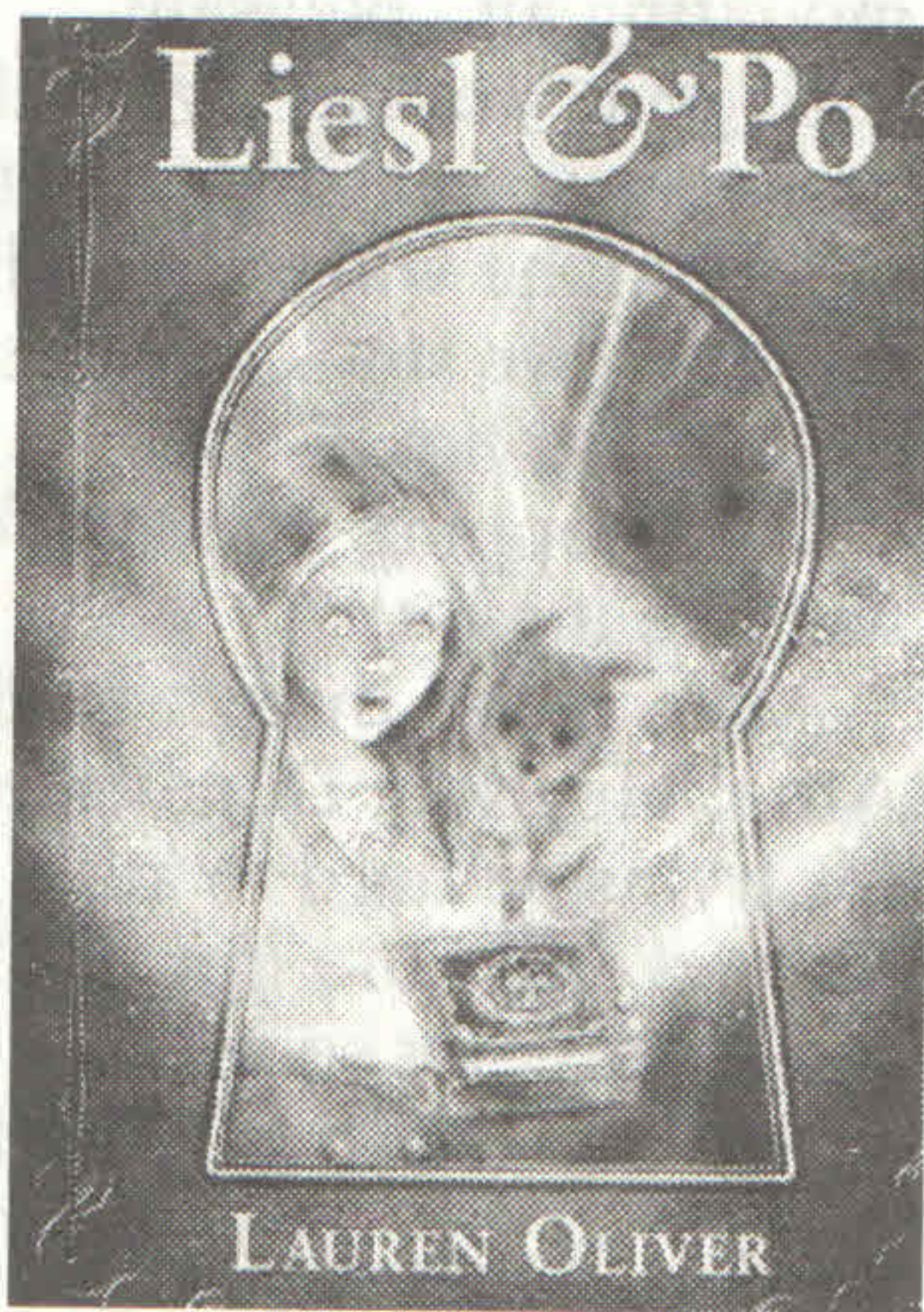




## The Village School's Children's Book of the Month



**Book reviewed by  
Shannon Johnson**  
(2nd & 3rd grade teacher)

### **Liesl and Po**

by Lauren Oliver

Riddled with secrets, cruelty, deception, hope, and a touch of humor, Lauren Oliver's *Liesl and Po* is a supernatural adventure that follows Liesl and her 'found' friends who are on a quest to put her father's soul at rest. Set in a dreary world where the sun never shines, the loneliness that brings Liesl and her friends together slowly fades as their friendship grows.

The story opens up with a fairytale-like beginning. Liesl is trapped in a tiny attic bedroom with only a window and books as her entertainment. Her evil stepmother, Augusta, confined her there once Liesl's father became hospitalized. In a plot to keep Liesl's father's fortune, Augusta pretends Liesl is her own daughter and never lets Liesl leave the attic bedroom. It is here that Liesl first meets the ghost, Po and his cat-dog ghost, Bundle. Liesl immediately takes to Po. Watching their relationship develop is as interesting an adventure as the story.

With the help of Po, Liesl escapes from her attic bedroom and begins her quest to bury her father's ashes near her mother in the countryside. It is on her quest that she meets Will, an orphan who is an alchemist's assistant and is on the run from the alchemist and the Lady Premier because he lost the "most powerful magic in the world." Will, an admirer of Liesl, often stares up at her bedroom window from the street, and takes it upon himself to aid her as she makes her way to her old house.

As the adventure unfolds, so does a tale of friendship. *Liesl and Po*, with its supernatural elements and bigger questions about life and death, is as fun to discuss as it is to read. As a read-aloud, it grips my second and third graders and they hunger for more whenever we pause. Lauren Oliver paces the book well and keeps readers interested with compelling characters and an interesting plot. This is a very unusual children's book, hard to categorize and hard to put down. *Liesl and Po* is a great choice for eight to twelve year olds to read themselves and is a great read-aloud for children seven and older.