

**CYRM Resource Book
Young Adult Nominees
(Grades 9-12)
2006-2007**

Emako Blue

by Brenda Woods

Putnam's, 2004

Hanging on to Max

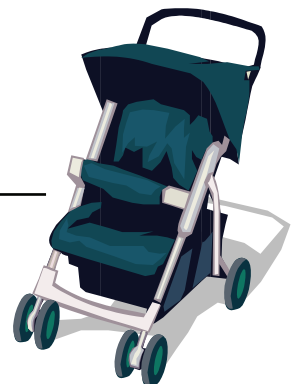
by Margaret Bechard

Roaring Brook Press, 2002

Shattering Glass

by Gail Giles

Simon Pulse/ Simon and Schuster, 2002



California Young Reader Medal
**Young Adult
Ballot**
2006-2007

_____ *Emako Blue*

_____ *Hanging on to Max*

_____ *Shattering Glass*

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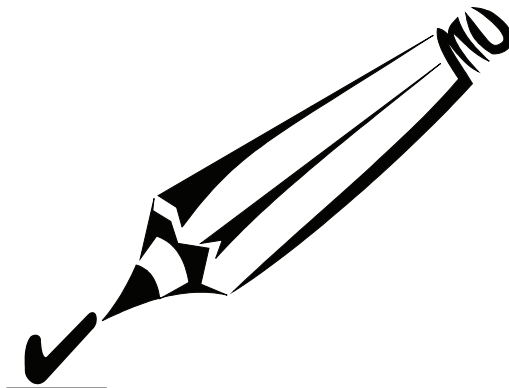
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Emako Blue

by Brenda Woods

Synopsis

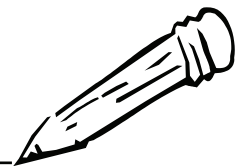
Monterey, Jamal and Eddie meet Emako Blue when she transfers to their high school from her old school in South Central Los Angeles. Emako is beautiful, confident, good-natured and has an incredible singing voice. Already at fifteen, Emako has been spotted by a record producer and may one day be on her way to stardom. Although they live in different parts of town and have a different family life, Monterey and Emako become best friends, sharing their thoughts and dreams. Jamal, known as a “player,” falls in love with her. Eddie, who can’t wait to get out of South Central L.A. and is on the fast track to college acceptance, shares similar family troubles including an older brother in prison. Only wealthy Savannah, who is jealous of Emako, becomes her rival. Their world is shattered and they are left to mourn their loss when Emako is killed in a drive-by shooting.



Hooks

- Emako transferred from her old school in South Central Los Angeles to get away from the gang atmosphere of her neighborhood. Can she really escape from the life there?
- Monterey chafes at the restrictions on her activities that her parents enforce, telling them she is now fifteen and no longer a baby. What has made her parents fearful for her well-being?
- When Emako’s brother, Dante, is released from prison, their mother lets him return home because, “He is still my child.” Emako is not happy that her brother is home and can’t wait for him to leave. What happens as the result of her mother’s decision?

Meet the Author—Brenda Woods



Brenda Woods moved to Southern California as a young girl. *Emako Blue*, her second novel, has been welcomed by reviewers who were enthusiastic about her first, *The Red Rose Box*, which she completed after college at California State University Northridge. She has explored various types of creative expression, including photography, but writing has the most appeal.

Connections for *Emako Blue*



African-Americans—Fiction

- Myers, Walter Dean. *The Beast*. Scholastic, 2003.
- Sitomer, Alan Lawrence. *Hip-Hop High School*. Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.
- Sitomer, Alan Lawrence. *The Hoopster*. Hyperion Books for Children, 2005.
- Volponi, Paul. *Black and White*. Viking, 2005.
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Show Way*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2005.

Bullying (Bullies)—Fiction

- Brooks, Kevin. *Kissing the Rain*. Scholastic, 2004.
- Friesen, Gayle. *Men of Stone*. Kids Can Press, 2002.
- Gardner, Graham. *Inventing Elliot*. Dial Books/Penguin Group, 2004.
- Mac, Carrie. *The Beckoners*. Orca Book Publishers, 2004.
- MacPhail, Catherine. *Missing*. Bloomsbury, 2002.
- Mayfield, Sue. *Drowning Anna*. Hyperion, 2002.
- Nixon, Joan Lowery. *Laugh Till You Cry*. Delacorte Press/Random House Children's Books, 2004.
- Pascal, Francine. *The Ruling Class*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004.

High Schools—Fiction

- Burke, Morgan. *After Hours*. Simon Pulse, 2005.
- Draper, Sharon M. *The Battle of Jericho*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003.
- Flinn, Alex. *Fade to Black*. Harper Tempest, 2005.
- Meyer, Adam. *The Last Domino*. G. P. Putman's Sons, 2005.
- Moore, Peter. *Caught in the Act*. Viking, 2005.

Interpersonal Relations—Fiction

- Du Prau, Jeanne. *Car Trouble*. Greenwillow Books, 2005.
- Hughes, Pat. *Open Ice*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2005.
- Myracle, Lauren. *Rhymes with Witches*. Amulet Books, 2005.
- Roberts, Laura Peyton. *The Queen of Second Place*. Delacorte Press, 2005.
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Behind You*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004.

Los Angeles (California)—Fiction

- Brian, Kate. *The Princess and the Pauper*. Simon Pulse, 2003.
- Dean, Zoey. *Blonde Ambition*. Little, Brown and Company, 2004.
- Fleischman, Paul. *Breakout*. Cricket Books, 2003.
- Talbert, Marc. *Star of Luis*. Clarion Books, 1999.

Other Titles by Brenda Woods

- The Red Rose Box*. Puffin, 2003.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Emako Blue*



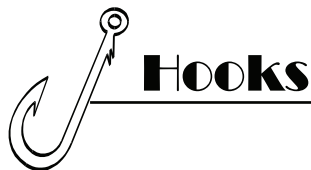
- Emako got away from Truman, her South Central school. How different is her new school in a better neighborhood? What did both schools have in common? Are there things that seem to be constant at any high school? Are they positive or negative things?
- Savannah could accept that Emako was pretty and talented but what was it about Emako that Savannah said really messed with her? What makes some people, like Savannah, react to beauty or talent with jealousy, while others, like Monterey, can react with respect or even admiration?
- What role does each character play in the story? What is Savannah's purpose? What do we learn from this character?
- What is the real source of Savannah's anger and pain?
- Although Emako has "been with nobody," many, including her friends, assume she has had a lot of experience with boys. Why?
- When do you know Jamal is no longer "playin'" with Emako? How do you know?
- Emako teased Monterey but seemed to enjoy all the normal teen things she did. What were some of the normal teen things they did together?
- Emako's mom let Dante return to her home when he was released. "He's still my child," she said. Was letting Dante stay a bad decision?
- Dante does not have a voice in this book. He and Emako are heading in opposite directions, yet his choices lead to her death. Can we tell Dante's story?
- What sort of future do you see for Latrice and Marcel, Emako's younger siblings?

Hanging on to Max

by Margaret Bechard

Synopsis

Seventeen-year-old Sam Pettigrew's life was on track. He had friends, a social life, football and plans for college after high school. Then his world changes when his girlfriend tells him she is pregnant. After the baby is born, she decides she is not ready to be a parent and plans to give him up for adoption. Sam does not want his son to go to strangers and petitions for custody of the baby. His father agrees to support him and Max until Sam graduates from high school and then Sam must go to work to pay his father back. Now Sam is juggling diapers, feedings, school work, advice from his school counselor to still consider college, lack of emotional support from his father, is tired most of the time, and often feels he is cut off from his former friends. He transfers for his senior year to an alternative high school which provides child care while he is in class. There he reconnects with Claire, an old friend who is also a parent. She and her baby provide friendship, support and the social life Sam has been lacking. However, Sam's struggles to be a good father and to find his own future overwhelm him and lead him to make a difficult and heart-wrenching decision.



- When Sam takes custody of Max he thinks he can do it all: school, friends, being a good father. What difficulties do teen parents face?
- Sam's dad will support him and Max while Sam is in high school, but is against him taking the SATs and thinking about college. Should Sam go against his father's wishes?
- Sam sees the difference in the support Claire has with her family and his situation with his father. Would things be different if his mother were alive?

Meet the Author—Margaret Bechard



Margaret Bechard was born in Northern California and now lives in Oregon. Her books are realistic but she often uses humor when creating the situations in which the characters find themselves. *Hanging on to Max* is her second book for high school students, while most of her earlier books involve slightly younger characters. As the youngest of six children, Ms. Bechard turned to books early in order to create a private world. Her favorite childhood books included *Black Beauty*, *Little Women*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. When reading, she found herself becoming the main character in the story. As a writer, she feels most connected to characters in their early teens, identifying with their need to explore and experiment, and their ability to find humor in many circumstances. For more about Ms. Bechard, see *Something about the Author*, volume 85 (Gale, 1996)





Teenage Parents—Fiction

- Johnson, Angela. *The First Part Last*. Simon & Schuster, 2003.
Reynolds, Marilyn. *Too Soon For Jeff*. Morning Glory Press, 1994.

Teenage Fathers—Non Fiction

- Gottfried, Ted. *Teen Fathers Today*. Twenty First Century Books, 2001.
Lindsay, Jeanne Warren. *Teen Dads: Rights, Responsibilities, and Joys*.
Morning Glory Press, 2000.
Trapani, Margi. *Reality Check: Teenage Fathers Speak Out*. Rosen, 1999.

Fathers and Sons—Fiction

- Chan, Gillian. *The Turning*. Kids Can Press, 2005.
Durbin, William. *Blackwater Ben*. Wendy Lamb Books, 2003.
Grimes, Nikki. *Dark Sons*. Jump at the Sun/Hyperion, 2005.
LaFaye, Alexandra. *Worth*. Simon & Schuster, 2004.
Lupica, Mike. *Travel Team*. Philomel Books, 2004.
Myers, Walter Dean. *The Dream Bearer*. Harper Collins/Amistad, 2003.

Other Titles by Margaret Bechard

- If It Doesn't Kill You*. Viking Books, 1999.
Spacer and Rat. Roaring Book Press, 2005.
Star Hatchling. Puffin Books, 1997.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Hanging on to Max*



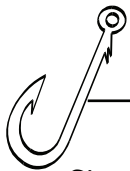
- At the start of the book, Sam seems to have distanced himself from his girlfriend and the coming baby. What made Sam change his mind and decide to take custody of Max?
- How is Sam's experience as a teenage dad different from the experience of the young moms at his school? Is he treated differently by the administration of the school? Do mothers and fathers have different rights? Should they?
- How do you feel about Brittany's decision to give up the baby and make a new start in a new state? What would you have done in her place?
- Why is Sam's dad so against Sam taking the SATs? Do you agree or disagree with Sam's dad? Is his position justified?
- Sam and his father have been on their own for some time. Imagine that Sam's mother was still alive: how would this story be different?
- How does Sam come to the decision to give up Max? Is there something in particular that changes his mind? Do you think Sam made the right choice? Why/why not? Explore the possible alternate endings.
- Did you like or dislike the epilogue at the end of the story? How would you have changed it?
- Was this a realistic portrayal of teenage parenthood? Did the story glamorize teen parenting? Research teen parenthood in the United States: how common is it? Can you find any real-life stories of teen moms and dads to compare to Sam's experiences?
- A parent wants what is best for his or her child. How do Sam's wishes for Max differ from what Sam's dad would like for Sam? Is hanging on to Max what's best for either boy?
- Adoption has a long history; explore the benefits and drawbacks of adoption.

Shattering Glass

by Gail Giles

Synopsis

Simon Glass is a total nerd. He is fat, clumsy, wears all the wrong clothes and is the object of hatred by a group of bullies. Rob Haynes, the charismatic leader of the group, devises a plan to make Simon popular and be voted the Class Favorite. Rob's motives, far from altruistic, are part of his power play and he manipulates the others in his group to take part in transforming Simon. Simon seemingly goes along with the plan as they take him shopping for new clothes, get his hair styled and develop a diet and exercise program. As he gains self-confidence and becomes more popular than Rob, Simon begins collecting information on the other members of the group and does what the others can't do—defy Rob. Rob's power hold on his friends and Simon's own secret manipulations come to a horrifying and violent head the night of the Class Favorite dance.



Hooks

- Simon Glass goes through a transformation to be accepted by his peers. How far would you go to be part of the popular group?
- Charismatic Rob Haynes can draw people to him and make them serve his purposes. What do people hope to achieve by following a person like Rob?
- Young Steward, who narrates the events, justifies his actions by saying, "Why do you have to make me the sinner because I follow instead of lead?" Would the outcome have been different if Young had been a leader instead of a follower?

Meet the Author—Gail Giles



Gail Giles was born in Texas and now lives in Alaska. She says that she created the characters in *Shattering Glass* in part because of her interest in two classic novels, *Lord of the Flies* and *The Great Gatsby*. Ms. Giles taught high school before becoming a writer. She also plays the guitar and paints with watercolors. Like *Shattering Glass*, her novel *Dead Girls Don't Write Letters* has been recognized by the American Library Association as of particular appeal to teen readers. To learn more about Ms. Giles, see: <http://www.gailgiles.com>



Popularity—Fiction

- Cooney, Caroline B. *Deadly Offer*. Scholastic, 2003.
Mechling, Lauren and Laura Moser. *The Rise and Fall of a 10th Grade Social Climber*. Houghton Mifflin, 2005.
Olin, Sean. *Killing Britney*. Simon Pulse, 2005.
Spinelli, Jerry. *Stargirl*. Knopf, 2000.
Yoo, David. *Girls for Breakfast*. Delacorte Press, 2005.

High Schools—Fiction

- Alphin, Elaine Marie. *The Perfect Shot*. Carolrhoda Books, 2005.
Boone, Ian. *Sleep Rough Tonight*. Dutton Books, 2005.
Crutcher, Chris. *The Sledding Hill*. Greenwillow Books, 2005.
Korman, Gordon. *Jake, Reinvented*. Hyperion, 2003.
Marino, Peter. *Dough Boy*. Holiday House, 2005.

Violence—Fiction

- Cadnum, Michael. *Edge*. Viking, 1997.
Flake, Sharon G. *Bang! Jump at the Sun*/Hyperion, 2005.
Lynch, Chris. *Who the Man*. HarperCollins, 2002.
Ritter, John H. *Over the Wall*. Philomel Books, 2000.
Saenz, Benjamin Alire. *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*. Cinco Puntos, 2004.

Other Titles by Gail Giles

- Dead Girls Don't Write Letters*. Simon Pulse, 2004.
Playing in Traffic. Roaring Press, 2004.

Writing Prompts / Discussion Questions for *Shattering Glass*



- Read Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* or William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* and compare their violent endings to *Shattering Glass*. What do they say, either individually or in agreement, about the consequences of following an amoral leader?
- Most readers agree that this story is an uncomfortable read. In what ways does the story or the writing affect you? What role does shock play in luring the reader and keeping you reading?
- The title of the book is both descriptive and a pun. What does it mean? How much of the story do you feel is given away by the title? The opening lines also let you know what is to come; is this a good way to begin, or could it turn off some readers?
- What is the role of humor in a more serious, even horrific, story?
- How close is this depiction of high school to your school? Why does high school get such a bad reputation in the media and movies? Can you find and discuss some real life incidents like those in *Shattering Glass*? What elements come together to make a high school very competitive and clique-oriented?
- What makes a good leader? Why is Rob able to manipulate everyone? What effect do the followers have on the relationship?
- Simon seems sympathetic at first, but how does your opinion of him change as the story progresses? What qualities does he possess that make him a target?
- How do seemingly normal kids descend so quickly into such extreme violence? Do you feel capable of such actions – what could make you or people you know act in such a way?
- Discuss the imagery and symbolism of the funhouse mirror. How and when is it used in the novel?
- Are there consequences for the students involved? Do you feel they are adequate?