

# TEEN LIBRARIAN

## Monthly

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### Editorial

Welcome to the October edition of TLM! This month we look at Halloween, providing services to Teen Parents, online ideas, a (not so) hilarious hoax that shocked a number of people (myself included) and a disturbing trend in teens who don't know much about Shakespeare. It is not all doom and gloom – publisher Classical Comics is releasing a series of graphic novel adaptations of famous and well-loved classic novels and plays (including Shakespeare). Lastly there is also the monthly Eight Questions Interview with Gemma Malley – author of *The Declaration*.

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### Halloween Idea

Halloween will be upon us in 16 days and an idea for this time of year, instead of the usual scary displays and monster costumes is to hold a *Halloween Cosplay* event.

Cosplay, a portmanteau of the English words "costume" and "roleplay", is a Japanese subculture centred on dressing as characters from manga, anime, tokusatsu, video games, and, less commonly, Japanese live action television shows, fantasy movies, Japanese pop music bands, Visual Kei, fantasy music stories (such as stories by the band Sound Horizon), and novels. In some circles it has come to mean simply wearing a costume (so those that want to participate but don't have a manga costume can still come under a sheet).

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### Teen Parents: an Observation

It seems to be that more and more focus is being put on providing for

teenagers as a unique category of users within the library service. This is fantastic news as, at last, libraries are trying to make themselves relevant to young adults, seeking ways to provide for their needs and recognising them as the users of the future (remember the days when services related to Teens consisted of damage control and ingenious ways to keep them away from the library, so as not to disturb the 'regulars'?!)

I have witnessed the growth of provision in my own place of work; TRGs, Study Centres, Manga Clubs, Games workshops, even DJ classes, all of which have seen great success. However, it is through these 'relevant', 'target-focused' activities along with a personal interest in Early Years Provision, that I have observed a potential gap in this teenage provision by libraries - that of services to teenage parents.

Teenage parents fall into that category of special populations in particular need of the services and resources that libraries can offer, yet few are users and those that are seem grossly under-served. As well as the benefits these teenage parents may gain from libraries it is also important for them to be made aware of the benefits that libraries can bring to their own children. A simple Teenage Parents and Babies storytime session can be used to teach teenage parents of the importance of reading and singing with their children, allow the teenagers to interact with other members of their own peer-group as well as an opportunity to showcase the resources and support that the library as an information centre can provide the teenagers themselves.

In order to attract teenage parents to the library it may be necessary, as in most cases with special sectors of the population, to make use of existing local community groups, organisations and agencies (such as teen support groups or teen maternity groups) to encourage and make the teenagers feel more at ease. Perhaps as a starter you may try inviting the group for a one-off tour of the library, working in conjunction with other service-providers as part of holistic provision.

Outreach is often key to the success of such groups and traditional tactics not always the most effective. In order to encourage usage it may also be worth rethinking other aspects of the service to suit the particular needs of teenage parents, for example, reducing fines and using promotions to encourage them. The most important factor to highlight however is that the issues faced by teenage parents must be recognised as an important part of our outreach provisions on all levels of the service, but particularly need to be given more consideration by those aiming to work with teens on grassroots level.

#### Links

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy>

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy>

Government guidance and information on issues of Teenage parents/pregnancy \*

#### **Gaia Online**

Gaia Online has become the fastest-growing hangout on the web. Millions of teens come to Gaia every month to play games, make friends, and participate in the world's most active online community.

Gaia provides a fun, social environment that inspires individuality and creativity. With everything from art contests and poetry forums to fully customizable profiles and digital characters, Gaia is a place where teens can create their own space and express their individual style.

#### **Features:**

- **Online Hangout:** Millions of teens spend hours a day on Gaia, exploring, chatting and just hanging out. Whether they're posting on our forums, participating in special events, or playing our multiplayer mini-games, there's always something fun to do.
- **Endless Customization:** Gaia revolves around creative customization. Every member can create their own virtual character and dress it up with over five thousand items: clothes, accessories, pets, masks and just about anything else imaginable.
- **Thriving Community:** Gaia Online boasts one of the most active forum communities in the world with over one billion posts to date. Members can chat in online games, post messages on forums, or send each other private messages.
- **Gaia Gold Marketplace:** Gaia Online is free to join, and members earn free Gaia Gold for everything they do on the site- posting, playing games, or just hanging out. Members can buy thousands of items in our virtual stores, or they can set up their own shops. Our virtual auction house lets members buy, sell and trade their items--over 50,000 auctions are completed every day!
- **Fun and Games:** Members can interact, have fun, and earn Gaia Gold with their quick and casual online games. They can also go head-to-head in the Avatar Arena to see who can make the coolest virtual outfit, or test their talents in the Art Arena, where thousands of members vote on the best original artwork.

#### **The Happy Ending Foundation**

"Books should give them a sense of good triumphing over evil and let them be rest assured that the goodies will come out on top."

Some (or all) readers may have come across the recent campaign by the HEF to ban books with sad endings.

Fortunately it was all a hoax – guerilla marketing for Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. It took a lot of people in (including me).

For the full story go here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/2lkeae>

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Why did the sparrow fly into the library?

*It was looking for bookworms!*

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### Shakespeare who?

Ignorance about Shakespeare is so widespread among teenagers that thousands are failing to score a single mark in the key stage 3 school test on the works of Britain's greatest writer.

For the complete Telegraph article follow this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/2nodns>

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The concept behind Classical Comics is **to create exciting and engaging graphical novel versions of classical literature**; to introduce new generations to the world of classic fiction; and to make the works of masters available and accessible to all.

To reach the audience at all ages and literacy levels, each Shakespeare play comes in three versions:

- **Original Text** - the full script
- **Plain Text** - a plain English version of the full script
- **Quick Text** - with shortened dialogue for young readers and for those people who want to understand the story rapidly.

(Incidentally, non-Shakespeare comes in Original Text and Quick Text only, because the language is much easier to start with).

Classical Comics are not just for children; most adults would like to understand at least some of Shakespeare's plays. Unfortunately, as we all know, they are hard to appreciate in cold script form - hence the ongoing successes of film versions of the plays. Classical Comics' Graphical Novel formats go one step further.

There is an extra level of enjoyment reached by reading rather than by simply watching. It is an *active* process and therefore more engaging for the reader who automatically becomes a participant in the storytelling.

A list of titles is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/3xr3qm>

See some examples of Classical Comics' works here:

<http://tinyurl.com/33qjhd>

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### Library Youth and Teen Services 2.0

<http://libraryyouth.ning.com/>

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This coming weekend will see the MCM Expo hit the Excel Centre in London's Docklands. Guests include Eoin Colfer who will be promoting the graphic novel adaptation of the Artemis Fowl series. You will also get to see an army of Cosplayers and the latest in Movie, Comics and other modern media

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### Submissions

As always all submissions are welcome for TLM. Share your event and group ideas celebrate your triumphs and brag a bit. There is no shame in saying "This is what we are doing and it is going well!" You may inspire others and also gain inspiration yourself.

Please send all submissions to [teenlibraryservice@gmail.com](mailto:teenlibraryservice@gmail.com)

## **Eight Questions with... Gemma Malley**

### **Q1. What influenced your decision to write for Teenagers?**

I think teenagers are so exciting to write for. The books I read when I was a teenager have really stayed with me – it's a time when you're learning so much about the world, learning to think for yourself and beginning to question all the things you've taken for granted. What better audience can a writer ask for?

### **Q2. How do you get into the heads of your characters?**

I guess all my characters come out of my head so it's not too difficult to get into theirs – even the not so nice ones! I think writing is a bit like acting in that way; you have to immerse yourself in each character and really understand their motivations. I like to sketch out each character before I start writing, so I know their life history, their personality and everything else about them.

### **Q3. Do you know instinctively what will appeal to Teens or is it more a hit or miss process?**

Oh, I don't really think like that – I think that if a story is worth telling then it will be of interest to the audience whoever they are. If you think too much about your audience and what they might or might not like, you might as well be in marketing!

### **Q4. What is the most satisfying part of the writing process for you?**

Two things – firstly, when I finish a book, that's a great feeling. And the second is when I see it on the shelf. No, scratch that – the best part is seeing someone read my book, or having them tell me they enjoyed it. That's when the book really becomes real.

### **Q5. Do you ever read the works of other Teen/YA authors? If yes what can you recommend?**

Oh, definitely. I love Philip Pullman, Jennifer Donnelly and Meg Rosoff... Lots of the classics are great for teenagers, too. I loved *Catcher in the Rye*, *the Outsider* and *On the Road* when I was a teenager. I still do...

### **Q6. Are any of your novels based on personal experiences?**

I think it's inevitable that personal experience creeps into my novels, but never directly. So, for instance, my time at boarding school certainly informed some of the scenes in *The Declaration*, but that doesn't imply that my school was anything like Grange Hall – I actually enjoyed myself there, I promise!

### **Q7. Are you working on anything new at the moment (or do you have anything planned)?**

I'm working on the sequel to *The Declaration*. It's a very different book that follows Anna and Peter's lives on the Outside of Grange Hall.

### **Q8. Do you ever do Library visits to Teen Reading Groups? If yes, what is the best way to get into contact with you or your agent about it?**

I haven't yet, but feel free to contact Dorie Simmonds, my agent, on [dhsimmonds@aol.com](mailto:dhsimmonds@aol.com)