

# Between the Covers

by Ken Furtado  
book reviews



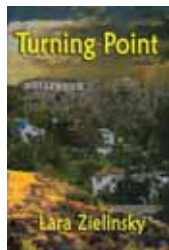
## Featured Titles

### Turning Point

By Lara Zielinsky

P.D. Publishing, Inc., \$19.99, pap.

In his play, *The Zoo Story*, Edward Albee's character Jerry says, "sometimes it's necessary to go a long distance out of the way in order to come back a short distance correctly." That line kept popping into my head while reading *Turning Point*, a lesbian love story that takes a long and winding road to a conclusion some readers might find predictable from the outset. But whether you can predict the ending should not prevent you from enjoying some of the twists and turns.



Brenna Lanigan is the top-billed star of *Time Trails*, a hugely successful TV science fiction program. Thoughts of Captain Jane-way are inescapable so let me acknowledge them and move on. The show is in its fifth and final season, and a new character has been introduced to add dramatic tension and sex appeal — and, some people hope, an undercurrent of lesbian love. Cassidy Hyland is the newcomer, and the tension off the set is way higher than the tension on the set. But all that begins to change when Brenna makes an obligatory appearance at the fifth birthday party of Cassidy's son.

Similarities emerge that permit détente, and then real friendship, to develop between Brenna and Cassidy: both are attractive, both

are divorced (Brenna is recently remarried), both are moms. Ultimately, both women find themselves dealing with mutual sexual attraction.

Their developing relationship encounters many hurdles, some of which are self-imposed and others external. An abusive ex-husband (Cassidy's), a too-accommodating new husband (Brenna's) and offscreen rivalries and machinations on the set are a few.

I found my reading slowed by the tiny (8-point) typeface used in the book, and there were times I felt the editor was asleep on the job, especially during passages of dialog from the filming of *Time Trails* and italicized asides, recollections and daydreams that did not further the story sufficiently to warrant their length. The women's characters, however, are realistic and the love scenes are appropriate without becoming empurpled. Readers looking for a contemporary and convincing lesbian love story unencumbered by political correctness will probably enjoy *Turning Point*.

### The New Kid

By Eliot Schrefer

Simon & Schuster, \$25.00, hard cover

Fifteen-year-old Humphrey is *The New Kid*, whose picaresque adventures ground a story of siblings from a dysfunctional family exploiting the kindness of strangers, only to find that kindness may come with strings attached.

A reversal of fortune finds Humphrey, his mom and her new husband moving to Florida, where they reside in a cheap motel. Humphrey has trouble fitting in with the local kids, who are cool and trashy at the same time. One of those kids, Wade, is semi-nice, but Wade is not above sending his mother's boyfriend to beat up Humphrey over jealousy about Humphrey's relationship with Wade's mother ... or maybe over inner conflicts about the sexual pull he and Humphrey feel towards each other.

Gretchen is Humphrey's half-sister. She



is six years older and has the same mother but a different father. Gretchen is a moderately famous teen TV star who moved out years ago. Now she's in love with, but temporarily broken up with, a handsome young man who worked on the set of her TV show, and whose wealthy parents have taken a shine to her as a possible future daughter-in-law.

*The New Kid* is told in alternate sections by Humphrey and Gretchen. Humphrey speaks in the first person; Gretchen's parts are told in the third person.

After Humphrey's severe beating, Gretchen, who is traveling in Europe with her boyfriend's parents, convinces her hosts to bring Humphrey over. Gretchen has everything planned: a summer of immersion in European culture for herself and Humphrey, reconciliation with her boyfriend and maybe a posh continental boarding school for Humphrey. The world is not as accommodating as Gretchen might wish, and all the characters learn that things and people may not be what they seem.

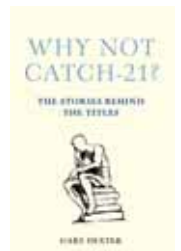
*The New Kid* is an outrageous story — a *Candide* for Gen Z — told with heartless charm and wicked wit.

### Why Not Catch-21? The Stories Behind the Titles

By Gary Dexter

Frances Lincoln, \$16.95, hard cover

Writer Gary Dexter traverses the globe, the ages and the genres to provide a fascinating explication of how 50 famous works of art acquired their titles. His sweep includes plays, novels, works of nonfiction, poetry and a Tolstoy story based on a Beethoven sonata. He begins with Plato's *Republic* and marches forward through the millennia, stopping at David Mamet's 1992 play, *Oleanna* (in which there is no character or place by that



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