

Attracting Reluctant Teen Readers

B. A. Binns

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Finalist – 2010 RWA Golden Heart®

Winner – 2011 National Reader's Choice Award in the Young Adult category

2011 Top Book Choices for Youth in Detention – School Library Journal

2012 YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers

Stories of Real Boys Growing Into Real Men



Do Guys Read?

- Stupid question—Revealing answers
 - “I don’t read.”
 - “Well, I read my textbooks.”
 - “Ok, I do read comics.”
 - “I read all the time. I guess the other guys haven’t found anything they like yet.”
- Unless kids have a reading disability, they all read
 - We need to let them know that what they do IS reading
- If he says he doesn’t read, don’t stop there. Find out why.
 - No time to read
 - No desire to read
 - Reading isn’t cool/Reading is for girls
 - Community/cultural pressure
 - Closet readers – prefer that their peers not know they read

Guys are different

- There are more than just anatomical differences
 - Boys generally take longer than girls to develop comparable literacy skills. Things even out by about age 16.
 - If he decides he “doesn’t read” he may never even try to catch up
 - Many adolescent boys want to see practical value in their reading material.
- Guys read less
 - Ages 6 to 8, 52% of boys and 59% of girls read books for fun five to seven days a week.
 - Ages 15 to 17, only 17% of boys and 31% of girls.
- Once he begins thinking of himself as a reluctant reader, it can become a self-defeating prophecy
 - Our first is to keep him from thinking he doesn’t/can’t read

The Man Cave concept

- Set up a guy friendly area of the classroom, library or home
 - Less visual stimulation/distraction
 - Allow distractions
 - Allow a little noise
 - Comfortable chairs (beanbags, anyone)
 - Right to move around
- Get his input
 - Let guys name the “Man Cave”
 - Select Location
 - Recommend content

Make Interesting Books Easy to Find

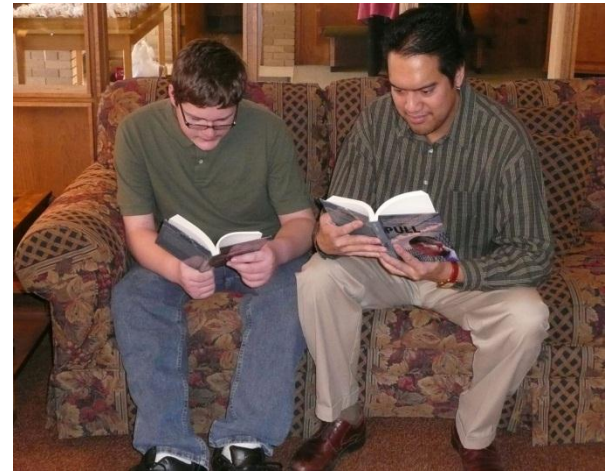
- Shelves set up with books attractive to guys
 - Genre specific shelves
 - Open display



- The librarian's job is to always showcase a variety of titles - to make great new books irresistible to a reluctant reader, no matter their gender. We librarians are more like used-car salesmen than we ever want to admit!

Jim Klise – Chicago area librarian and author of Love Drugged

Model Reading



- Read to him/with him
 - Seriously, almost every person of every age likes being read to
- Get male readers/role models
 - Male teachers, community members, celebrities, parents, staff
- Encourage teen boys to read to younger boys
 - Mentoring
 - Passing on their knowledge

Give him Relevant Choices

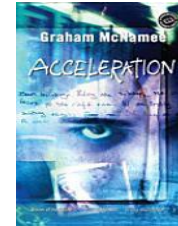
- Have books guys prefer like

- Crime/detective/mystery
- Science Fiction
- Humor
- Graphic Novels/Manga
- Novels in verse
- Short stories
- Practical books
- Non-fiction

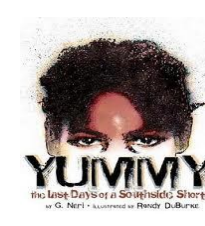
- Don't forget, not all reading involves books

- Magazine/newspapers
- Audio books
- Web blogs

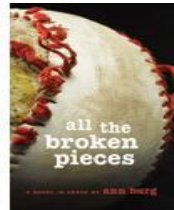
Mystery/Crime



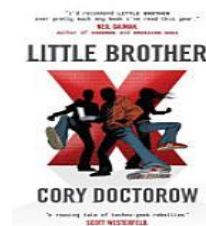
Graphic Novel



Book In Verse



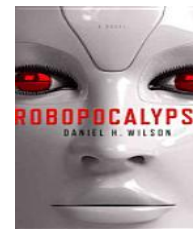
Science Fiction



Practical/Real World



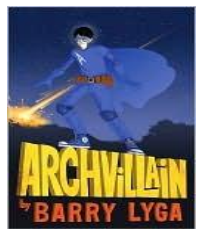
Short Stories



Adventure



Humor



Use Technology

- Join Social Networking with Reading for Pleasure
 - Book Trailer project
 - Class Blog/online discussion group
 - Twitter - Follow those hashtags
 - Facebook - Does your class/library have a page?
 - Texts - Let him sign up for book messages/suggestions
 - QR codes



- *<http://bit.ly/xlqlbu>*

Encourage Guys to Write

- Create and share their own stories
 - Fiction
 - Non-fiction - How to instructions
 - Show off what they know
- Book Reviews
 - Not essays; short, sweet and heartfelt works
 - “Alex Cross, best detective series *ever!*”
 - “Pull is better than cable.”
 - “It’s a amazing book.”
- Keep reviews available
 - Once one peer says he likes a book, friends grow interested

Have Authors Visit

- Local authors /Illustrators
 - <http://www.scbwi.com>
 - <http://www.babinns.com>
 - Stop by the SCBWI Illinois booth



- Skype visits
 - <http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com/>
 - <http://authorskypetour.livejournal.com/607.html>



References

- The YALSA Quick Picks committee “seeks books that teens, ages 12-18, will pick up on their own and read for pleasure. The list is geared to the teenager who, for whatever reason, does not like to read. Teen input is a vital aspect in the final decision of the committee. The visual appearance of a book and the standard considerations in the quality of content is equally important when selecting books for reluctant young readers.”
 - <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/quickpicks/2012>
- General
 - <http://alwaysdad.wordpress.com/2010/09/29/are-dads-the-key-to-get-boys-to-read/>
 - <http://www.k12reader.com/strategies-to-help-engage-reluctant-readers-in-reading/>
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/21/books/review/boys-and-reading-is-there-any-hope.html>
 - <http://www.boysread.org/>



- **SPEAKER BIO:**

- B. A. Binns is the award winning author of numerous short stories. Her debut novel, PULL (ISBN: 978-1-9348-1343-0) tells the story of a young man’s journey from guilt and the fear that biology forces him to repeat his father’s violence, to the realization that his future is in his own hands.
- Visit her website at <http://babinns.com>, and her blog at <http://barbarabinns.com/>

- **Reviews**

- The characters’ feelings are realistically portrayed and the raw language is not gratuitous...this is Binns’ first novel and she is an author who definitely has potential. –**School Library Journal**, May 2011
- ...the kind of book you should read on a weekend because once you've started it, you won't want to stop...many young adults will enjoy reading about the many challenges David faces and his unruly wooing of Yolanda. –**Voya**, Jan 2011
- ...this compelling story gives authentic voice to the social politics of teens, the long-term consequences of domestic violence, and a maturing teen’s need to differentiate the expectations he has of himself from those even the adults he respects have of him. This is a good group discussion book. –**Booklist**, Dec 2010.
- woow im totally obsessed with david now i love the guy! everyone in class wants to read the book too. im going to let them read it so they too can obsess over the wonder david albacore and the seemly perfect mighty mite. – 7th grader
 - (I know, grammar was apparently optional, but I just had to include this one)