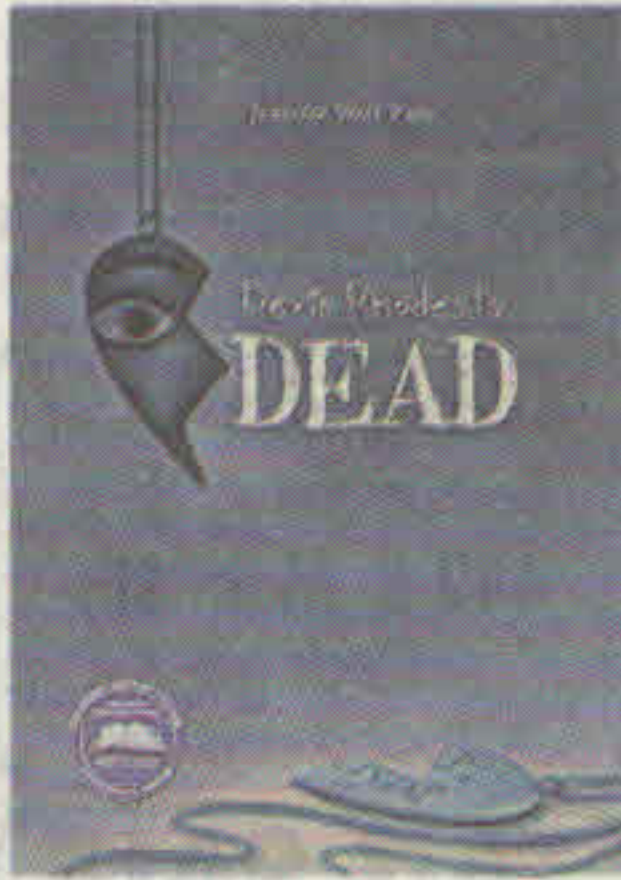




## The Village School's Children's Book of the Month



Book reviewed by  
Rise Richardson,  
school director

### 'Devin Rhodes is Dead' By Jennifer Wolf Kam

Fifteen-year-old Devin Rhodes is found dead and her best friend Cass blames herself. The circumstances of Devin's death are not revealed until near the end, so this book is a mystery.

The story unfolds in alternating chapters, first the present moment for Cass, then the sequence of events slowly unfolding before Devin's death, all told from Cass's point of view, so you'll find yourself in a teenager's head, which includes Cass's view of herself as overweight and dumpy.

In the story before Devin's death, Devin and Cass have been best friends since childhood, but now as teenagers, they are slowly growing apart. The story circles around their tangled and difficult relationship, and the fights they had before Devin disappeared. In the present moment, Cass is in a fog of guilt, unable to shake off the conviction that she is directly responsible for Devin's death.

Told through the eyes of a confused, depressed and typical 15-year-old girl, most teenage girls (and boys) will like this book. From Devin's and Cass's point of view, all parents are blind, stupid and useless. The girls have to figure things out themselves, including navigating the high school cliques of girls and boys. Both girls attract and interact with boys differently, and near the end, Cass is surprised to find a boy who likes her for who she is.

The book starts a little slowly, but eventually picks up speed. As the mystery unravels, the book culminates in the hour that Devin disappeared, followed by the present moment that reveals all and brings resolution for Cass. Cass can finally forgive herself and move on with her life.

The book is for young adults, 13 to 18 years old and older. Teenagers will like this book, resonating with all the uncertainty and angst about their own identity. Adults will like this book, recalling all the craziness and confusion of being a teenager. And the book is also a very good mystery.

You can meet Jennifer Wolf Kam at the Central Massachusetts Children's Book Festival on Saturday, Nov. 14, at Mt. Wachusett Community College, 444 Green St., Gardner. Jennifer will be signing books and will also be part of a panel presentation of young adult authors discussing their craft. The Central Massachusetts Book Festival showcases both authors and illustrators, with a range from picture books, to chapter books, to young adult novels, including non-fiction children's authors.

To find out more, visit [www.centralmasschildrens-bookfestival.org](http://www.centralmasschildrens-bookfestival.org) which is updated weekly with the latest information.