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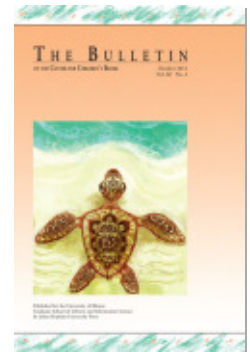
*Trial by Fire* by Josephine Angelini (review)

Kate Quealy-Gainer

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**ANGELINI, JOSEPHINE** *Trial by Fire*. Feiwel, 2014 [384p] (The Worldwalker Trilogy)

ISBN 978-1-250-05088-5 \$17.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 9-12

The severe allergies that have kept Lily Proctor from a normal teenage experience lead to her having a seizure at an end-of-the-school-year senior party. Utterly mortified, Lily wishes for a different existence, and that's just what she gets: she wakes up to find herself in a completely different version of her town of Salem, one where witches not only exist but rule the world with an iron fist. In this version, Lillian, Lily's alternate, is the most powerful witch, and she ruthlessly uses her powers to strike down those who oppose her. Lily finds herself drawn to Rowan, Lillian's former lover and now nemesis, as he organizes the effort to end Lillian's reign, but as Lily learns more about her own powers and Lillian's history, she begins to wonder if Lillian isn't after all protecting the world and the people she loves from a power even greater and more dangerous than magic—science. Angelini draws absorbing characters, from the physically frail but doggedly determined Lily, to the grief-stricken but compassionate Rowan, to the incredibly complex, perhaps-not-so-evil villain, Lillian. The environmental message initially seems a bit heavy handed (Lillian's world is unpolluted and pure due to use of magic as energy), but that element is given depth by Lily's ethical dilemmas as she navigates the power structures in this new Salem and learns the temptations and the limits of her own abilities. A compelling, intricate world, a swoony romance, and a memorable cast make this one a blazing success. KQG

**ARONSON, MARC**, ed. *One Death, Nine Stories*; ed. by Marc Aronson and Charles R. Smith, Jr. Candlewick, 2014 153p

ISBN 978-0-7636-5285-2 \$16.99

R Gr. 9-12

Nineteen-year-old Kevin Nicholas was reckless, charismatic, and troubled. His unexpected suicide provides the occasion for this set of interconnected short stories by nine different authors that spin variations on the theme of initiation. A young boy with no ambition is coerced into working for his uncle at his funeral home; jolted into something like self-awareness by the unwavering gaze of Kev's sister, his life begins with Kev's death. Other boys, and one girl, remember the "firsts" in their lives that were orchestrated by Kev: first drink, first sex, first theft and now, first funeral. Most poignant, perhaps, is the experience of the boy who remembers his initiation into the gang Kev formed, recalling the complicated embrace of masculinity he felt when Kev chose him to inflict the pain he later called on them all to bear. Two stories explore the ripple effect of Kev's death on people who didn't know him at all. Each story shows how the death of a young person impels a pause and often results in an affirmation to move forward with a more well-defined purpose. The talents of the writers, including Rita Garcia-Williams, Ellen Hopkins, A. S. King, Will Weaver, and Nora Raleigh Baskin, keep the stories consistently moving and authentically voiced, with only the jaunty tone of Aronson's enthusiastic afterword hitting a discordant note. Useful as a model for a group creative-writing exercise, this would also make for therapeutic reading and discussion in the aftermath of a tragedy. KC