. HAVE A GREAT TIME!

If your date turns out to be a dud, ditch her!

## PROM BOYS . . . Get Ready, Find a Date, PROM!



## 24 GIRLS IN 7 DAYS

BY ALEX BRADLEY

**JACK GRAMMAR**, average American senior, has **no date to the prom**. Or so he thinks. Percy and Natalie, Jack's so-called best friends, posted an ad in the online classifieds in his school newspaper. They figured it couldn't hurt—after all, there's not much in this world sadder than Jack's love life. Now Jack must take 24 girls out on dates within 7 days to pick the lucky one to take to prom.

### CLASSIFIED

Jack Grammar would never try to fondle your butt during a slow dance. Jack Grammar is a gentleman, owns his own tux, and has superb taste in corsages. Jack Grammar is looking for a prom date. Could it be you? Email [MyNewPromDate@yahoo.com](mailto:MyNewPromDate@yahoo.com).

To:

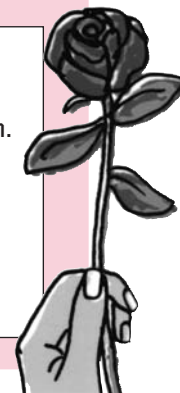
CC:

Subject:

It is with deep gratitude that I thank you, benevolent anonymous benefactor, for the intelligent and humane personal ad, which I'm sure will prove to be a pivotal event in the narrative of my maturation.

Your humble servant,  
Jack Grammar

P.S. I will poke your eyes out with a coat hanger.



### PROM

is held in the middle school gym!!

### SENIORS

decorate for their own prom.

### COUPLES

have to go through a "receiving line" with their dates and shake hands with the school's administrators.

### FINDING

a prom dress approaches wedding-dress proportions. Girls attend fashion shows, buy every catalog and magazine, comb through every boutique within a 200-mile radius, and have fittings and alterations weeks before the prom.

### AFTER

each couple is announced, the new king and queen are chosen, followed by the rest of the court. Then the old king and queen lead the new prom court in the first dance. After a little bit, the rest of the couples join.

### BEFORE

the dance, all couples going to prom must be announced and promenade before the previous year's King and Queen.

### AFTER

prom, everyone piles in cars and caravan to the Jersey Shore, blasting Bruce Springsteen the whole way.

### GIRLS

wear garters and the guys remove them (sometimes with their teeth!).

## Interesting Prom Traditions

Do any of these things go on at YOUR prom?

We want to hear about YOUR prom story!!

After you attend this year's prom, send us your story, good, bad, or ugly.

The best ones will be FEATURED on our website!



0-399-23474-8 \* \$16.99 (\$25.00 CAN)

NEW FROM NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR **JOAN BAUER!**  
*Best Foot Forward*

**JENNA BOLLER** is back from her **life-altering** trip to Texas and dripping with maturity. She's got a **new job** as assistant to Madeline Gladstone, Director of Quality Control for Gladstone Shoes, and a **handsome protégé** named Tanner Cobb.

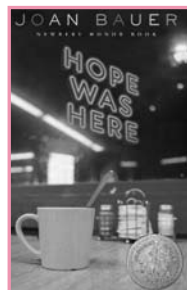
But balancing all these responsibilities with the angst of junior year and her needy family isn't easy, especially when she's uncovering nefarious dealings at a mysterious shoe factory called Plant 417 and her protégé happens to be a shoplifter. Jenna finds it difficult to trust Tanner, although his street smarts might be just what she needs when the going gets tough—filling so many shoes is a tall order! Thankfully, Jenna's sense of humor keeps her grounded and helps her understand that maturity is a work-in-progress. Once again, Joan Bauer has written a sure-footed, funny, and poignant novel about honesty, self-esteem, the demands of loyalty, and the redemptive

*power of sole.*

*A fresh new look for all of your favorite JOAN BAUER books in paperback!*



**RULES OF THE ROAD**  
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\$7.99 (\$11.99 CAN)



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FROM  
THE  
UK TO U

Seems like every-  
thing cool these  
days comes from  
across the pond:  
Harry Potter,  
David Beckham,  
Simon Cowell of  
"American Idol"  
fame, the list  
goes on . . .

Up your  
"BRIT" FACTOR  
by checking out  
some of these  
great books.



**THE WERELING** by Stephen Cole  
Werewolves, romance, mystery, thrills . . . all packed  
into one spine-tingling series.  
**BOOK 1: WOUNDED** (1-59514-041-7)  
**BOOK 2: PREY** (1-59514-042-5)  
**BOOK 3: RESSURECTION** (1-59514-043-3)  
\$5.99 each

**SCORPIA** by Anthony Horowitz  
Sensational spying for the younger set, this is the  
fifth book in Horowitz's Alex Rider series about a  
teenage agent for the top secret British intelligence  
agency, MI6.  
(0-399-24151-5) • \$17.99

**GUITAR GIRL** by Sarra Manning  
Molly Montgomery and her best mates thought  
they were just having fun when they formed their  
band, The Hormones. But when success hits, the  
hazards of fame force the newly crowned teen  
queen of grll angst close to the edge.  
(0-14-240318-0) • \$6.99

**LBD: IT'S A GIRL THING** by Grace Dent  
Ronnie, Fleur, and Claude are the Les Bambinos  
Dangereuses, hence LBD. When their parents won't  
let them go to the Astlebury Music Festival, the LBD  
plan their own concert, even if it means dealing  
with their enemy, Panama Goodyear.  
(0-14-240182-X) • \$6.99



# Tales of the OTORI

*Across the Nightingale Floor,*

*Episode 1: The Sword of the Warrior*

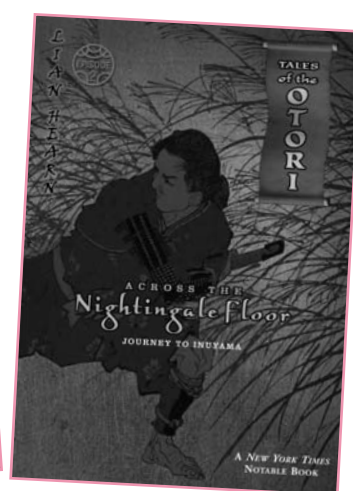
*Episode 2: Journey to Inuyama*

## THE MYSTICISM OF ANCIENT ASIA

comes alive in an epic and elegant tale of warriors, romance, and loyalty in Liam Hearn's Tales of the Otori. In the first two episodes, we follow Takeo, a country boy who discovers hidden powers and becomes entangled in a plot to assassinate the evil Lord Iida. In his quest, Takeo meets and falls in love with the beautiful heiress Kaede, a young woman with a deadly reputation. Love, revenge and honor motivate Takeo and Kaede in the struggle to fulfill their destinies.

Published in two parts in a floppy, glossy package. Coming to a bookstore near you in Summer 2005.

HERE'S  
YOUR  
SNEAK  
PEEK...



*Kenji sat cross-legged, eyes narrowed, one arm resting on his knee. "I think I know who he is. Lord Shigeru sighed, his face became still and wary. "Then, you had better tell us." "He has all the signs of being Kikuta: the long fingers, the straight line across the palm, the acute hearing. It comes on suddenly, around puberty, sometimes accompanied by loss of speech, usually temporary, sometimes permanent..."*

*"You're making this up!" I said, unable to keep silent any longer. In fact, a sort of horror was creeping over me. I know nothing of the Tribe, except that the assassin had been one of them, but I felt as if Muto Kenji were opening a dark door before me that I dreaded entering.*

*"You were in two places at once," I said. "The guards saw you outside, while I saw you in the garden."*

Kenji bowed ironically to me. "We can split ourselves and leave the second self behind. We can become invisible and move faster than the eye can follow. Acuteness of vision and hearing are other traits. The Tribe has retained these abilities through dedication and hard training. And they are abilities that others in this warring country find useful, and pay highly for. Most members of the Tribe become spies or assassins at some stage in their lives."

I was concentrating on trying not to shiver. My blood seemed to have drained out of me. I remembered how I had seemed to split in half beneath Iida's sword. And all the sounds of the house, the garden, and the city beyond rang with increasing intensity in my ears.

## The Secret Blog of Raisin Rodriguez by Judy Goldschmidt

**RAISIN RODRIGUEZ** has been **uprooted** from her life in California to live with her mom and their new blended family in Philadelphia. So she decides to record every detail in a **secret blog** she keeps for her friends from home, spilling every **humiliating** incident she has while trying to make new friends. But humiliation doesn't begin to cover what Raisin experiences when **someone at school discovers her blog** and prints it out for the world to see.

Hilarious and heartbreakingly hysterical, **THE SECRET BLOG OF RAISIN RODRIGUEZ** offers a glimpse into the mind and heart of a truly unique character with an unforgettable voice.

### *Raisin on philosophy:*

Life is full of little surprises. For example, today I learned that when mothers say things like "Today will be better than yesterday," they don't necessarily know what they're talking about.

### *Raisin on awkward social situations:*

I stood alone in the corner, trying to figure out what face to make. I finally landed on the perfect one (plain, but with the corners of my mouth slightly upturned to indicate that I was glad to be standing alone in the corner).

Log onto [www.raisinrodriguez.com](http://www.raisinrodriguez.com) for more Raisin Rodriguez!



**WHETHER YOU WANT TO START YOUR OWN BLOG** or just read the best of what the Internet has to offer we've got the skinny on the best blogs out there. Click around in these sites (and follow their links) to see what's going on in the world of books!

**LOG ON IF YOU WANNA . . .  
READ A GOOD BLOG**  
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**START YOUR OWN BLOG**  
[www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)  
[www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com)



## AUTHOR Q & A



**Q: First and foremost, what's your favorite snack to eat while writing?** **A:** Unfortunately, typing requires two hands and eating requires at least one, which is why one meets a lot of pale, gaunt writers. Unlike most authors, though, my "writing" involves very little in the way of typing. I mostly stare at the computer and eat Cheez-Its.

**Q: Where do you do most of your writing?**

**A:** My apartment has a basement, which my roommates and I call "the Hole." We all work in the Hole. My roommate, the architect, has his drafting board down here, and my roommate, the law student, sits down here in the lay-z-boy and reads these intimidatingly thick law books, and I sit with my feet propped up on my desk, eating Cheez-Its.

**Q: Have you started working on next book?**

**A:** My next book is about a washed-up child prodigy who has dated 19 girls, each of whom dumped him and each of whom was named Katherine. It's called *An Abundance of Katherines*, and it is, I'll admit, semi-autobiographical. I wasn't a child prodigy or anything, and I've dated more Sarahs than Katherines, but I have been dumped 19 times.

**Q: What was your favorite book growing up?**

**A:** Well, see, if I answer this question honestly, I'm going to sound like an idiot and also like a girl, because my favorite books in elementary school were from the *Babysitters' Club* Series. So, instead, I'm going to lie. My favorite book growing up was *The Collected Plays of William Shakespeare*, because I am a very sophisticated person with exquisite taste in literature.

**Q: What are you reading now?** **A:** Right now, I'm reading Shelby Foote's three-volume history of the Civil War. I've been reading it off and on for almost ten years, and so far, I've only made it halfway through volume 2. It's hard to get into, because I know how it's going to end. I don't want to spoil the surprise for anyone, but I'm pretty sure the South loses.

**Q: Do you know someone like Alaska? Pudge?**

**A:** I don't know anyone like Alaska anymore, but I used to. In high school, particularly, I was irrepresibly attracted to people with Alaska's charisma and adventurousness. And I certainly know someone like Pudge: Me. In some ways, Pudge and I are different (Pudge hates novels, I love them; Pudge likes oatmeal cream pies, and I think they cause cancer). But I see a lot of Pudge in myself.

**Q: The whole dying words thing is a little morbid. Why do you think Pudge is so fascinated by them?** **A:** People's last words are morbid, but they're also often fun. (I think of a dying Oscar Wilde looking up at his garishly decorated hotel room and saying, "Either this wallpaper goes, or I do.") I think Pudge likes last words because he likes history, he likes knowing what happened to people and why it happened, and he believes (as I do) that how people die often reveals a lot about how they lived.

**Q: Like Pudge, you attended boarding school in Alabama. What was your experience like?**

**A:** I loved it. The great thing about boarding school is that you get to hang out with your friends 24 hours a day. The only real disadvantage is that by leaving home at 14, I didn't get certain kinds of education. I learned a lot about Faulkner and Jane Austen, for instance, but I didn't have anyone to teach me how to shave or do laundry. So every time I cut myself shaving, which is every time I

shave, I feel a twinge of regret for my misspent youth, but other than that, boarding school was great for me.

**Q: What would you be if you weren't a writer?**

**A:** When I was eight, I really wanted to be an earthworm scientist. But then my dad made this gigantic earthworm farm, and all the earthworms promptly died, because I am no good with pets. Shortly after the Earthworm Debacle, I wrote a story and my third grade teacher like it, and after that I always wanted to be a writer. So I guess if I wasn't writing, I would probably be a really bad earthworm scientist. I wonder if there is a word for earthworm scientist. Oh, there is: oligochaetologist. Thanks, Google!

**Q: Any advice for aspiring scribes?** **A:** After I graduated from college, my parents were a little concerned about my employability, so they got me an appointment with a career counselor, and one of the things he asked me to do was write a list of "skills." This was my list: 1. Typing, 2. Reading, 3. Telling lie, 4. Sitting

The career counselor was unimpressed, but as it turns out, these four skills are the particular cornerstones of the writing life. So I would advise aspiring writers to type, read, tell lies\* and sit. Reading is particularly important.

**Q: Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it says on your website that you were a finalist for "Chicago's most fabulous 20somethings." Did you win?** **A:** I did, oddly enough. My girlfriend nominated me as a joke, and then, lo and behold, it turns out that I am actually fabulous. I feel like this speaks poorly of Chicago's 20somethings as a whole, since even my girlfriend will tell you that while I have my redeeming qualities, I am not overwhelmingly fabulous.

*\*That whole story, for example is a total lie. I never went to a career counselor. Forgive me. I have to keep practicing so my lying stays sharp.*

## FIRST DRINK. FIRST PRANK. FIRST FRIEND. FIRST GIRL . . . LAST WORDS

Nineteenth-century preacher Henry Ward Beecher's last words were **"NOW COMES THE MYSTERY."** The poet Dylan Thomas, who liked a good drink at least as much as Alaska, said, **"I'VE HAD EIGHTEEN STRAIGHT WHISKEYS. I DO BELIEVE THAT'S A RECORD,"** before dying. Alaska's favorite playwright was Eugene O'Neill: **"BORN IN A HOTEL ROOM AND—GOD DAMN IT—DIED IN A HOTEL ROOM."** Even car-accident victims sometimes have time for last words. Princess Diana said, **"OH GOD. WHAT'S HAPPENED?"** Movie star James Dean said, **"THEY'VE GOT TO SEE US,"** just before slamming his Porsche into another car. I know so many last words. But I will never know hers.

a novel

l o o k i n g f o r a l a s k a



Miles **"PUDGE"** Halter is fascinated by famous last words and tired of his safe—okay, boring—life at home. He leaves for boarding school to seek what a dying Rabelais called the **"GREAT PERHAPS."**

Pudge becomes encircled by friends whose lives are everything but safe and boring. Their nucleus is razor sharp, sexy and self-destructive Alaska Young, who has perfected the arts of pranking and evading school rules. But when tragedy strikes the close-knit group of friends, it is only coming face-to-face with death that Pudge discovers the value of living and loving unconditionally.

# THE HOLLYWOOD CONNECTION . . .

If you liked these MOVIES, you'll LOVE THESE BOOKS! Read on for some great reads that will complement your favorite flicks.

*If you like*

**28 DAYS LATER** (zombies, Apocalypse, deadly viruses, etc.) . . .

*... you'll love*



## THE BIG EMPTY

by J.B. Stephens, a gripping quartet set five minutes in the future of a world both unimaginably transformed—and all too believable!

One year ago, a devastating plague called Strain 7 killed three quarters of the human race. The surviving population of the United States has been relocated to the coasts; the heartland is now a wasteland called **THE BIG EMPTY**. But seven teens trying to put their lives back together will learn that the abandoned zone holds danger, secrets, and above all, hope.

*If you like*

**BRING IT ON** (cheerleaders, Kirsten Dunst, and “spirit fingers”) . . .

*... you'll love*



## I WAS A NON-BLONDE CHEERLEADER

by Kieran Scott, a book that proves that blondes don't always have all the fun!

New Jersey transplant and natural brunette Annisa Gobrowski has a problem—she's not blonde and everyone at her new Florida high school is. But no lack of golden highlights is going to stop Annisa from making the cheerleading squad. She may be a little different, but Sand Dune High had better watch out—this non-blonde is here to stay!

*If you like*

**ROCK STAR** (Mark Wahlberg, clad in leather pants, living out his Rock & Roll fantasy) . . .



## GUITAR GIRL

by Sarra Manning, which follows a high school outcast as she reaches the über-heights of Avril Lavigne-esque fame!

Seventeen-year-old Molly Montgomery never planned on becoming famous. Molly's band, The Hormones, was just supposed to be about mucking around with her best mates. But when their debut album rockets up the charts, the newly crowned teen queen of grrl angst learns that fame never comes for free.

*If you like*

**PRINCESS DIARIES** (Chad Michael Murray + Mandy Moore x Anne Hathaway = The ultimate geek turned chic teen movie) . . .

*... you'll love*



**SO SUPER STARRY** by Rose Wilkins, the first book in a new series about a girl who has it all and could not care less.

Octavia Clairbrook-Cleeve has a famous TV star for a mom and a very posh-sounding last name but she's extraordinarily protective of her outsider status. So why is her closet suddenly full of ultra trendy clothing? How come the A-list girls are actually smiling at her? Can this not-so-ugly duckling transform into a total swan without sacrificing her identity?

*If you like*

**SKULLS** (secret societies, murder, Yale and a Dawson's Creek alum) . . .

*... you'll love*



## INVENTING ELLIOT

by Graham Gardner, a suspense novel by a powerful new talent.

When Elliot Sutton arrives at Holminster High, he is determined not to become a target like he was at his old school. He invents a new Elliot: tough and impenetrable. Enter the Guardians, a group of upperclassman who secretly rule over the school with a quiet and anonymous terror. Now they want Elliot. Not to terrorize him . . . but to become one of them.