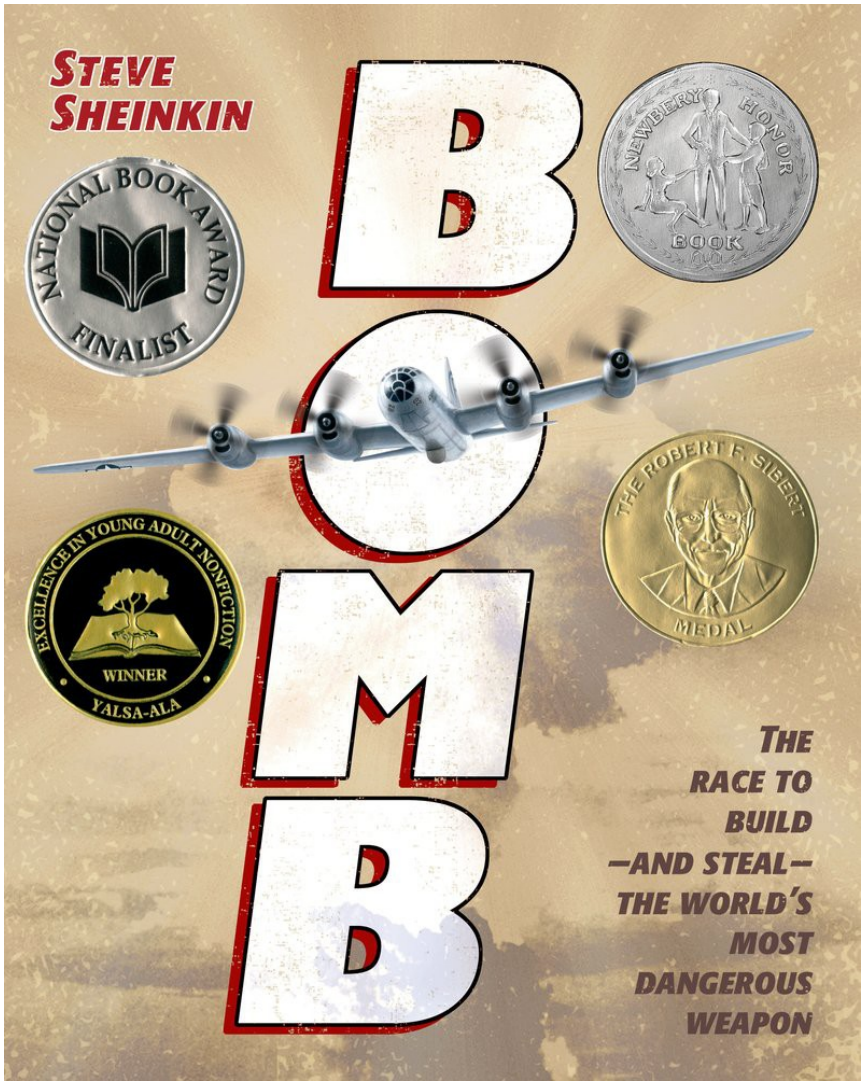
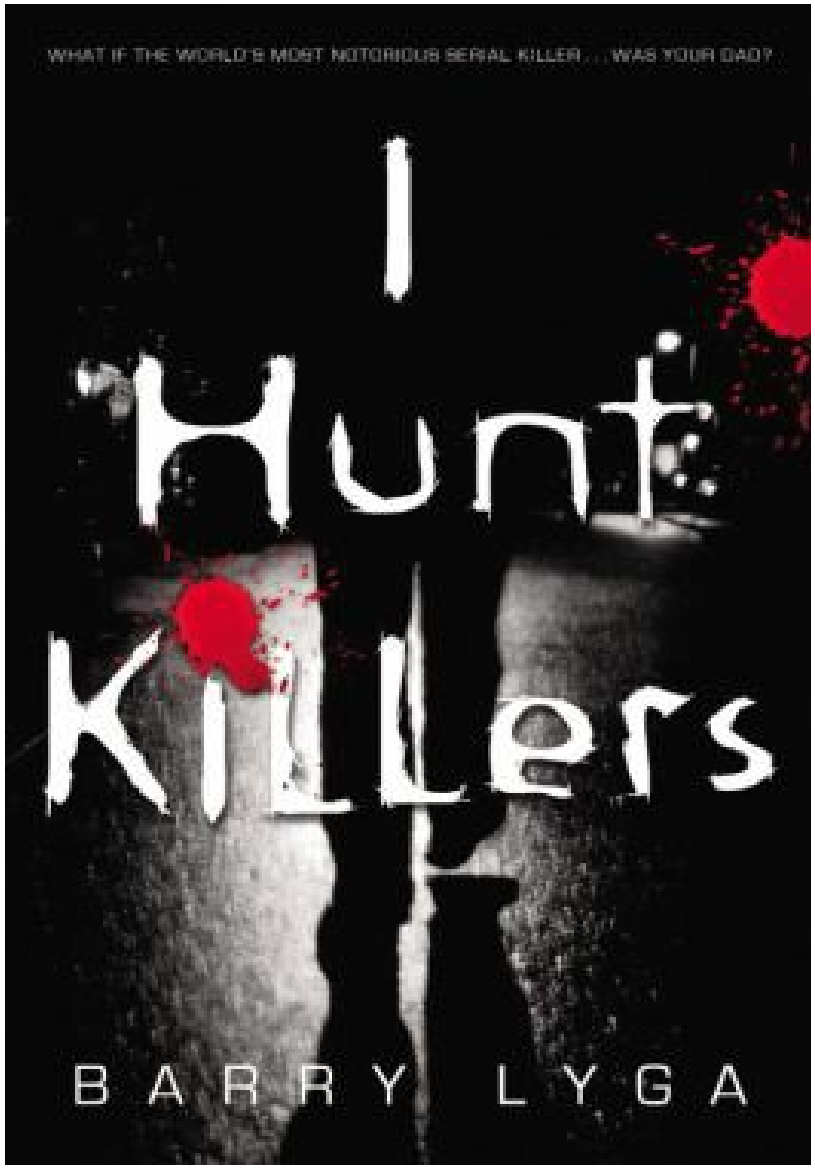


It was a fluke of history that scientists started to understand how atoms work just as Hitler was coming to power and threatening to overrun Europe. Suddenly it just might be possible to produce not only atomic energy, but atomic explosions of tremendous power that could change the outcome of the war. Suddenly it wasn't just about scientists wrestling with equations and experiments to get at how the universe hangs together, and falls apart. Suddenly it was also about international espionage, generals and presidents, Nazis and Soviets.

Suddenly it was a breathless story with a cast of thousands! This book won a slew of awards not because it's "important", but because it's such a ripping yarn. **Steve Sheinkin's book, Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon,** is not just about the bomb. It's about all the people you never heard of, never thought about—the spies, the resistance fighters, the secretaries, the scientists and engineers who don't usually get top billing in the history books—telling you how it all happened, in their own words, taken from interviews and testimony and memoirs, all documented in the back of the book. **Bomb** is the real deal.

Booktalk by Abbie Anderson, 4/11/13



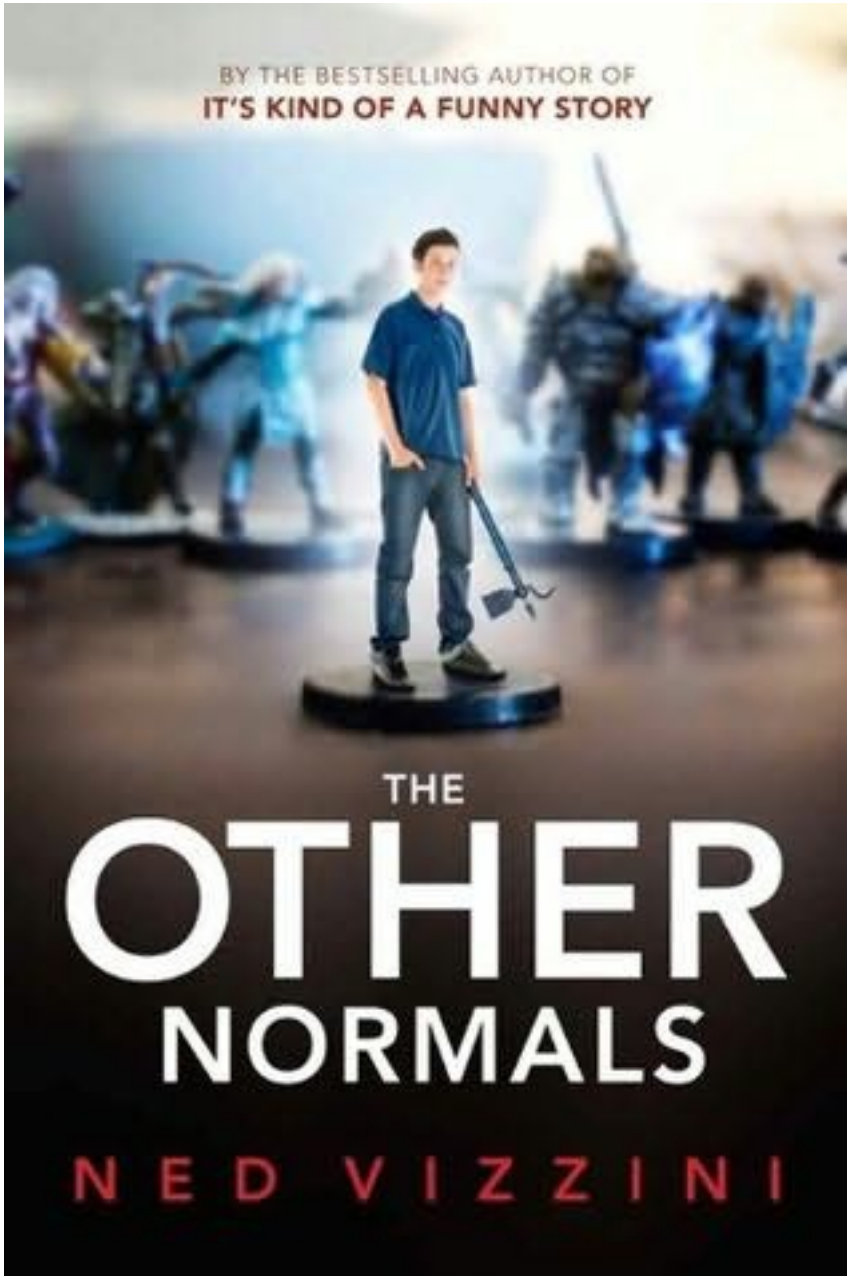
Don't read this book if you are prone to nightmares. Don't read this book if you have a weak stomach. Don't read this book if you don't want to know the details of what serial killers do, and why they do it, and why they like it.

17-year-old Jasper Dent can't help knowing what serial killers do. His father killed 123 people in 123 hideous ways before he let himself be caught four years ago—124 people if you count Jasper's missing mother, and Jasper does.

Dear Old Dad raised Jasper to follow in his footsteps, taught him everything he knew. Now, every day, Jasper tells himself, "People matter. People are real." He doesn't want to be like Dear Old Dad—and he doesn't know if he can help it.

Don't read this book if you don't like well-drawn, believable characters mixed in with your gruesome murders, along with some well-timed humor. Don't read this book if you don't want to think about the question, "Do we have to be the people we were raised to be?" Don't read ***I Hunt Killers* by Barry Lyga.** The sequel, *Game*, just came out April 16.

Booktalk by Abbie Anderson
3/25/13



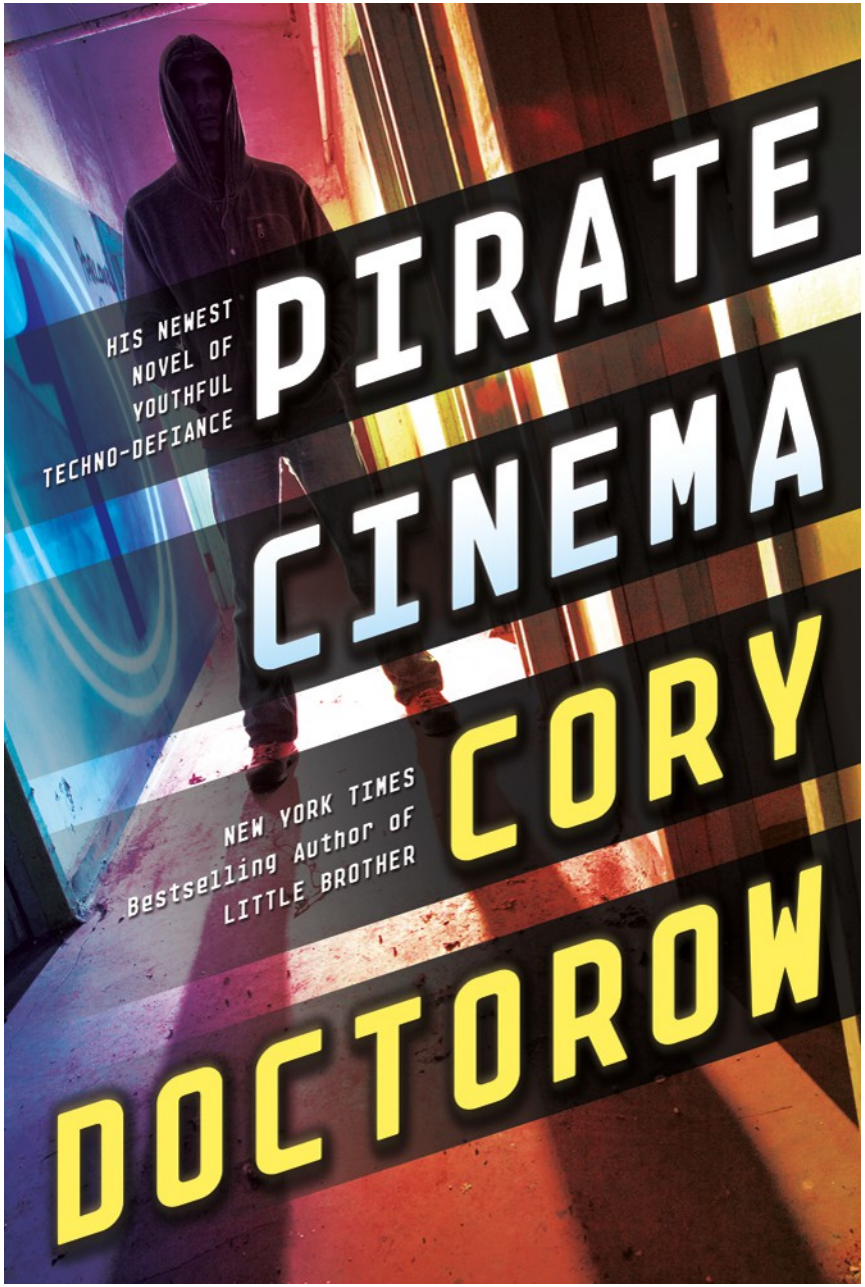
This guy Perry, he has got to be the saddest white boy you could ever know. But he grows on you. Don't tell anybody, but, uh—I play Creatures and Caverns. Yeah, yeah, the role-playing game, where you make up your own characters and roll the dice to find out if you're going to win a fight or not. Don't look at me like that, you don't know how cool it is until you're in it.

When I met him, Perry was playing *by himself*. Seriously. I cut class so I could teach him a thing or two about research and going out in parties. No, not *to* parties, in parties of fellow adventurers, okay? And Perry? He may look like a hopeless geek, but he's funny, and he's a good friend, and if you're smart you'll want him on your side in a fight.

Anyway, Perry's parents decided that Perry needed to quit RPGs and go to camp like a normal kid. They sent him to *my* camp. My "ghetto" camp where no white boy has gone before. Where nobody knows about me and Creatures and Caverns.

And where Perry finds out that it's *real*. But it's not what you think. Sure, there's creatures and caverns, all right, but there's politics and secret police and some serious monsters. Their world split from ours a gajillion years ago, and then the worlds kind of came back together, and they found out we're all connected across the worlds in weird ways. They call themselves **The Other Normals**, and the book is **by Ned Vizzini.**

Booktalk by Abbie Anderson, 4/22/13



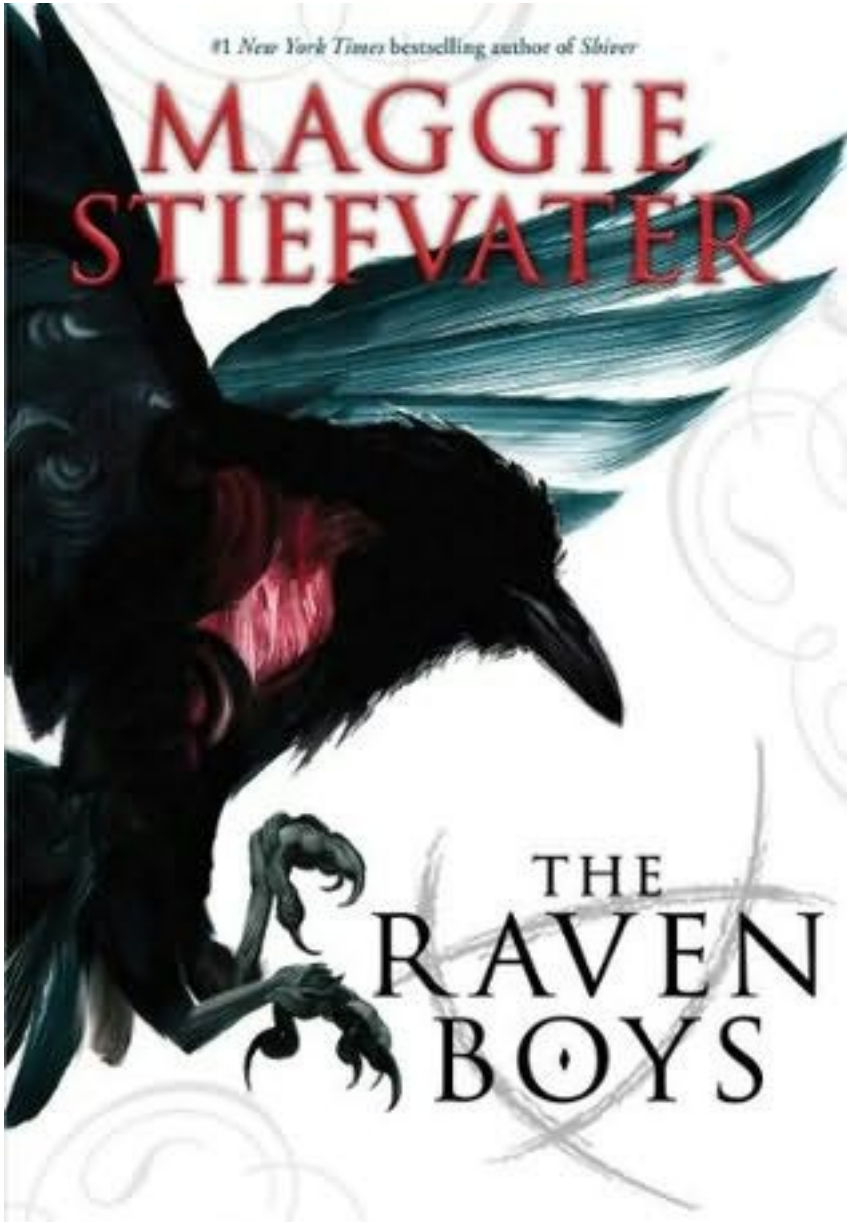
First thing you need to know is, if you're going to spend time with Trent, you need to be nimble of the brain, like. He's a Brit, see, and they don't talk like people from around here. Also, he lives a little in our future—and he and his mates have minds that work at light speed on all things techno and media.

It all starts when Trent gets his family cut off from the Internet because he can't stop illegally downloading movies to re-make into his own brilliant mash-ups. This messes things right royal with his mum's disability and his dad's online job and his brilliant kid sister's homework. So Trent runs away. He leaves home and goes to London, with no idea how to survive on the streets.

But Trent is lucky. He falls in with a tribe of underground media technoheads. He falls in love, and has best friends with secrets of their own. They live to show films that the law says shouldn't be made. So they start fighting the law, and the big corporate money behind it, because they think that everybody should be free to create and re-create.

Trent tells you his story in his own voice, and he is very good company: funny and dim-witted and brilliant all at the same time. It's **Pirate Cinema,** another installment from *Little Brother* author **Cory Doctorow.**

Booktalk by Abbie Anderson, 4/11/13



This is one of those books where you feel like the characters are people you really know. They may be doing things that aren't a part of your life, like seeing the spirits of people who will die in the next twelve months, or obsessing over following spiritual power lines that will let them wake up an ancient Welsh king who will grant them a favor. But what they think about, what they care about, and how they react to things—it's like you've been in their skin, or like you've known people just like that.

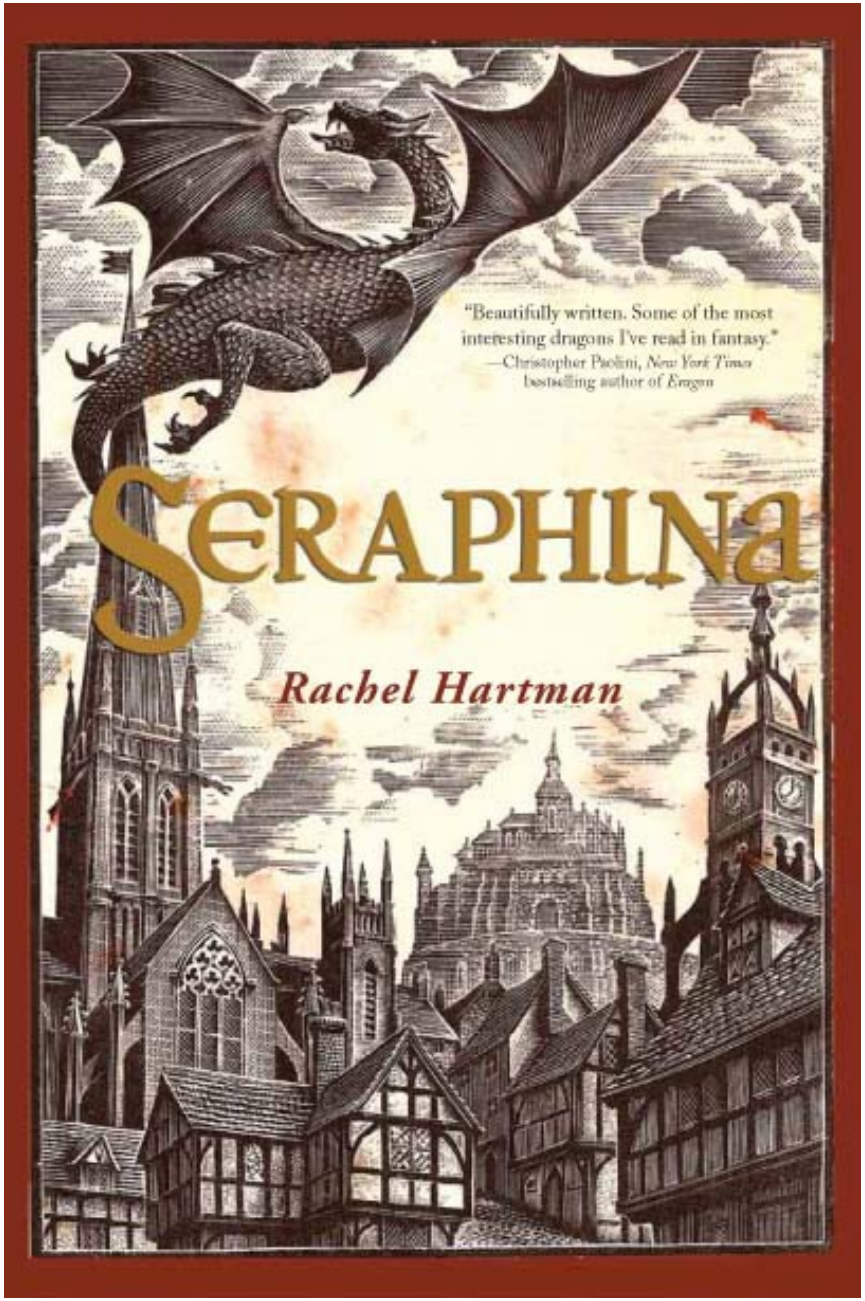
But it's not one of those character-study books where nothing happens. If you like plot, then you may think this one starts slowly, but once it gets going it's relentless.

And you know those books where the writer starts describing things, and the whole story comes to a halt while you plod through the details? This is not one of those books. Instead the writer shows you how a place or a person looks to someone else, what it feels like to be there, and that is a very different thing.

It's also one of those books where nothing anybody else says about it will be what it's like for you, because there are just so many ways into it. That's why I'm not going to tell you anything else about it—except that it's one of those books that was designed to have a sequel, and that ends in a non-resting place that may leave you spluttering.

Maggie Stiefvater wrote *The Scorpio Races* and the *Shiver* trilogy. Now it's **The Raven Boys**, book 1 of 4 in the Raven Cycle. Book 2, *The Dream Thief*, comes out in September 2013.

Booktalk by Abbie Anderson, 4/22/13



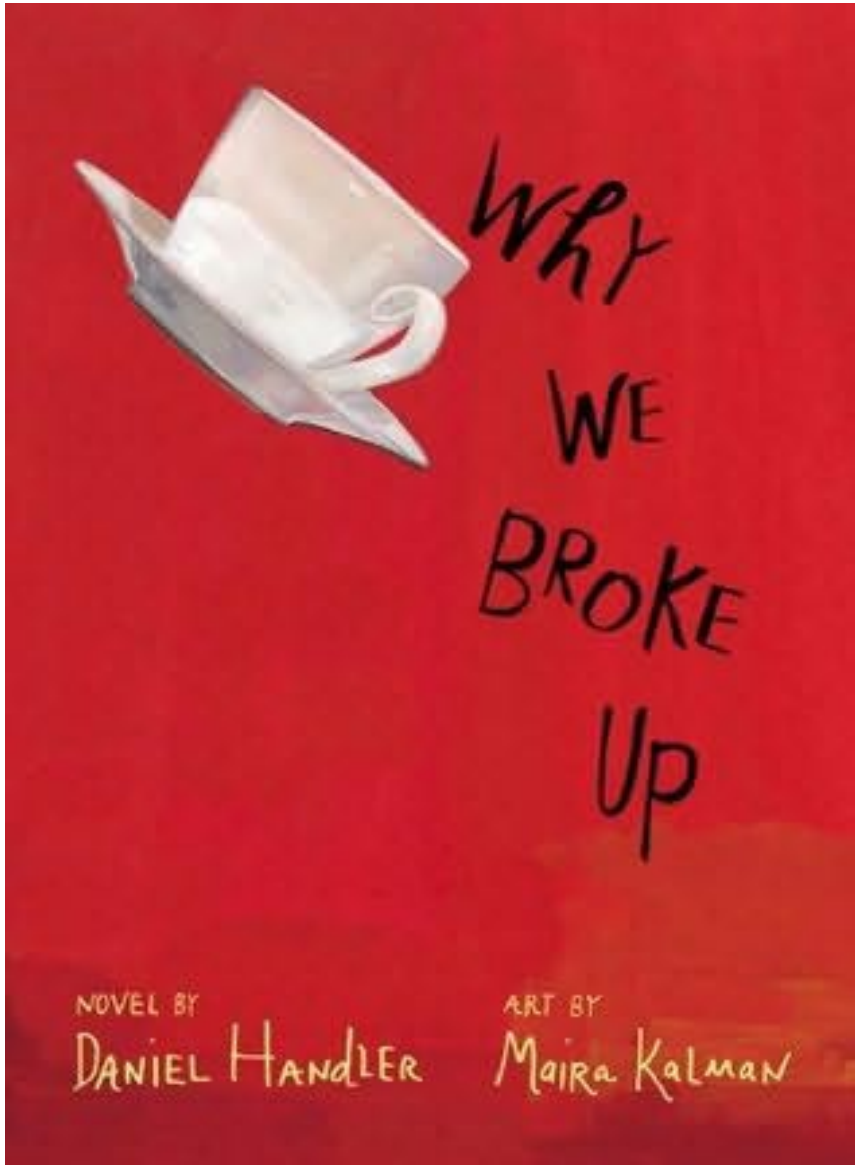
Seraphina has a great gift for music, which she loves. Seraphina has bad moods, which she doesn't love so much. Seraphina has inconvenient, bizarre visions, which she really doesn't love.

Seraphina is 16. In her world, humans live in an uneasy truce with dragons—and dragons can choose to walk in human form (although they don't really understand human feelings or manners, which makes their behavior a little strange). Most humans still hate dragons, and nobody wants to understand them. Well, almost nobody.

The human queen and the dragon king forged a fragile peace years ago, and now the king is coming to reaffirm the treaty. Too many people have too many secrets, and too many misunderstandings. Seraphina has her own extremely dangerous secret—and a handsome prince who needs her help to save their world from another devastating war.

Seraphina, by **Rachel Hartman**, won the Morris award for best debut for young adults, and it is a delicious read for fantasy lovers. The sequel, ***Dracomachia***, is scheduled for February, 2014.

Booktalk by Abbie Anderson
1/29/13
Cut in length for OLA-WLA Joint Conference 2013, Booktalking the Best/Book Rave session



Sometimes you look at things, things that you have because of someone in your life, someone you thought was special, someone you thought loved you for real and for who you really are, and you look at those things, and you have to put them in a box and write about what each one of them is and why it's there, and you have to dump that box at the door of the person you thought loved you. And maybe he did, and maybe he wanted to be right with you, but it's too late, and he can go do anything he wants with whoever he wants because you're not going to be an idiot for him any more. He can have it all back, even if he never knew you kept any of it, because even if he thinks you're "different" and he likes that about you, and even if he's so beautiful you think your heart will stop, and even if you'll never forget what it felt like to be with him, even if all those things are true, you still have to choose who you are over whatever jackass jock crap he thinks is who he is, and you still love weird old movies and he still loves basketball, and your friends and his friends do not share any human language whatsoever, and some things are just more important, and that is **Why We Broke Up, by Daniel Handler.**

Booktalk by Abbie Anderson, 4/22/13