MEDT 6465 REVIEW 4: HIGH SCHOOL FICTION

Use the fiction review guidelines below (from School Library Journal) as you evaluate titles for the fiction reviews (media log reviews 2, 3, & 4).

Your name
Godwin, Megan

Title of book being reviewed
Monster

Author of book being reviewed
Walter Dean Myers

Publisher, Publication date
Harper Collins, 1999

ALA or other award list on which this title was found (if applicable)
Michael L. Printz Award & Coretta Scott King Award Honor in 2000

Plot: type of story (fantasy, mystery, adventure, etc.)
Drama, Mystery

Plot: setting
Harlem, New York

Plot: period
1990’s

Plot development
State in the review and note briefly here
Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Character development
State in the review and note briefly here
Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Integration of background and any other factual material
State in the review and note briefly here
Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Language and writing style
State in the review and note briefly here
Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Creation and sustaining of mood
State in the review and note briefly here
Yes  No
If the story has a dominant theme, is it too obviously superimposed on the plot
State in the review and note briefly here
   Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

How does the story compare with others
State in the review and note briefly here
   Distinguished
   Above average
   Average
   Below average

Grade level at which most children will read this book or enjoy hearing it
Note at head of review
   9-12

Is this interesting enough to recommend to reluctant/slow readers?
Specific audience/no

Note in the review the quality and type of illustrations, any unusual format or print, etc. (optional)
i.e., if it applies
   Photographs

Recommendations
   First purchase
   For general purchase
   Strictly additional
   Not recommended (this should be implicit in your review so that the words "not recommended" are not necessary.)

Do you feel this book is outstanding?
Star books distinctly above average in quality, appeal, and/or usefulness. If you have given the book an outstanding review and yet do not feel it should be starred, please explain.
   Yes  No

Additional comments related to "How does the story compare with others of its general type." Give specific comparisons, if possible, including author, title, and publication date.

Additional comments related to "Do you feel this book is outstanding?"

Review text (target: 250 words +)
Steve Harmon is a 16 year old in jail and on trial for accessory to murder for being the lookout in a robbery that goes bad in the heart of Harlem, New York. Steve tells the story as if he is partially journaling his experience and partially as if he is writing a screen play or movie about his own trial. The story is raw and graphic when he tells how jail life is. His trial is full of people who are cold and callous toward him like the attorneys, the officers, the clerk, the court reporter, etc. For him this is his life and whether he will spend 25 years in jail, but to them his trial is just another trial and a day in the life of the judicial system. Did he do it or didn’t he? He doesn’t really say. The reader gets a glimpse of life on the other side and if you haven’t seen it before, you won’t want to after reading the harsh reality’s inmates experience in jail. His lawyer seems to be on his side but Steve kind of hints at a side of his attorney that makes it seem as though she is really just doing a job. The only real emotion you feel is from his mom and his dad when they come to visit him in jail. The book is illustrated with photos, but the most interesting aspect to the way the book is presented is the fonts used and the style of writing. We are taken from a page from a journal to a screen play with actors, scenes, and lines. There are flashbacks and montages in the movie. The sad thing is his talent seems wasted. Steve is really good at the whole movie making setup and one might think that maybe if he had some sort of drive to pursue this gift or talent, maybe he wouldn’t be where he is today…jail. The reader sees that in the end of the novel maybe Steve also discovers that for himself and realizes what a gift a second chance is.