

TEEN TITLES



OUR COVER BOOK

Punching the Air

by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam is reviewed on page 22 by Brogan MacDonald from Wester Hailes Education Centre

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Teen Titles aims to promote reading and literacy in a fun way that appeals to all young people. *Teen Titles* is committed to improving reading within Edinburgh and beyond.

Welcome to *Teen Titles* 78, our second issue of 2020/21. In this issue we catch up with Alex Nye, author of *When We Get to the Island* and find out about Wibke Brueggemann's hilarious debut novel *Love is for Losers*.

Cover: from *Punching the Air* by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam, reproduced by kind permission of HarperCollins. Cover artist: Temi Coker.

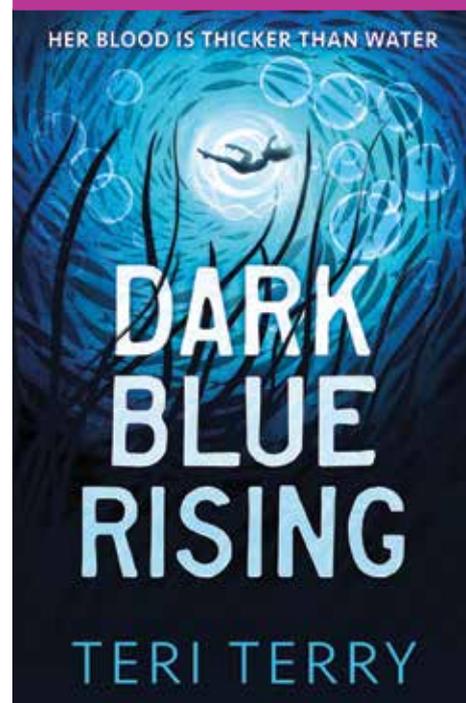
Escape, Connect, Relate



Reading is something you can do for empathy and to support your own mental health and wellbeing. It is a way to explore issues that might be affecting you or someone you know, issues like depression, anxiety, body image, bullying or bereavement. So, we have decided to flag up some of the books we have reviewed that we think do just that. If you look on the inside back page you'll see a list of them.

FOCUS ON FAMILY

'very exciting'



Dark Blue Rising

Series: The Circus Trilogy

Teri Terry

Hodder £7.99

ISBN 9781444957105

Tabby has been raised not to trust anyone or Cate will flit to a new town (again). An accident reveals just why Cate was so overprotective and secretive and her sinister warnings to 'beware the circle' follow Tabby to her new life, and the extraordinary secrets that she uncovers.

I liked *Dark Blue Rising* because it left me with questions at the end of every chapter making me want to read on. I liked how creative its story idea is. What I didn't like was how at the start of

the book it presented us with a lot of questions. Most of them were never answered, and instead we were given a lot more questions by its finish. The ending was not as climactic as I would have hoped. It felt like the book was very rushed and hurried as we were just presented with pieces of information after information. *Dark Blue Rising* also has some very bizarre but impossible things happening. I would recommend it if you are a person who wants to read a series and who likes adventure books.

RICHA SINGH
Boroughmuir High

Dark Blue Rising was very exciting all the way through and the plot was full of unexpected events! It was quite sinister but in a good way. All the creepy dreams and weird underwater bits made it even more gripping! I thought the descriptions of plunging into the sea were really good. *Dark Blue Rising* ended on a cliff hanger. Although this does make me want to read the next book, I thought that too many questions had been left unanswered and not enough links had been made between its different aspects. I would recommend *Dark Blue Rising* because it was a real page-turner, although the ending was a bit disappointing and I didn't like the conclusion it seemed it might be coming to. I think I will read the next book to find out what happens, though I have the feeling I might not enjoy it as much as the first part because of the way the story began to go, I might be wrong though!

EMMA BRANDER
Boroughmuir High

Wonderland

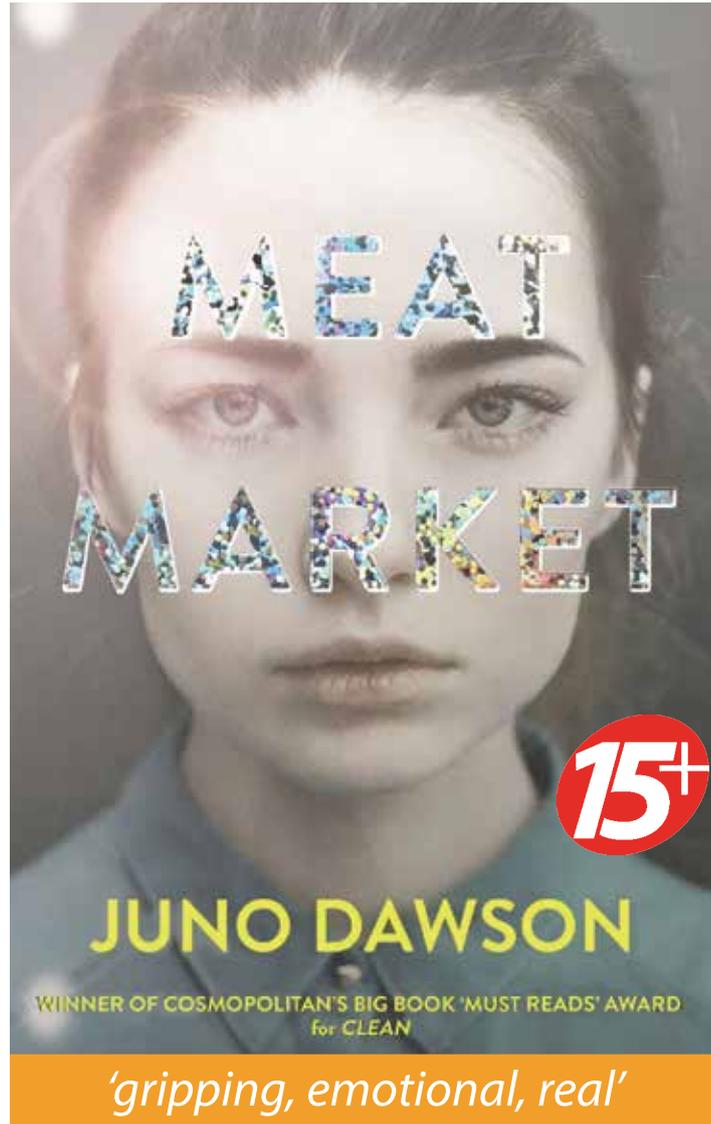
Juno Dawson
Quercus £7.99

ISBN 9781786541055

Take a peep through the looking glass at the teenage uber-rich, as Alice searches for her elusive friend Bunny at Wonderland – an exclusive weekend-long extravaganza, where relationships are fuelled by drugs and alcohol and the unshakable confidence of the elite.

I loved this book! I liked how it is so magical and the story is so good. It has just the right amount of magic to make you feel like that this story could happen in the real world.

CAMERON DU PUY
Boroughmuir High



Meat Market

Juno Dawson
Quercus £7.99

ISBN 9781786540386

Jana is catapulted into fame when she is scouted by a model agency. Balancing her old life of friends, boyfriend, family and college with Parisian catwalks and New York photo-shoots isn't easy and inevitably her life starts to fall apart in this candid look at the fashion industry and the pressures and abuses models can face.

The beginning was a little bit mysterious as a strange man is following the main character Jana. You don't find out that he is a model scout until a couple of pages in. *Meat Market* was gripping because you got to follow Jana along with her journey throughout the modelling industry, seeing both the glamour and the gore. It really makes you think about the kind of world we live in where people comment on teenagers and their appearance. This book in three words: gripping, emotional, real.

CHARLOTTE BRADY
Royal High

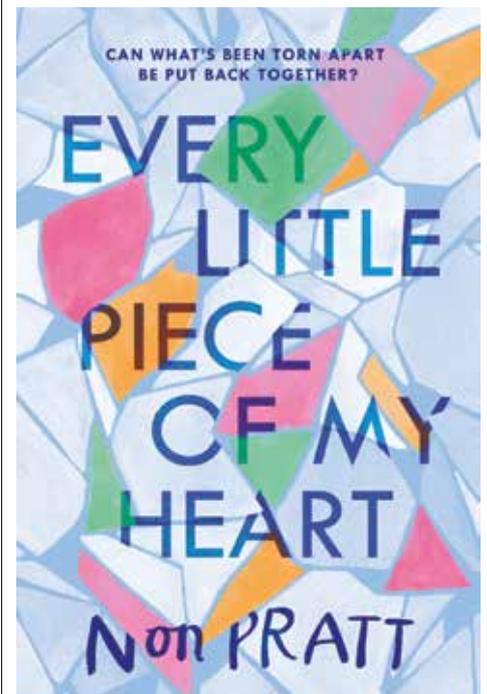
Every Little Piece of My Heart

Non Pratt
Walker £7.99
ISBN 9781406366945

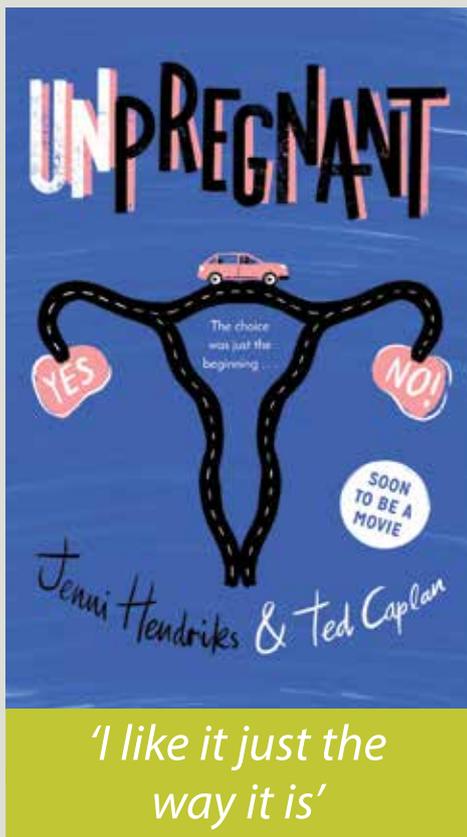
Freya sends Sophie a mysterious parcel, months after she moves away; inside there is a parcel for Win. A strange game of pass the parcel ensues in which each person receives an item that links them to Freya and a parcel to pass on to someone else. Sophie and Win try to connect the pieces of Freya that she has left behind and who she left them to.

I enjoyed this book because of the diversity in characters. It was interesting how Sophie struggled with Lupus while trying to piece bits of Freya's life together. This was a great story about misconceptions and friendships.

AVA SMITH
Forrester High



FOCUS ON FAMILY



Unpregnant

Jenni Hendriks and Ted Caplan
Chicken House £7.99 ISBN 9781912626168

Veronica is pregnant, and unable to confide in anyone close to her. She enlists the help of her ex-best friend Bailey who drives her to an out of state abortion clinic in this surprisingly hilarious road trip adventure.

15+

What I liked about *Unpregnant* was the sense of chaos and how you couldn't tell what was going to happen next. There were a series of twists and turns, and overall it was a really enjoyable book to read. My favourite character would have to be Bailey as she is so carefree, and even though she has problems of her own she is still there to help. I don't think this book needs any improvements. I like it just the way it is.

KAITLIN GRIEVE
Forrester High

This Winter

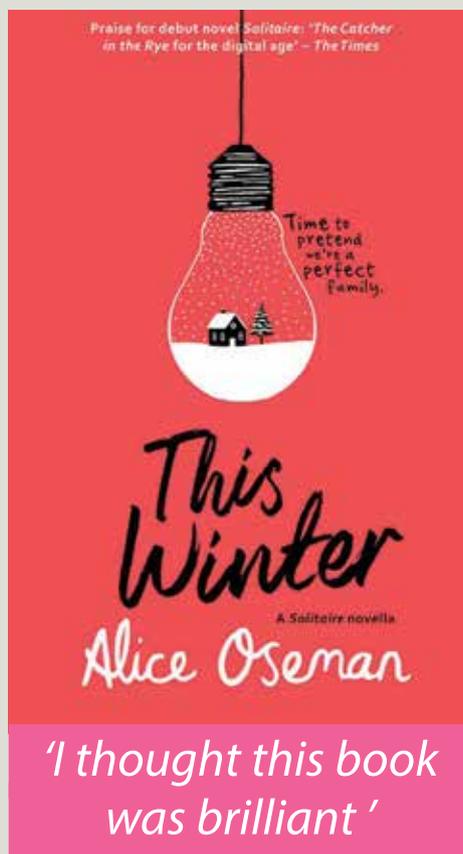
Series: Solitaire
Alice Oseman
HarperCollins £6.99 ISBN 9780008412937

Charlie and Oliver Spring are trying to get through what has been a difficult winter and Christmas Day with minimum fuss, but Charlie has recently been diagnosed with

an eating disorder. Will this Christmas drive them apart or bring them back together?

I really enjoyed this novella. I thought that its themes of family tension and moving on made for a heartwarming read. The idea of splitting the story is interesting, allowing for all sides of the story to be told. I think Alice Oseman does a particularly good job on Oliver's side of the story. It rounds things up nicely to a happy ending which adds a pleasant shine to an otherwise quite sad book. I thought this book was brilliant at tackling some heavier themes such as mental health. It also gives the message that it is okay for things not to be okay. I would recommend this book as a Christmas novel or for anyone looking for something to read in a library period as it is quite short, but it would also be good for a book report.

JACK PEARSON
Trinity Academy



The Girl Who Lost Her Shadow

Emily Ilett
Kelpies £6.99 ISBN 97817825060721

Gail and Kay are sisters, and they also used to be best friends. But then their dad left, and Kay changed. She became more quiet, less happy and Gail does not know what to do to help her sister. But one day Kay's shadow disappears. Gail is now determined to find

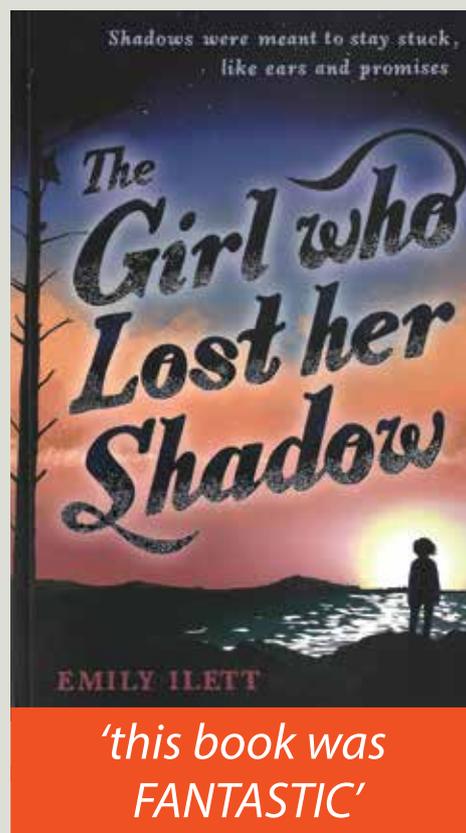
her sister's shadow, convinced that it will help Kay be happy once more.

I really liked this book. My favourite part was when Gail was eating cereal and her shadow moves away from her. Then she finds out her sister's shadow has disappeared as well. It makes the idea of sisters drifting apart and the adventure of bringing them back together really heartwarming. My favourite character is Gail because she's the younger confident sister and she may be younger but she makes a good leader.

RALA HAMIED
Craigroyston Community High

This book was FANTASTIC! I have barely the words to explain it. The book cover is lovely. I know people say don't judge a book by its cover but it really draws attention to the reader. I personally loved the main character, Gail. She has not had the best life in the past but as the story goes on she grows and grows in confidence which I found really inspiring. I am definitely not a confident person nor am I a calm person, but a book like this makes me want to be more so.

NICOLE CZERWINSKA
Craigroyston Community High

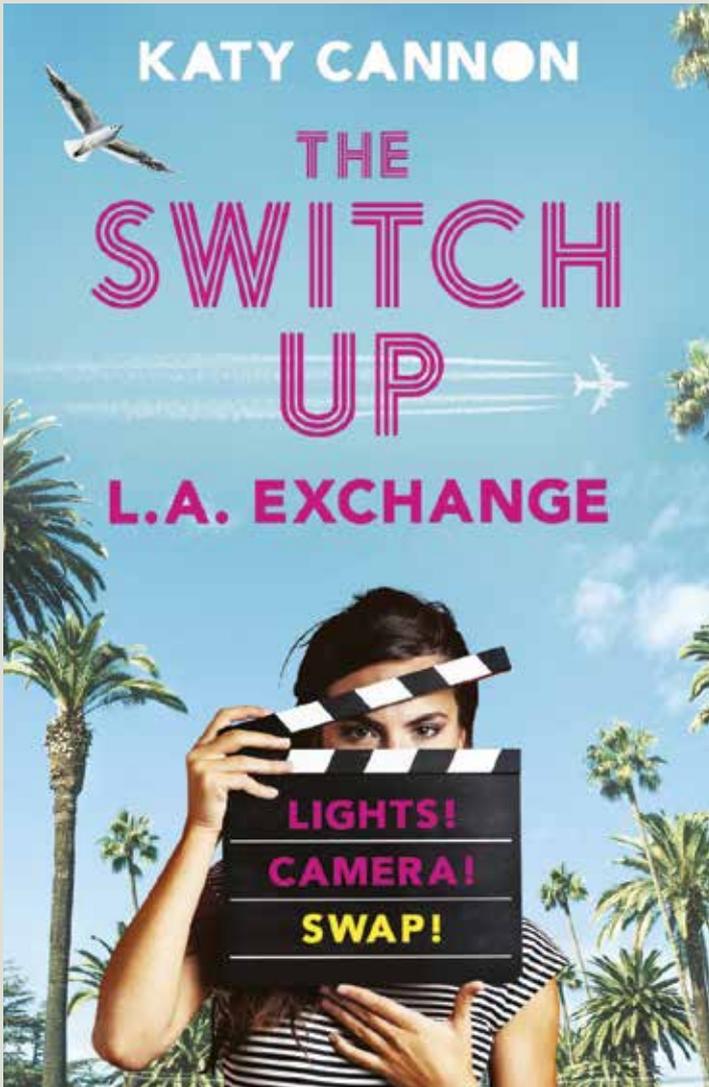


L.A. Exchange

Series: The Switch Up, no 2
Katy Cannon
Little Tiger £7.99 ISBN 9781788951920

After promising not to switch places again after their shenanigans last summer, Willa

FOCUS ON FAMILY



'sassy read'

and Alice plan a run-of-the-mill touristy holiday in LA. But then Willa gets herself into a spot of bother that only Alice can help her out with. But what happens when Alice-pretending-to-be-Willa realises that she's quite happy with just being Alice?

This was a kind of sassy read: you get cool girl vibes from it. The heroine was like a typical girl but she was also kind of funny and at some points she really made me laugh. I liked the book and my Mum did too! There's mystery in it too ... but not like *Harry Potter*. I can't wait to read the other books in the series!

AFIFAH KHAN
Holy Rood High

I thought that this book was a bit of a slow starter, but once I got into it *L.A. Exchange* was an enjoyable read. It didn't matter that I hadn't read the first one in the series. I normally read horror so this was not my usual genre, but I found it a fantastic book.

SARAH SMILES
Holy Rood High

The Boy with the Butterfly Mind

Victoria Williamson
Kelpies £9.99
ISBN 9781782506003

Jamie has ADHD and is counting down the days until he moves to America, where he hopes an American doctor will fix his brain. But his US plans get cancelled and instead he moves to Scotland to live with his dad, stepmum and stepsister. His stepsister is none too thrilled about this either, as she misses her own dad and thinks that if she was perfect he would come back.

I really enjoyed this book. I liked the coming together of Erin and Jamie's stories. I enjoyed how when Erin first meets Jamie she is almost

repulsed by him and then at the end they are best friends. It was cool to see a character with ADHD, since, even though I read a lot of books, not many have main characters with ADHD. *The Boy with the Butterfly Mind* is a great book, and I'll definitely recommend it to my friends.

ORLA O'NEILL
Craigmount High

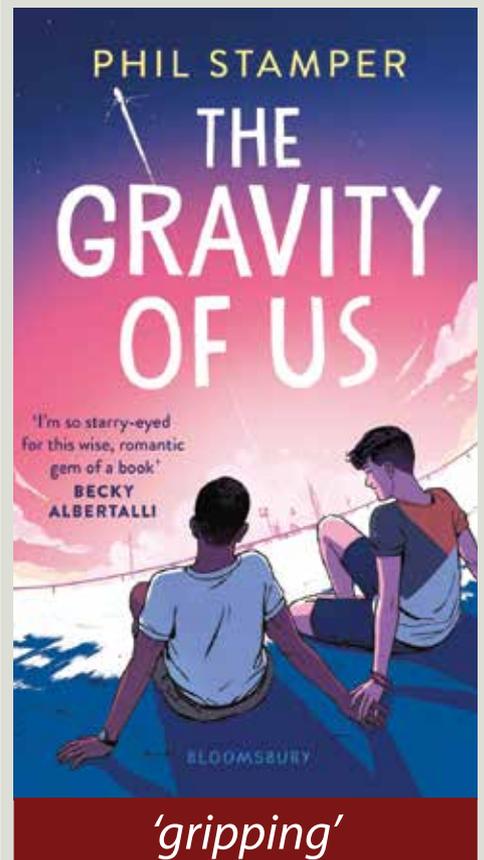
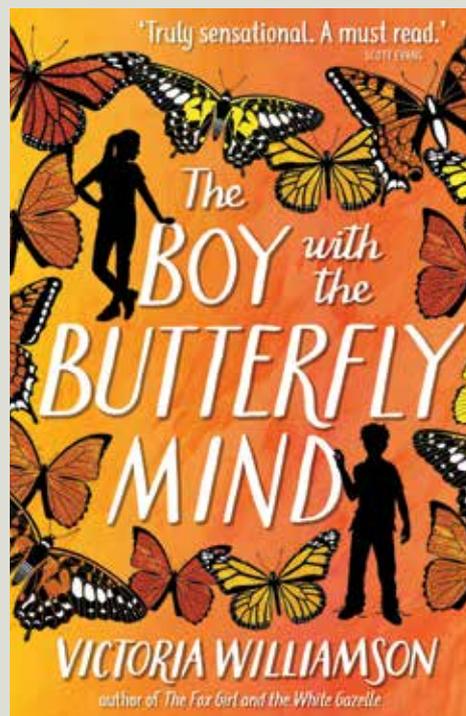
The Gravity of Us

Phil Stamper
Bloomsbury 7.99 ISBN 9781526619945

Cal has everything going for him, a huge following on social media, about to start an internship with a big digital media company and he's 17 years old. Unfortunately, however, he is whisked away from everything he knows as his dad has been selected to be an astronaut for NASA's first mission to Mars. Cal is torn between his old friends, meeting new ones and the fact that he and the families of the space mission team are the subject of an outdated reality TV programme.

This book is so gripping and easy to read. I liked the way I got to know the characters over just a few pages. The romantic moments and mental issues felt so real, making the book relatable. The book also teaches us about the reality of dealing with the media, social media and family dynamics.

RALUCA MANDA
Gracemount High



'gripping'

ALEX NYE

A chase across the wilds of Scotland with Alex Nye



Alex Nye spoke to May Gatward and Ellie Hartnup-Spiers from Trinity Academy about her novel *When We Get to the Island*.

Q What inspired you to write *When We Get to the Island*?

A I wanted to write something about the fate of refugees, people forced to make horrendous journeys by boat and land, unsure of what they would find at the end of their journey. So this inspired me, together with my work as a teacher with children who are 'looked after' or in care. I also love the book *The Thirty-Nine Steps* by John Buchan, and wanted to include a chase across the wilds of Scotland.

Q Why did you decide to set the story in Scotland?

A I set the story in Scotland partly because I live here, but also because I wanted the adventure to take place in the wilds, where Mia and Hani are relentlessly pursued across rough moorland landscapes. I particularly wanted to use the setting of Smoo Cave – the largest sea cave in Britain – as a dramatic backdrop to the ending of the book. It's an amazing place, water-filled chambers beneath the earth with fascinating legends attached to it. I decided to have Hani and Mia chased through this underground labyrinth so that I could use the atmosphere.

Q Why did you add the Duke to the story?

A He popped up accidentally as I was writing it. Altnabreac is a real station. It is on a very remote line barely used, and there really are only 93 passengers a year who arrive at this station, and the line really is only kept open by the Duke of Sutherland who owns a great deal of Scotland. I have no idea what the real Duke of Sutherland is like, but when this character appeared, stepping off the train in his wellies with his fishing gear and disappearing along the forest path, I decided he would need to re-appear. He became very important to the story, and I also realised he might be the only kind of person to have the power to make certain decisions that could override the authorities. The more I wrote about him, the more I liked him.

Q Hani apparently means 'happy, joyful, delighted'. Is this true and why did you decide to name him this?

WHEN WE GET TO THE ISLAND

A Yes, it is true. I borrowed the name from a friend of mine I was at university with. Her son, who is half-Egyptian and was born in the early Nineties, was called Hani. I always liked the name. Then when I found out what it actually means I felt it was fitting for my Hani because of the ironic implication. It means happy, joyful, delighted, and yet Hani's life is so hard.

Q Who is your favourite character in *When We Get to the Island*?

A That would be very difficult to answer. I think perhaps I like my version of the Duke of Sutherland. But I also really like Mia, the way she runs like the wind, and has had such a tough time.

Q How long did it take you to write *When We Get to the Island* and did it go through many drafts?

A I can't actually remember how many drafts it went through, or how it evolved. I know I had a first version of the book written back in 2016. But I completed the final draft in 2019.

Q Why did you decide to be an author?

A I've been a writer all my life really. Even as a child I wrote all the time, and it was my best skill, so I just knew that I would always write. As a teenager I won the W H Smith Young Writers' Award, and that encouraged me to continue.

Q What is your favourite book and why?

A I have so many favourite books. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte was a favourite for a long time. I also have many favourite children's books, including *Midnight is a Place* by Joan Aiken and *The Borrowers* by Mary Norton. I love the first for its historical setting and its description of the Lancashire mills, and the poverty of children forced to work in them. And I love the second because of its brilliant writing style.

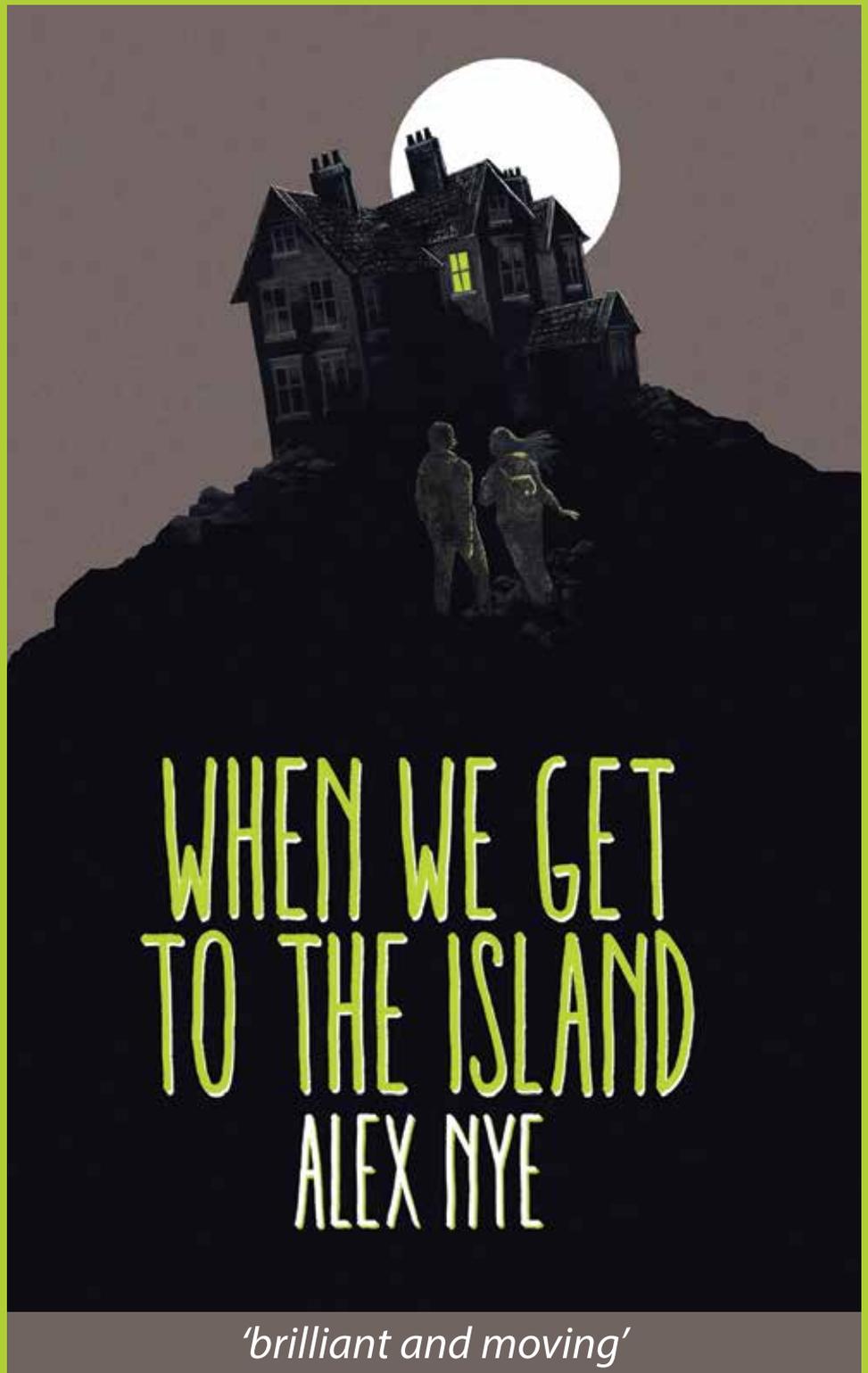
Q You have written quite a lot of books. What would be your best tip for young writers?

A My best tip would be this: don't be discouraged. It can be very tough being a writer. There's a lot of competition, rejection, fear of failure, but persistence is everything. As with most things in life. Also, read for pleasure as much as possible. Reading teaches you how to write.

When We Get to the Island

Alex Nye
Fledgling Press £8.99 ISBN 9781912280285

Mia helps 12-year old Syrian refugee Hani escape from a dangerous gang of people smugglers. They go on the run across the Scottish wilds, planning to find Hani's missing sister and to all go and live on the island where Mia, an orphan, was brought



up, but Hani's former captors are not far behind them.

This is a brilliant and moving book. We think that it tells a story that many people need to hear. It has a heart-warming ending to show that not all should be lost and the world is not full of evil, but it also shows the horrible conditions that many Syrian refugees have to live in.

MAY GATWARD AND ELLIE HARTNUP-SPIERS
Trinity Academy

I really enjoyed this book, especially because it seemed very realistic. I believe the same thing could be happening to other children right now across the world. Although the storyline took a while to develop, once it had I was gripped. During the story, you learn about countries such as war-torn Syria, Northern France and Scotland. Alex Nye is an extremely good author and I would gladly read more of her books.

KIRSTY CRAWSHAW
Balerno High

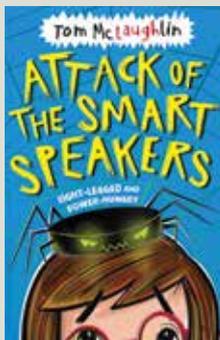
JUST FOR LAUGHS

Attack of the Smart Speakers

Series: Super Geeks
Tom McLaughlin
OUP £6.99

ISBN 9780192766922

Smart speakers have become the latest craze but it is not long before they are hatching evil plans to enslave all of humanity. Will the Super Geeks be able to save the world from them?



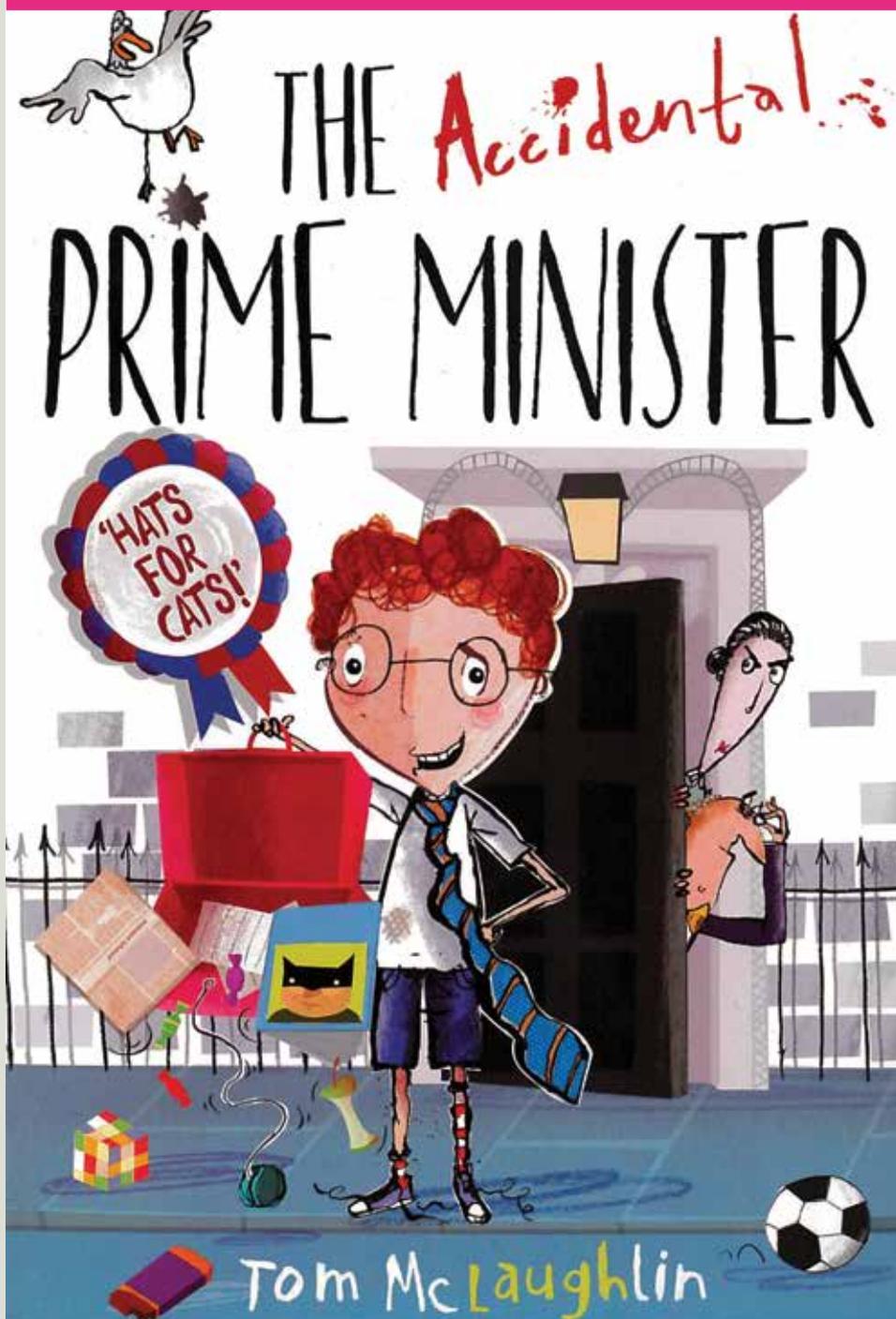
'quick and easy read'

I enjoyed this book. It had a topical and thought-provoking theme and was well-written. I particularly enjoyed the pertinent theme of robots having too much personal information and how anything

put onto a computer is never forgotten. The three main characters were relatable and the relationship between them was solid and three-dimensional with old arguments and running jokes a constant thread throughout the story. I liked the way all the parts of the plot tied up nicely at the end with a happy and funny ending. The fact that there is a prequel to this book that I hadn't read did not detract me from reading this story until the end. This book will be enjoyed by people looking for a quick and easy read on a potentially controversial topic.

JACK PEARSON
Trinity Academy

'appeal more to younger readers'



The Accidental Prime Minister Returns

Series: The Accidental Prime Minister
Tom McLaughlin
OUP £6.99 ISBN 9780192773678

When Joe discovers that he is not really Prime Minister, due to a spelling mistake in his name, he calls a re-election. His new campaign manager organises high-profile photo shoots and a re-think of priorities. But

is Joe really happy with this new image – and does he still care about what voters want?

We wanted to know how someone our age would act if they became Prime Minister, so this book got our interest straight away. We found some of Joe's actions a bit over the top, and the opposition didn't play fair either. We thought Joe would have noticed if someone spelt his name wrong! The humour was a bit corny for us, maybe because the book was a bit 'kiddy' and would appeal more to younger readers.

BLYTHE MILLAR AND BETHANY MCLUSKY
St Thomas of Aquin's

PAST TIMES

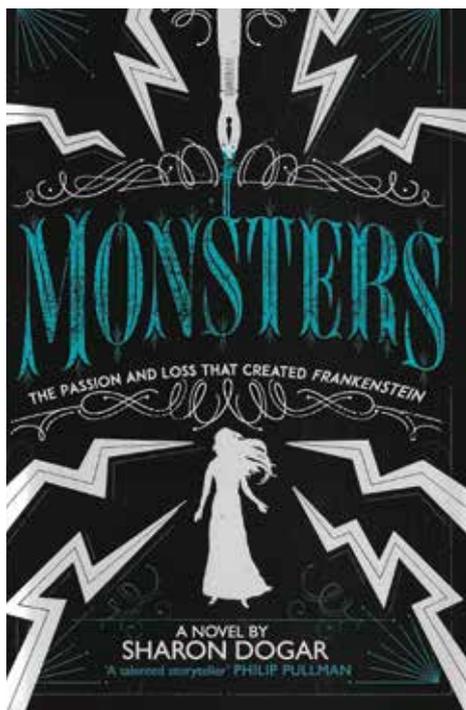
Monsters

Sharon Doggar
Anderson Press £7.99 ISBN 9781783449033

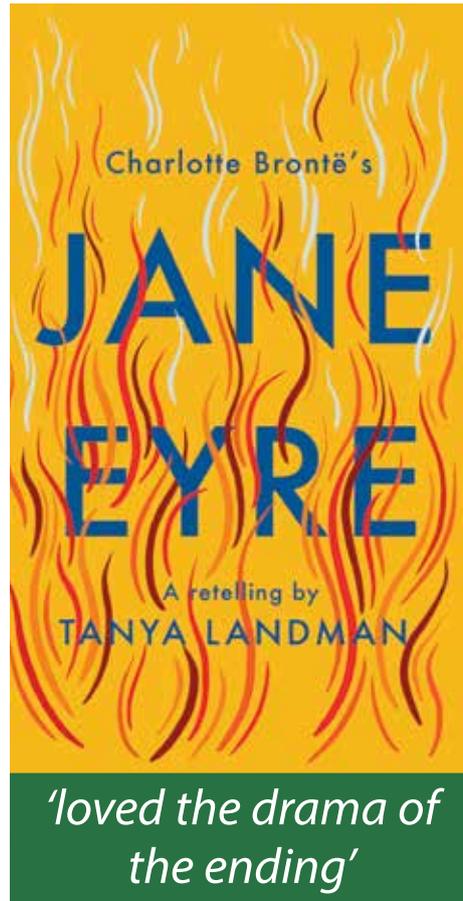
The imagined story of Mary Shelley, author and creator of Frankenstein – the hideous monster that has gripped readers for over two hundred years. Find out how wicked and monstrous things that happened in her own life shaped the book we know today.

The storyline was very intriguing and abstract and, to some, relatable. I was not aware of the story of Mary Shelley's life, so parts of it were interesting, but I thought the romance aspect was a bit clichéd. It was fascinating how Mary became aware of the monstrous behaviour by her and those surrounding her, and how it influenced the writing of *Frankenstein*.

JASMINE NWAOKORO
Gracemount High



'very intriguing'



Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre: A Retelling

Tanya Landman
Barrington Stoke £7.99 ISBN 9781781129128

A retelling of the book Jane Eyre. Offered a job in a country house, it looks like life has turned a corner for Jane. With strange happenings in the dead of the night, will the owner of the house change Jane's life for the better or worse?

I was very impressed by this retelling. Having read the original Jane Eyre, I was interested to see what this book would be like, and I really enjoyed it! I felt that there was lots of great vocabulary and writing techniques which helped convey the story well, and all the key plot points were included. There was a lot resting on this as it is such a well-known book, but the author really did the story justice. I really hope that this new version will enable many more to enjoy this classic tale.

ROSIE BRETT
Broughton High

I know this is a remake of the original and it is shorter. I haven't read the original, but this retelling was intriguing as time passed too fast when reading it. I would like to read the original because it will go into more depth.

ORLA MUNIZ
Broughton High

This was almost like the original, but shorter. It has all the main points that are in the original and it is written really well.

ANNA KHUPENIA
Broughton High

This is not a book we would have read without a reworking of the novel. We both found the beginning of Jane's life so sad and could not believe the cruelty of her extended family or what she had to put up with at school. We found the middle a bit boring and repetitive but loved the drama of the ending.

SURANNE JEFFRIES AND ALEISHA DEIGHAN
Gracemount High

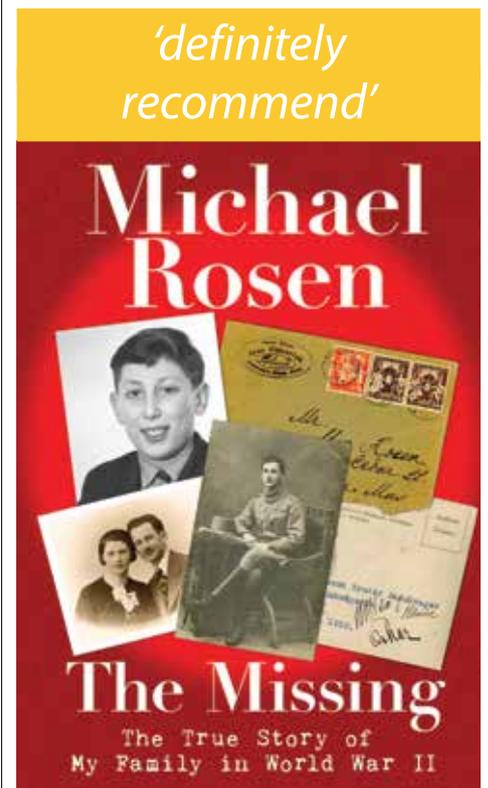
The Missing

Michael Rosen
Walker £8.99 ISBN 9781406386752

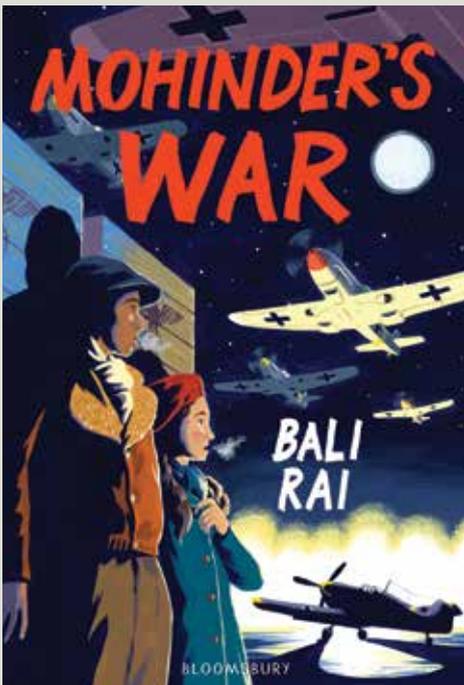
Poet Michael Rosen explores his family tree, and in particular the stories of his great uncles who disappeared during the Second World War. Through a mixture of poetry and prose, he tells his story of the Holocaust and how his family was persecuted for being Jewish.

The Missing is a very enticing book that made me keep coming back to it to find out what happened next. I found it fascinating and would definitely recommend it to anyone interested in World War Two and the Holocaust. It is very informative. It was amazing to be able to read someone's own story and how the war affected their life and family.

VIKTORIJA SMETANINA
Craigroyston Community High Burn



PAST TIMES



'emotional roller coaster'

Mohinder's War

Bali Rai
Bloomsbury £5.99 ISBN 9781472958372

Simpreet is attending his great grandfather Mohinder's funeral when he sees an elderly woman cry. He approaches her, and finds out that she knew his great grandfather during World War Two. The woman's name is Joelle, and she tells Simpreet of her adventure with Mohinder, an RAF pilot whose plane crashed by her house during the Nazi occupation of France.

This was very good and very descriptive, but it was a bit of an emotional roller coaster – a sad thing happened but the plot was really good. I think someone who likes reading for the sake of reading and is looking for something that will equally raise your blood pressure and calm you down at the same time would like this. It was believable – it WAS sad but I can imagine this could have happened.

DAISY LAING
Broughton High

Mohinder's War is a good book in my opinion because it refers to a real time in the world and whoever reads this book could learn a lot of new things. I would highly recommend this book if you are interested in the First/Second World War. It is packed with a lot of cliffhangers so you go on a ride of different emotions. It is short but you still feel more emotion than you would think.

FILIP STRZALKA
Craigmount High

Personally, I really liked this book. It made me feel like I was there. The way the characters interacted in the story was really interesting (in a good way). The roller coaster of their story shows the ups and downs of life in the war. It helps people understand what it was like to be alive in these scary times.

MAYA CAMPBELL
Craigmount High

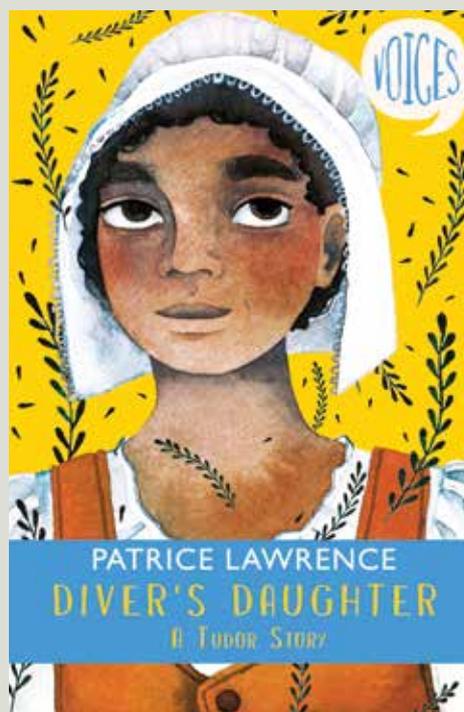
Diver's Daughter

Patrice Lawrence
Scholastic £6.99 ISBN 9781407191409

Eve's mother was stolen from her family in Mozambique when she was a child, and they now live in a slum in Elizabethan England. This is the story of the struggles faced by black people at a time when the Western World functioned on slavery. Eve and her mother attempt to dive down to the wreck of a ship, rumoured to be rich with treasures. But will they survive and will Eve overcome her fear of the water to help rescue her mother?

I love this book! Especially when Eve gets over her fear of water and shows great bravery. What I didn't like about the book was the way it was published – it would have benefited from some illustrations and I didn't like the front cover, because it looked like it was for a younger audience which didn't match the content. There was also too much historical detail, almost to the detriment of the actual storytelling. The portrayal of racism is brutally honest, which made it an uncomfortable read for me at times, though in the end that's what made it an effective read.

CHLOE MACINTOSH
Queensferry High



Wuthering Heights

Tanya Landman
Barrington Stoke £7.99 ISBN 97817811289371

An easy-to-read, contemporarily told retelling of Emily Bronte's classic novel and the passionate, obsessive love affair between Heathcliff and Cathy by YA writer Tanya Landman.

I really enjoyed this book, because it was a nice, quick easy read. There were good descriptions of the characters. Even although the author is retelling the original story, Heathcliff comes across as a forceful character who indirectly murders a lot of people. Reading this kind of book is a good introduction to the classics but I don't feel I now need to read the real thing.

ELLA LEAR
Balerno High

A Snowfall of Silver

Series: A Sky Painted Gold
Laura Wood
Scholastic £7.99 ISBN 9781407192413

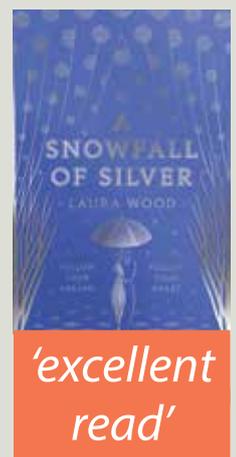
In the autumn of 1931 Freya runs away in the middle of the night from her Cornish home to become an actress. She joins a touring theatre company, but neither her life nor falling in love turn out to be anything like she planned.

I really enjoyed this novel. With all of its twists and turns as Freya discovers herself, it makes for an excellent read. Romance is a recurring theme in this novel, so I would suggest this book to anyone who loves romance as well as coming of age tales. This novel is a spin-off to *A Sky Painted Gold* by the same author, this time following Freya, so if you enjoyed that book then you should also enjoy this one.

MATILDA BRIMS
Trinity Academy



'nice, quick easy read'



'excellent read'

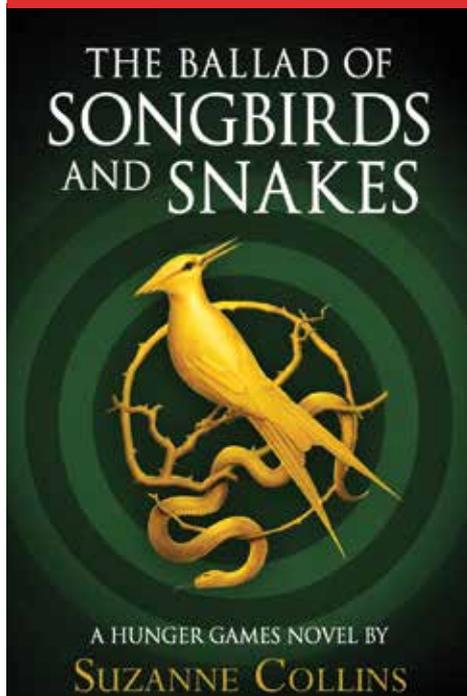
SC-FI & FANTASY

The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes

Series: The Hunger Games
 Suzanne Collins
 Scholastic £18.99 ISBN 9780702300172

It is the morning of the reaping that will kick off the tenth annual Hunger Games and Coriolanus Snow is preparing for his one shot at glory as a mentor in the Games. He has been asked to mentor the female tribute from District 12. As the fight to the death

'definitely worth your time'



begins, Coriolanus starts to feel for her. Will his desire to survive at all cost outweigh his need to follow the rules?

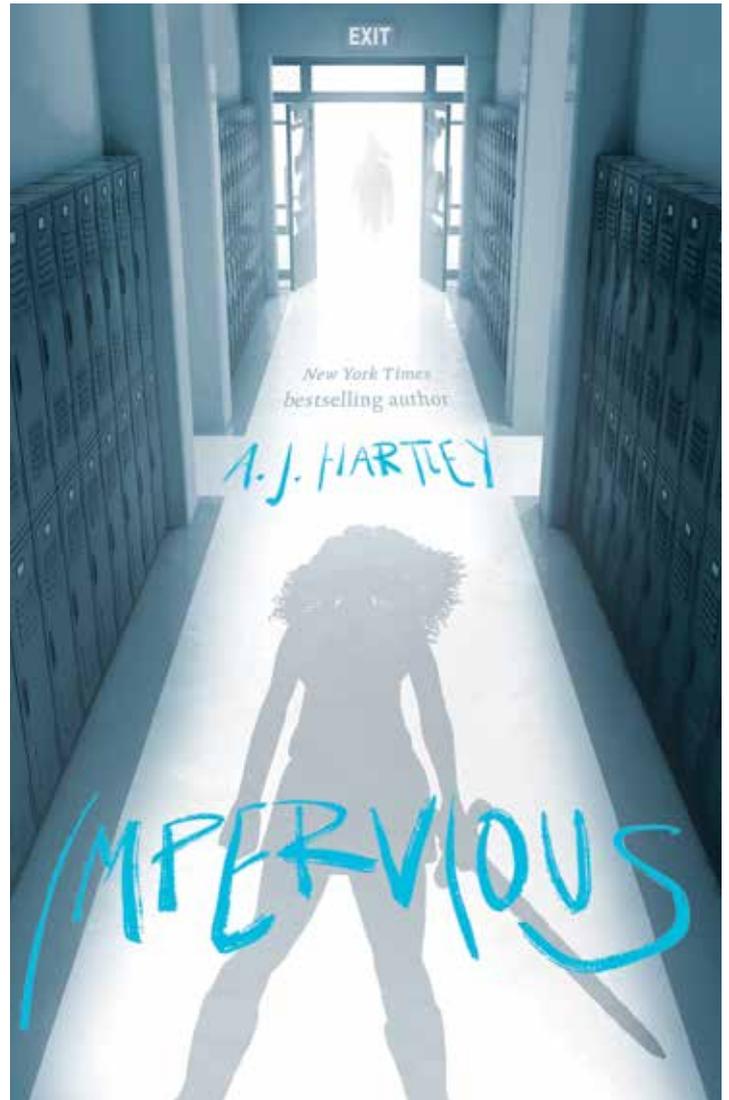
This book is an enjoyable asset to *The Hunger Games* series. It felt, however, like an extra rather than a fresh new book, which I think is what the author was aiming for. I thought Coriolanus was a strange choice for a protagonist, but he turned out to be quite a deep character. It was interesting to see his journey to the top. I also think showing his back story from a different perspective makes you think differently of the character, as you know their real motives. I think turning the franchise's biggest villain into a hero makes the series better. Overall, this book didn't break any new grounds for the series but it made it a little bit finer. Collins may not be able to carry on the adventures of District 12 protagonists but could continue releasing the back stories of the other characters which helped make the series so successful. This idea could help readers discover parts of *The Hunger Games* they never knew about before. If you liked the previous books, then this is definitely worth your time.

CHIKA NWAFOR
 James Gillespie's High

Impervious

A J Hartley
 Uclan Publishing £6.99 ISBN 9781912979394

Trina Warren is a normal high school student who is going to fourth period when she is gifted a necklace. Little does she know that this necklace is magical, and that it will throw her in a mad



'appeals to me as a student'

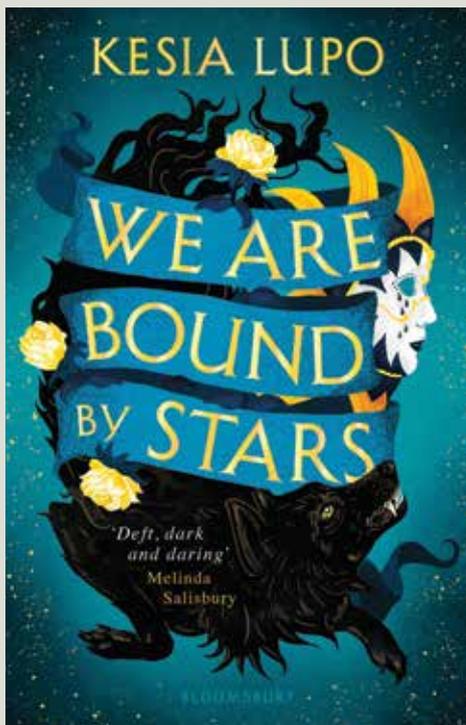
adventure against faceless monsters. She is the only one who can save her town from the Soulless One and will do anything in her power to succeed. But it takes only one second to change everything.

The author impressively delineates *Impervious* as a horrific fantasy with an unpredictable twist of adventure and disaster, and a shocking but satisfying end. A J Hartley represents Trina Warren as an ordinary girl living a not so ordinary life. At such a young age, she is grieving the loss of her mother and is having a hard time surviving high school due to constant pressure dealing with friendships and maintaining a good image. This story is personal not only to the writer, but also appeals to me as a student, who has been going through the same terrifying yet intriguing high school experience.

MANYA RACHH
 Firhill High



SCI-FI & FANTASY



'magic and fantasy'

We Are Bound by Stars

Kesia Lupo
Bloomsbury £7.99 ISBN 9781408898079

Livio, the first male descendant of the most powerful family has lost control of his magic abilities. Could Beatrice, a maker of magical masks, help him take control of them? Both have their futures written out for them. Working together can they help save their island from a masked assassin with a deadly agenda?

This book brings into question the true nature of destiny and its implications. There is a creative use of magic and fantasy, which adds a unique dimension. The story of both protagonists intertwines beautifully at the end of the story.

JENNIFER ROSS
Gracemount High

The Loop

Ben Oliver
Chicken House £7.99 ISBN 9781912626557

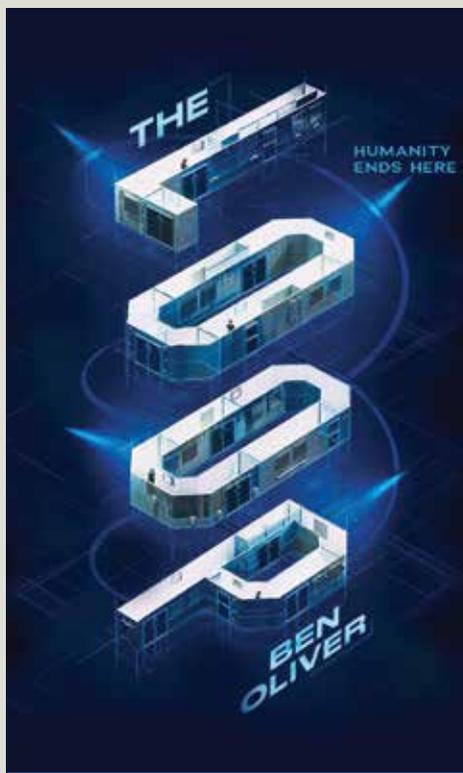
The Loop is a prison controlled by Artificial Intelligence where prisoners can delay their execution date by agreeing to medical



experiments. Somehow, the daily robotic routine is disrupted amid rumours of an uprising outside the walls. All prisoners are suddenly labelled as A or B. After Group A is taken for experimentation that has dark consequences, Luka realises that he must escape and find out what is happening inside and outside the prison.

I really liked this book, and the world and characters are all fascinating. The tension the book created was incredible, and with each turn of the page you find yourself rooting for the main cast more and more. People who like *The Hunger Games* and *The Maze Runner* will love *The Loop*. This book in three words: trapped, control, technology.

AILISH YOUNG
Royal High



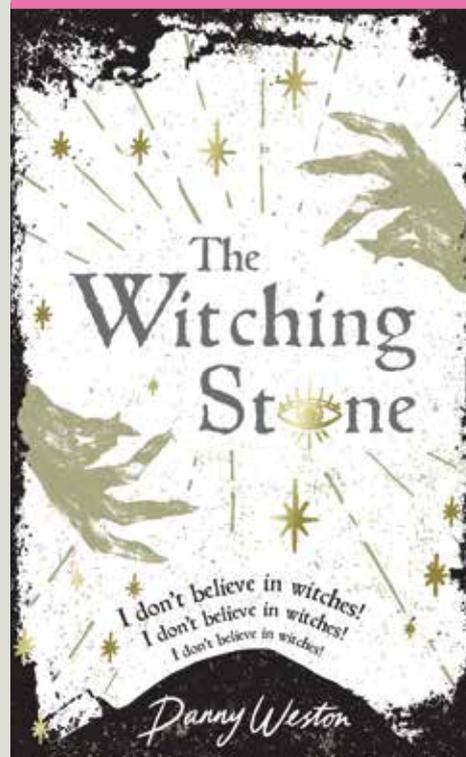
'trapped, control, technology'

The Witching Stone

Danny Weston
Uclan Publishing £7.99 ISBN 9781912979387

Alfie has chosen to spend the summer with his dad in the sleepy village of Woodplumpton. If nothing else, it's a chance to avoid his ex-girlfriend in Bristol. On his first day there he meets a local girl called Mia who tells him the strange story of the village's local celebrity, an alleged witch called Meg who was buried upside down

'my new favourite book'



in the 1700s. Suddenly, the legend of Meg becomes more real to Alfie than to others – she is hell bent on getting revenge and only Alfie can help.

I thought this was really good and it's my new favourite book. In the right spots it was really scary but then it evened out by being light-hearted in other areas. It was also realistic which made it more scary because it was believable. Eerie, funny and a page turner.

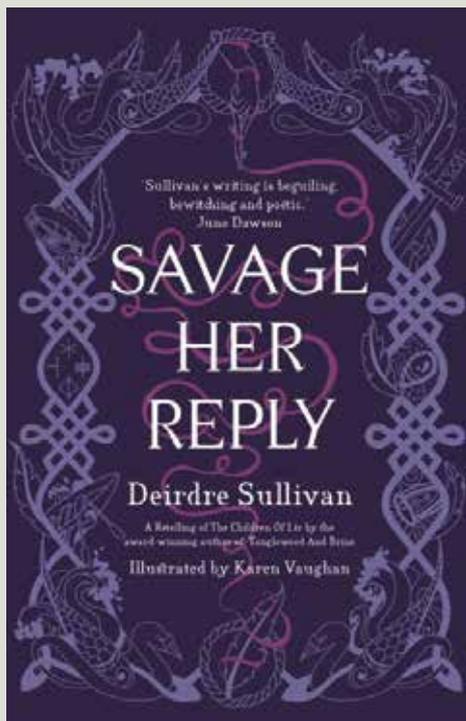
DONALD MACBEATH
Broughton High

Savage Her Reply

Deirdre Sullivan
Little Island £13.99 ISBN 9781912417643

A retelling of the classic Irish Fairy tale *The Children of Lir*. When Aife's sister dies, she is forced to marry Lir, her sister's widowed husband. But Aife possesses a powerful magic and when she sees that Lir treats his own children very, very badly, she is driven to protect them, whatever it takes.

Overall, I like the theme of the book, changing from a stereotypical good, kind protagonist with simple descriptions to a protagonist who is developed more deeply and becomes more sophisticated and also a bit on the dark side. I, however, did not really enjoy reading the book because I found some parts quite confusing



'I like the theme of the book'

and hard to follow. The characters had been developed well but I felt the story could have been made a bit more interesting, but in some parts the story development was enjoyable.

CAROLINE KANNAMPUZHA
Broughton High

Graveyard Shift in Ghost Town

Michael Pryor
Allen & Unwin £6.99 ISBN 9781911631651

Although they have different approaches to the job, Anton and Rani work together to rid the city of Melbourne of an influx of ghosts. They face competition from other ghost-hunters like The Trespassers and co-operation from Aunt Tanja, who may be more of an imposter than a genuine relation.

If anyone is looking for a funny and mysterious book to read, then here it is! After reading the first sentence, I was gripped by



'I was gripped'

the storyline about a plague of ghosts scaring everyone in the city. The author has created a humorous plot and this book made me laugh out loud. I've already recommended *Graveyard Shift in Ghost Town* to my friends.

CHRISTINA FARNHAM
Tynecastle High

Knock Three Times

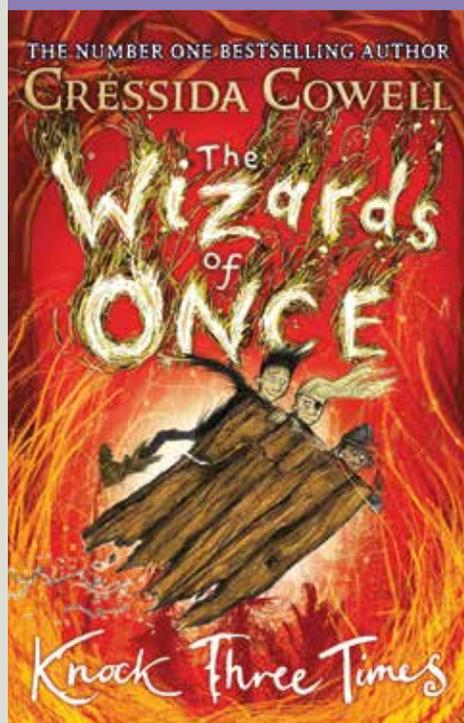
Series: The Wizards of Once, no 3
Cressida Cowell
Hodder £7.99 ISBN 9781444941456

Wish and Xar need to collect the next ingredients for the Spell to get rid of Witches. But their new friend Perdita isn't ready to part with the tears of the Drood, and the scales of the Nuckalavee can only be gotten if they complete a shadow quest. And surely things would be easier if Bodkin didn't keep falling asleep whenever he gets scared?

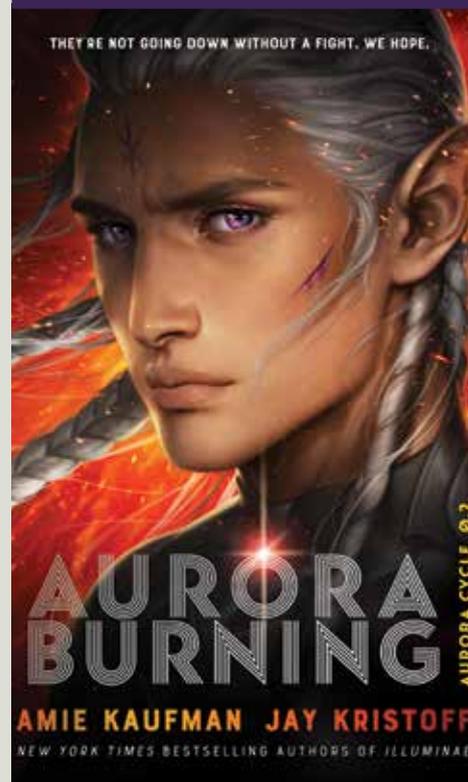
This is not a bad book but maybe in some parts of it there could be more descriptive words. The drawings are, however, amazing! They really give you a description of the characters and the scenes that they are in. I have read the other two books in the series and both of them summed up the story before this one really well so I understood it all. People who like reading about dragons and exquisite stories would like this book!

DANIEL POSPIECH
Holy Rood High

'there could be more descriptive words'



'this book is certainly not boring'



Aurora Burning

Series: Aurora Cycle, no 2
Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff
Rock the Boat £14.99 ISBN 9781786077745

Now on the wrong side of the law, Squad 312 must do everything they can to help Aurora fulfil her destiny. Easy, right? But how the Maker are they meant to do this if they keep getting split up? And if they can't tell the good guys from the bad guys? They need a Plan A. And then a Plan B, just in case.

The characters are as lovable as the first book, if not more so. The banter between the characters was entertaining and funny. There was constant action, from the first page until the last. This book is certainly not boring. I would recommend a re-read of the first book if you haven't already done so, as I found myself forgetting who some of the side characters were, and I found it difficult to get into the flow of the story again. It's packed with plot-twists and cliffhangers (there's one at the very end though, leaving a lot of questions for the next instalment in the trilogy). I would definitely recommend this if you enjoyed the first book in the series, *Aurora Rising*. Overall, it's a great sci-fi story and there's lots going on to keep you entertained.

EMILY KELT
Craigmount High

TEEN ISSUES

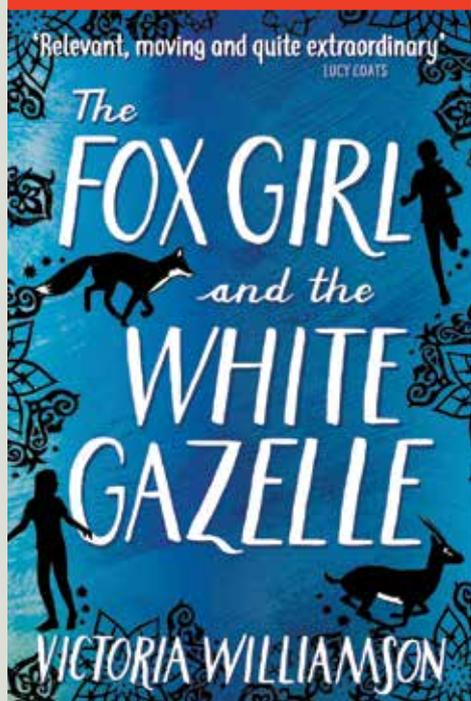
The Fox Girl and the White Gazelle

Victoria Williamson
Kelpies £6.99 ISBN 9781782504900

The story of a friendship between Caylin, a wild child struggling to cope with her alcoholic mother, and Reema, a Syrian refugee bewildered by her new life in Glasgow. When they discover an injured fox and her cubs in their garden, it forms a bond between them, as does their use of running to escape their daily worries

This was a really good book, with lots in it. It followed the friendship of the two girls as they bonded over the foxes but also dealt with sad issues like Granny's death, and serious topics such as addiction, family troubles and the war in

'moving and positive'

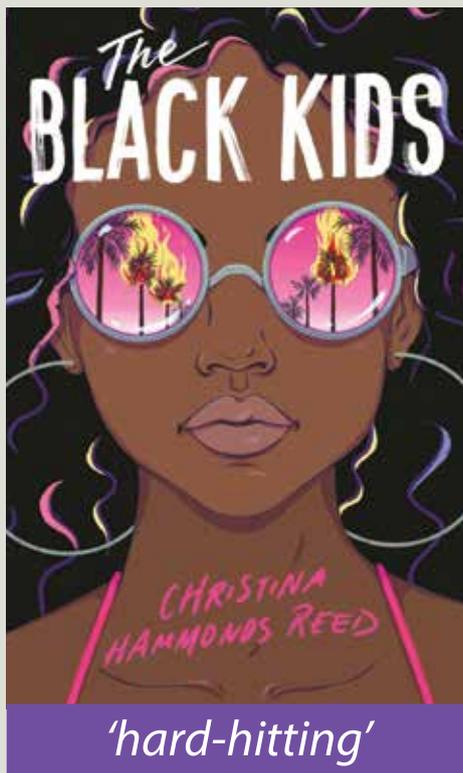


Syria. It had fun, adventure and messages about the environment. It was a moving and positive story.

POLLY DICKSON-SMITH
St Thomas of Aquin's

I found this book a bit slow, but liked how it combined a friendship story with an animal theme. A lot happened, but I didn't feel very involved. I think it would appeal to other readers though.

BETHANY MCLUSKY
St Thomas of Aquin's



The Black Kids

Christina Hammonds Reed
Simon & Schuster £7.99 ISBN 9781471188190

1992 is a momentous year for Ashley. Whilst she dreams of going to Stanford and finds love for the first time, the Rodney King trial throws her city of Los Angeles into chaos and her family is fragmented by the actions of her wayward sister.



This book was a departure for me in terms of what I usually read and I enjoyed it more than I expected to. I liked the characterisation – how Ashley developed from being angst-ridden to becoming more active, and trying to fix and have a better understanding of things. Her toxic relationship with Kimberly was also well-handled. Jo, not a very likable character, seemed believable in showing little gratitude towards

the mother who had worked so hard for her. The book gave a balanced view of prejudice and race riots and, by putting things in a personal context, was effective in bringing its message home to the reader. It is suitable for older teens; the story moves at a good pace and it is timely in its content.

DAMIAN LOGAN
St Thomas of Aquin's

The Black Kids took me out of my comfort zone because I usually read fantasy novels for escapism. I'm glad I tried it and I recommend it to others who like to read about hard-hitting subjects. I think the author presented the characters and storyline in a sensitive and comforting way. The characters all had flaws and strange ways of reacting to events which made them feel even more real and human. The main character, Ashley, is often reflective but in a fun and understandable way which made her endearing and interesting to follow.

Although I wasn't crazy about the way the story jumped from past to present, I really enjoyed this book.

SAIDAH MAYRIUM
Tynecastle High

Far From Perfect

Series: The Valentines
Holly Smale
HarperCollins £7.99 ISBN 9780008254179

After years of being in the spotlight, constantly displaying her activities on social media and putting on a public face, Faith starts questioning what she really wants in life. Fame, a rock-star boyfriend and a career as an actress may not be it.

I love books about romance, so was happy to try this one, but I felt it lacked excitement. It gave good insight into celebrity life, especially Faith's worry that everything she did was being watched and might have consequences, but her relationship with Noah was unconvincing. The only real surprise in the book was what happened to Charity – I didn't expect that. Otherwise, it was not very original or engrossing, but it did have some good characters – Mercy was my favourite. My overall opinion is that this was a nice, heartwarming book which didn't really live up to its promising start.

RUHIKA VIRALAM
St Thomas of Aquin's



'lacked excitement'



'everyone will be able to relate'

All I Want for Christmas

Beth Garrod
Scholastic £7.99 ISBN 9780702300882

US social media sensation Elle, who is under pressure to increase her following, decides to swap places for Christmas with one of her British fans. Holly, who lives in a small English village, normally loves the festive season, but has just broken up with her boyfriend. Will they both find what they want this Christmas?

There is something about this book that I think everyone will be able to relate to in some sort of way, whether that might be finding new ways to celebrate Christmas or hanging the Christmas decorations up early to keep a joyful mood around the family. One thing that bothered me was how it was written. Some of it was like reading a letter from the mail. Other parts had emojis which I think is for technology and not for books. While I was flicking through the pages of the book, I felt like the author could have been more creative with the chapter names instead of the two girls' names Elle and Holly for most chapters. To be honest, I couldn't finish the book. I personally don't like books about social media. I feel like I would have been more interested in the book if social media wasn't its main theme.

EBONI MCFARLANE
Wester Hailes Education Centre

This book has a unique and original layout, and I found it exciting to read a book with a different layout than most books. Each chapter is about one of the main characters, Elle and Holly. At the start of each chapter it has one of the girls' names at the top in bold writing so you know who's talking/writing in that chapter. Elle isn't an easy character to relate to, although she is a social media star which is believable because social media is such a big thing. On the other hand, Holly is a much more relatable character. She is a girl with boy issues, which most girls are familiar with. Overall, this book is a great book if you like Christmas and feel-good books.

KORI WILLIAMS
Wester Hailes Education Centre

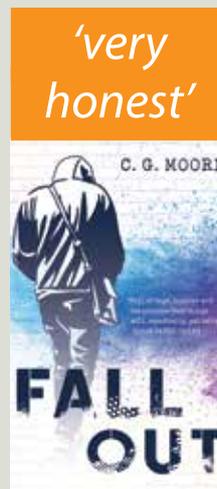
Fall Out

C G Moore
Uclan Publishing £7.99 ISBN 9781912979189

The day Cal Adams decides to come out to his family as gay, nothing goes right. His parents react violently to his confession, but that's nothing compared to the fall out with friends. Cal will go through abusive encounters and relationships before he understands what he truly needs: to accept himself, and realise that he deserves to be loved.

Fall Out is an enjoyable read but there were a few elements of it I wasn't too keen on, such as the fast-paced nature of the story, and the underdevelopment of the characters, which I personally felt lost the story a larger sense of intrigue and excitement. It is, however, a very honest telling of what many young people today experience. A warm feeling of relatability is weaved through the story, and its openness in exploring topics such as mental health, poverty and heartbreak will be endearing to people going through similar situations. Although some of the themes explored in the book are difficult to read about, the wit and humour makes it much easier to bounce from one page to the next. The chaotic and challenging situations that are thrown at Cal will leave the reader anticipating what will happen to him next, and, because of the deeply personal perspective told by Cal, the reader stays always on his side, rooting for him.

SEÁNA BREATHNACH
Craigroyston Community High



Hideous Beauty

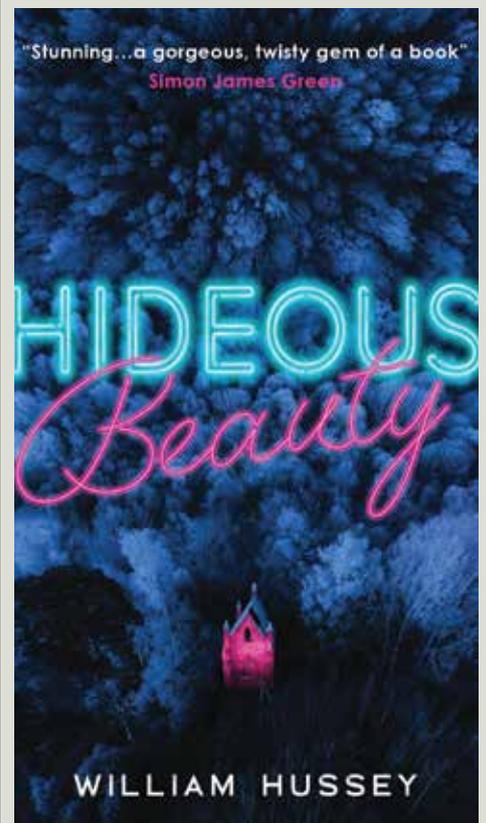
William Hussey
Usborne £7.99 ISBN 9781474966177

Dylan's world changed forever when he met Ellis – it was love at first sight and Ellis helped Dylan live his life more fully and be the person he wanted to be. So, understandably, Dylan is devastated when Ellis is killed in a car accident. His grief is multiplied when he realises that there was someone else at the scene of the accident and that Ellis was keeping secrets.



William Hussey stunningly portrays *Hideous Beauty* as a tragic LGBTQ story full of loss and hope, with a perfect blend of love and mystery. The writer highlights key issues including rape, cancer and drug addiction which need to be taken more seriously; he also depicts the importance of grieving in a powerful yet realistic manner. Depression is a very common issue among teens, and *Hideous Beauty* appealed to me as I felt immediately connected to the characters and sympathized with them.

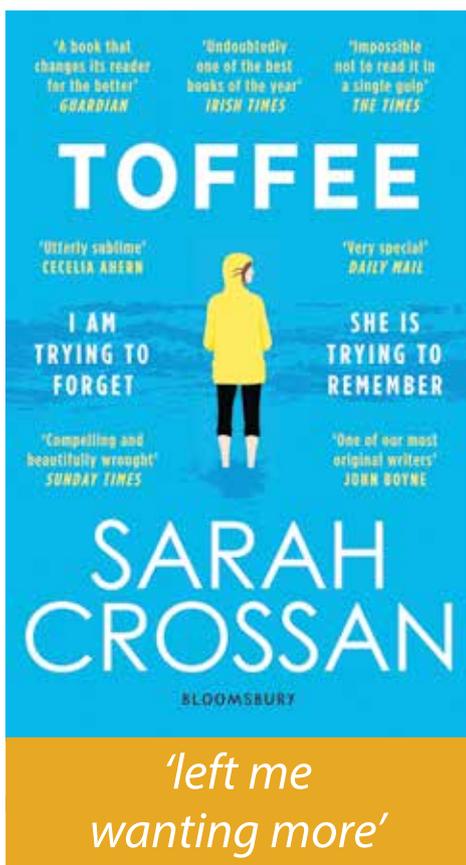
MANYA RACHH
Firhill High



WILLIAM HUSSEY

'perfect blend of love and mystery'

TEEN ISSUES



Toffee

Sarah Crossan
Bloomsbury £7.99 ISBN 9781408868133

Allison's home is not safe, so she runs. She doesn't know where she's going, but she just knows that she cannot turn back. Until she takes shelter in Marla's shed. Marla is an older lady who is a bit confused, and just invites Allison to come in. That's when Allison starts to question the meaning of home, friendship and who she really is.

I would read one page of this and find myself needing to turn to the next because this book was so good. The chapters were short and it left me wanting more. Things were written in such a way that I was really keen to find out what happened next. What Allison's dad does shake you because it is so wrong. I love the cover too! Intense and also kind of moving.

ORLA MUNIZ
Broughton High

Loveless

Alice Oseman
HarperCollins £7.99 ISBN 9780008244125

Georgia has never kissed anyone. Now that she is about to go to university with her two best friends, she is ready to put herself

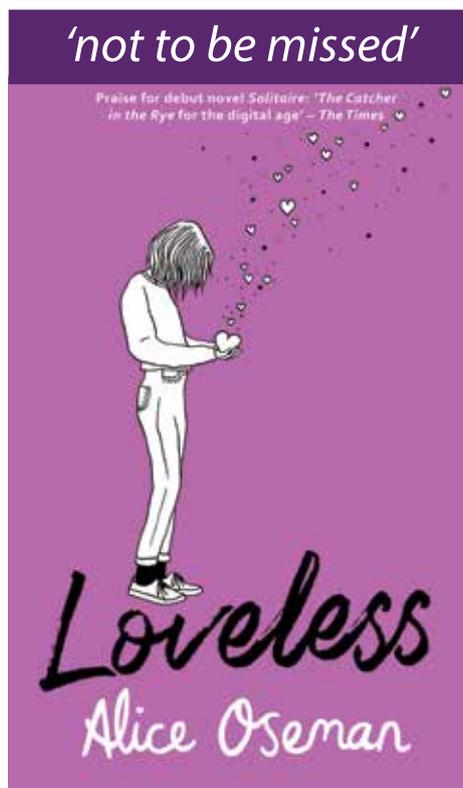


out there, and promises herself to find someone to kiss, to be attracted to. But things aren't that easy. When everyone around her seems to be confident in their sexuality, she starts questioning how she feels, ready to face whatever truth comes her way.

I would highly recommend this touching novel, which I really enjoyed. I had never read a book about anyone who is aromantic or asexual, despite having read quite a few books in the LGBTQ+ genre, so it was really informative. The main character was relatable and her story felt very real. Although this book didn't have a huge plot, it was so good because there was so much meaning behind it. I felt this was a real journey of self-discovery and reflection on the power of friendship. Not to be missed!

ROSIE BRETT
Broughton High

I really loved *Loveless!* It was an amazing book and it really helped me to learn about asexuality and aromanticism. I thought that overall the characters were well thought out, and the plot was easy to follow. Upon looking back on the book, however, I did feel the plot was a little all over the place, but this only became apparent after finishing the book, so don't let this put you off. Another thing I didn't like was how the character development seemed to focus on one character in particular. It also felt a bit rushed by the end of the book. But even after all the bad things I have said about this book, *Loveless* was not a disappointment! I don't feel that it stands up to the same level as some of Alice Oseman's other books, such as *Solitaire*. I feel *Solitaire*



is better because it is a much more brutal portrayal of teenage life, but if that's not your thing I would definitely recommend *Loveless*.

FREYA MCCRINDLE
Broughton High

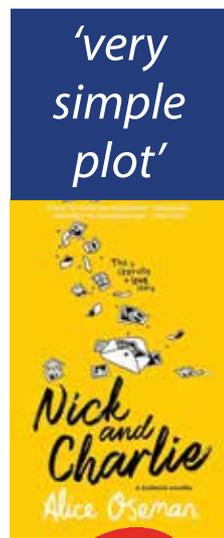
I thought this was a great book about trying to understand the complexity of life. All its characters were developed very well, especially the lead. It was a great example of telling us how our experiences, what we like and don't like and our surroundings influence us, but the truth comes out to be different for everyone. I thought this book was very realistic and original, and I kept on wanting to read it. I think this book is more suitable for older readers.

CAROLINE KANNAMPUZHA
Broughton High

Nick and Charlie

Alice Oseman
HarperCollins £6.99 ISBN 9780008389666

Nick and Charlie have been going out for two years, and now the time has come for Nick to go off to university. Nick doesn't ever worry about his relationship with Charlie, because, come on, they're 'Nick and Charlie'. Until Charlie starts to feel anxious about Nick leaving at the end of summer, worried about being left behind ... can their love survive long distance?



I felt this book had a very simple plot and limited character development.

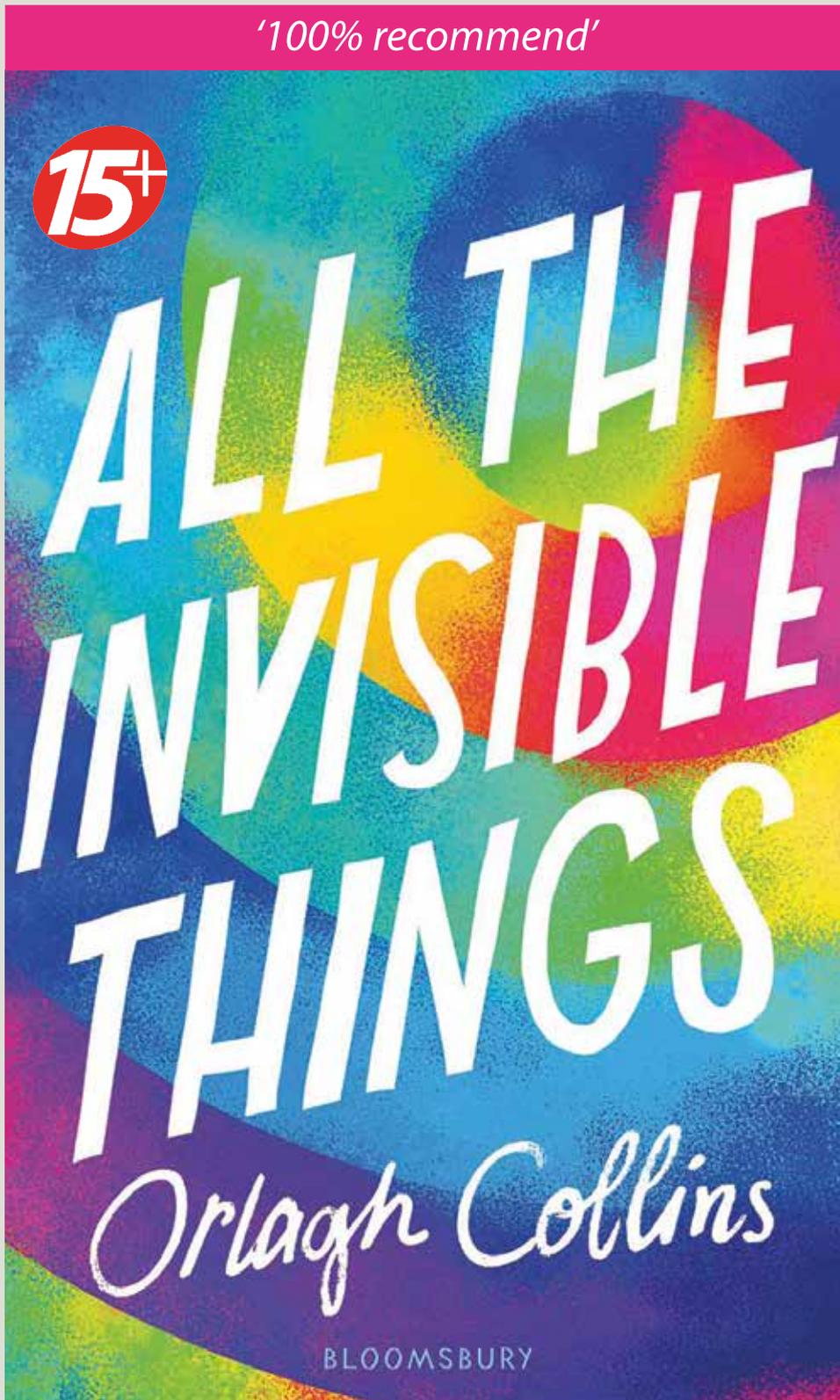
I didn't find it very interesting or meaningful, and felt it definitely lacked something. I would, however, be interested to see if the *Heartstopper* series is any better as it is about the same characters and has good reviews.

ROSIE BRETT
Broughton High

All the Invisible Things

Orlagh Collins
Bloomsbury £7.99 ISBN 978140888339

Four years ago, Vetty and Pez were best friends. Then Vetty's mum died and she moved away from London and from Pez. Now she's back and wonders if they can pick



'100% recommend'

15+

ALL THE INVISIBLE THINGS

Orlagh Collins

BLOOMSBURY

up their friendship where they left off? As they get to know each other again, Vetty is figuring out who she is and who she likes, and Pez has a couple of secrets of his own.

I thought that *All the Invisible Things* was extraordinary because the characters were so believable. Vetty is my favourite character: her personality is really cool and everything about her just makes me happy. This book brought out

different emotions in me. At first I thought it was boring and then it got way better. I would 100% recommend it!

ALICJA GAVIN
Holy Rood High

This book tells the story of an insecure teenager with a strange name – Helvetica Lake. During the course of the story Helvetica struggles to unpuzzle her love, her sexuality and her closest friends.

There was a clear message in this book: listen to what other people say to avoid misunderstanding, because misunderstanding things can often make people's lives far harder, and don't judge people for their sexuality. Reading this has made me want to be more aware of people's feelings and to be there for them. I felt that this book was very relatable and will be enjoyed by people who are 13 or above because that's when we are struggling to figure out our lives.

GABRIELA ROT
Holy Rood High

What Kind of Girl

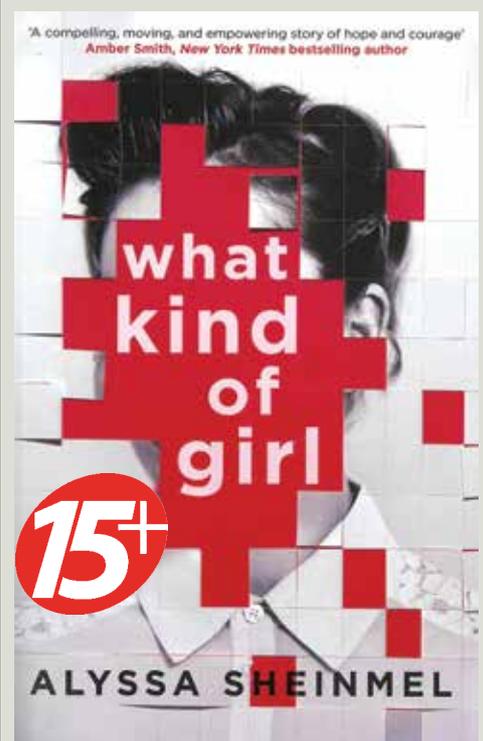
Alyssa Sheinmel
Atom £7.99

ISBN 9780349003290

When popular Mike Parker's girlfriend shows up to school with a bruise on her face, everyone has questions. Why did she stay with him for so long? Why didn't she go to the police? Is she even telling the truth? As the rumours grow, everybody is taking sides. But how do you decide which side you're on if you don't know who is lying?

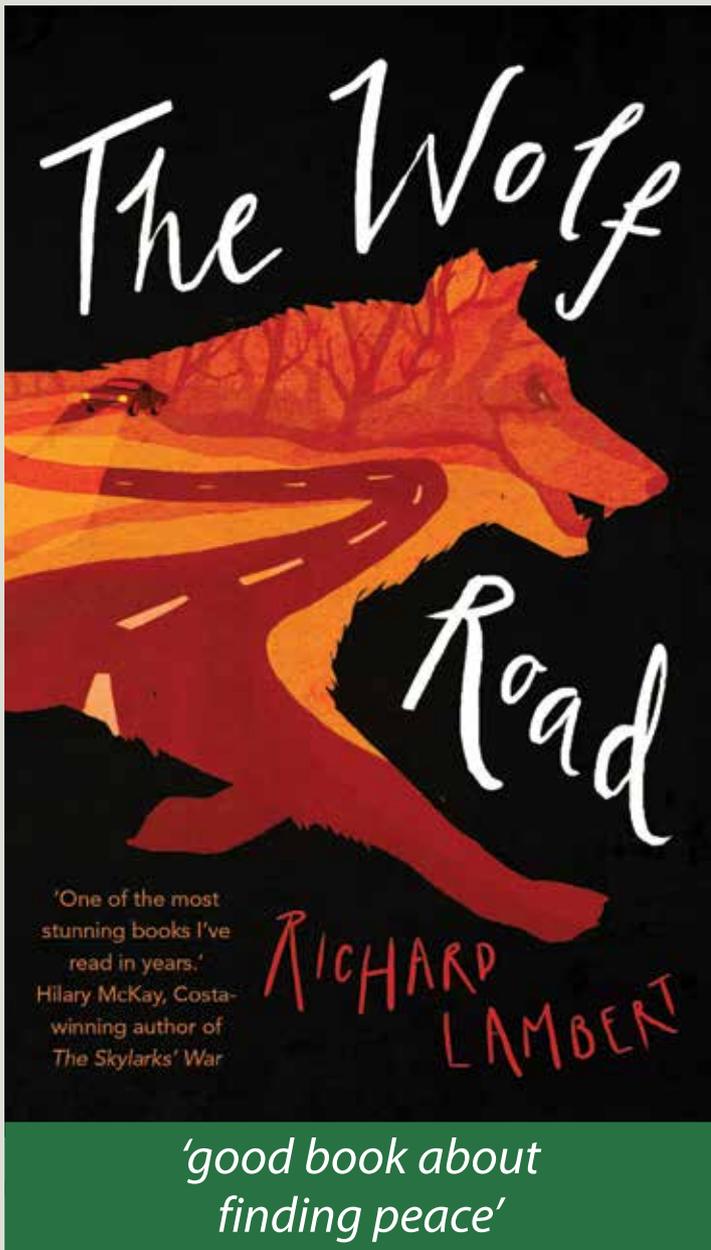
I REALLY liked this book! I liked how the story was told from different points of view. Even though I knew there was going to be a twist, I thought I knew what it would be, but then I talked myself out of it, so it was still a surprise when it happened because it was so well done. I'll probably read more books by this author now, but think that anyone who doesn't mind reading about sensitive or violent topics should definitely read this book.

HANNAH TELFORD
Castlebrae Community High



15+

ALYSSA SHEINMEL



'good book about finding peace'

The Wolf Road

Richard Lambert
Everything with Words £ 8.99 ISBN 9781911427162

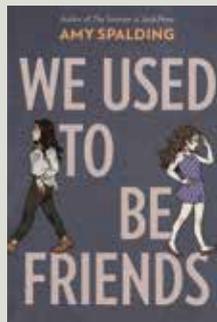
Lucas moves to remote Cumbria to his nan's when his parents are killed in a car crash. Refusing to engage with counselling and bullied at his new school, Lucas becomes even more isolated in his grief. Stories grow of a wolf killing sheep in the fells and as the hunt begins Lucas learns to face the bullies, his grief and help a new friend.

I thought that *The Wolf Road* was quite a good book, but in some parts it tended to be a bit dry. My favourite character would definitely be Lucas's nan, because she is the most realistic. I found some of the other characters fine but found some of their emotional changes towards the other characters a bit sudden. To improve it I think the author could maybe say more

about why Lucas's nan and mum fell out and show the other characters' thoughts and opinions to balance out Lucas's. On the whole though I thought it was a good book about finding peace and letting go.
MARA O'KANE
Forrester High

We Used to Be Friends

Amy Spalding
Amulet £13.99
ISBN 9781419738661



'really enjoyed this book'

James and Kat have been best friends

since early childhood. Now in the senior year of high school, will their friendship survive their final year of education? *We Used to Be Friends* is told from both characters' point of view, including flashbacks over the years. Will their ever changing lives bring them back together or dissolve their friendship?

I really enjoyed this book as it is focused on James and Kat's friendship. It's quite different to other books I've read as it starts with James's story going back through the past and Kat's going into the future. It focused on a few difficult issues like LGBTQ+ and divorce and I felt that a type of situation like this could definitely happen in real life. I liked seeing the characters develop and find out more about themselves. I would recommend this book to anybody who likes coming of age romance novels.

ORLA O'NEILL
Craigmount High

The Astonishing Colour of After

Emily X R Pan
Orion £7.99 ISBN 9781510102965

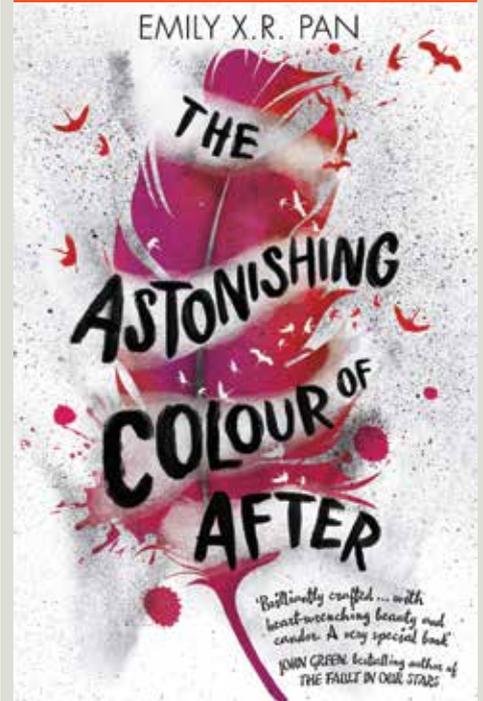
The suicide note says only 'I want you to remember'. What does that mean? Guided by her mother's spirit, Leigh sets off in the hopes of finding out what she's supposed to remember. And whilst she's travelling further from home, can she find a way to become closer to her grandparents? And to those back home – her dad, and the boy she thinks she might love?



I found this book really fascinating and it has helped me understand how a person can go through mourning, and how it would affect them and their surroundings. This story tells of a tragic loss; I don't think anyone deserves to go through what Leigh did in her life. I loved the way the author used colours to describe her emotions, which merged perfectly with Leigh's passion for art. It was a little confusing at times when suddenly you go back in time into Leigh's and other people's memories, but I think that it was really quite clever. I would recommend this book to people aged 12 or above, as this is quite a serious topic, but everyone should know that things like this can happen and they should know how to help anyone who ever finds themselves in a similar situation.

GABRIELA ROT
Holy Rood High

'really fascinating'





‘I wasn’t smart enough to become a pilot’ – Wibke Brueggemann

Wibke Brueggemann spoke to Chloe Macintosh from Queensferry High about her hilarious debut novel *Love is for Losers*.

- Q** How did you come up with the book title for *Love is for Losers*?
- A** I didn’t actually. The very clever people at my publisher’s did. The original title was *Hormonal Horror and the Cancer Shop* which, admittedly, wasn’t great.
- Q** Why did you base the love story on two girls?
- A** I’m not sure I consciously planned it. But as Phoebe became an actual person during my writing process, it became clear to me that if she was going to fall in love she was definitely going to fall in love with a girl. Then Emma appeared one day as I was scribbling away, and I just knew they’d be amazing together.
- Q** Are you planning to write a sequel?
- A** Well, I wasn’t planning on it, but now I am. It’s a lot of fun being able to accompany Phoebe on this new journey. Her mum is back in the country now, and Phoebe is in a relationship. There’s a lot going on. The book will be all about the question: What is sex? Like, what does it mean? To different people.
- Q** Why did you write the story in diary form?
- A** Again, it’s not something I consciously set out to do, but as I was developing the story, and as Phoebe’s voice became more refined, it seemed like the right thing to do. And I absolutely don’t regret that

WIBKE BRUEGGEMANN

choice. I think diaries are wonderful to read. Also, I kept a diary when I was younger, and very often it felt like it was the only place I could go to really be myself, so as a tool for storytelling I find it incredible.

Q The language could be quite blunt. Why did you choose to write in such a frank way?

A That's just Phoebe's voice. The way I hear her in my head. She's incredibly quick witted, and she prefers being honest to being polite. She believes that you should always say what you think, and not say one thing but mean something else. Also, Phoebe hates stupid people, but she knows you can't go around telling people they're being stupid, so, of course, the diary gets it. I think in many ways Phoebe is the person I wish I could have been at fifteen, and so I didn't hold back when I was writing her.

Q Are you working on other writing projects?

A Oh yes. I'm always working on something. At the moment I'm working on a YA novel about a sixteen-year old girl called Eve who is moving to France with her parents and experiences what it's like to live in a foreign country, where you know no one, don't speak the language and are a complete stranger to the culture. I'm also secretly working on a middle grade science fiction adventure. The hero is a twelve-year old girl called Cassini, who is linked to a computer interface called Huygens (Yes, 100% named after the Cassini-Huygens mission to Saturn) and has been sent to retrieve the heart of a black hole.

Q What made you want to become a writer?

A I wasn't smart enough to become a pilot. Also, I have terrible eyesight. Okay, that's not the absolute truth. I've always been a writer, because I have always written, and I think every writer dreams of being a published writer one day. For me there is absolutely nothing more fulfilling than being able to spend all day making up people and stories. I mean, it's the absolute dream, isn't it? And, yes, it can be really frustrating sometimes when you seem to be writing nothing but rubbish, and badly. It's a lot of hard work, and most of us have to have other jobs on top of the writing as well, but there is absolutely nothing in my life I'd rather be doing. I love it more than I could possibly explain. Also I'm not very good at life, and I prefer to live vicariously through fictional characters.

Q Who was your favourite author and what was your favourite book when you were growing up?

A My favourite book was *The Neverending Story* by Michael Ende. I was also (and still am) a huge *Star Trek* fan, and I must have read hundreds of the novels that accompany the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* TV series. One of my favourite authors of that franchise was (and still is) Peter David.



LOVE IS FOR LOSERS

15+

WIBKE BRUEGGEMANN

'appreciate the LGBT+ representation'

Love is for Losers

Wibke Brueggemann
Macmillan £7.99 ISBN 9781529033724

Phoebe is absolutely determined never to fall in love. If her best friend Polly is anything to go by, it turns you into a complete moron and leads to you abandoning all your friends. But then when Phoebe starts working in her godmother's charity shop she meets Emma and to her horror she finds her attitude changing.

I didn't like that the novel is in diary form, because it meant I didn't get a chance to hear other characters' thoughts and voices. But what I did enjoy was the amount of description provided when things happened to her. I did find the humour a bit too adult for a teenage audience. Although the book wasn't for me, I did appreciate the LGBT+ representation.

CHLOE MACINTOSH
Queensferry High



THRILLERS & CHILLERS

THRILLERS & CHILLERS

Harrow Lake

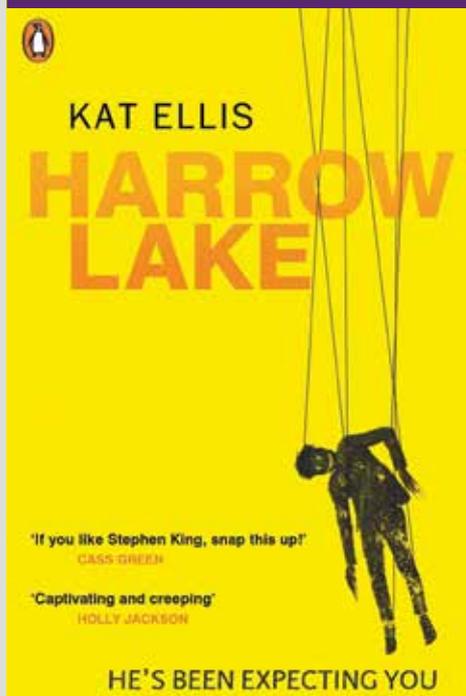
Kat Ellis
Penguin £7.99 ISBN 9780241397046

Lola, neglected daughter of an infamous horror film-director, is sent to the grandmother she has never met. Harrow Lake is a creepy town obsessed with the cult film that Lola's father made there decades before. As the annual film celebrations approach, Lola feels stalked by the past, but when she discovers shocking family secrets she realises that she might never be allowed to leave.



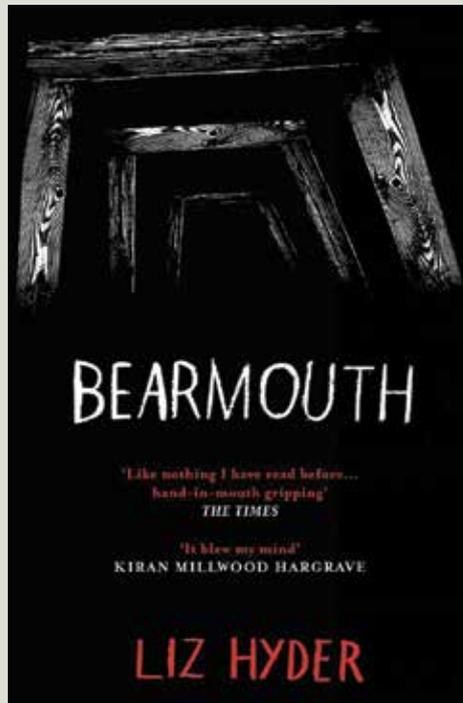
At the start of the book, I wasn't enjoying it; Lola was quite arrogant with the way she viewed the

'on the edge of my seat'



world and her attitude because of the way she had been brought up – such as you shouldn't say sorry or thank you to people, nor show weakness – but then as the book progressed I began to like it more and more. The plot was sometimes hard to follow with lots going on at once, but it was manageable most of the time. The creepy atmosphere and tension had me on the edge of my seat. The horror genre is not my usual type but it's the best horror I've read, since it's the only one I've read! The thing I like about it the most is that at the start her idea of horror is from the movies and her imagination but when she moves to Harrow Lake her imagination become reality, which was great. I would definitely recommend this book to senior high school students as it potentially could be scary for younger pupils.

JOANNE REEVES
Forrester High



'different book to what I'm used to'

Bearmouth

Liz Hyder
Pushkin £12.99 ISBN 9781782692423

Illiterate child Newt Coombes works in Bearmouth, a mine where life is short, and work is hard, with the promise that The Mayker will reward you in the next life. When Devlin arrives, he questions the way things are run and



Newt begins to look around with fresh eyes. Together they plan to free themselves and bring down Bearmouth.

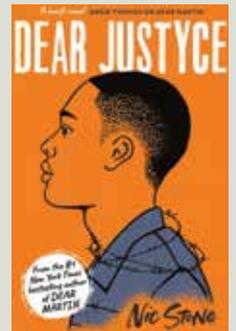
Bearmouth is a completely different book to what I'm used to and even though the language was a bit difficult to understand I got the hang of it eventually. My favourite character was definitely Thomas as all he did was look out for Newt and Devlin and helped them develop their vocabulary and spelling. He gave Newt a person to look up to, but I also loved how he kept Newt safe and out of trouble for most of the time. At first, I wasn't keen on Devlin as I didn't know much about him but as the story progressed his character really developed. This novel is maybe for people older than 14 as some scenes in it could be traumatising for younger readers.

JOANNE REEVES
Forrester High

Dear Justyce

Series: Dear Martin, book 2
Nic Stone
Random House £7.99 ISBN 9781984829689

Incarcerated teen Quan writes to Justyce about his experiences in the American juvenile justice system. Justyce has escaped their neighbourhood to attend Yale University but is determined to help Quan fight against racism and inequality alongside Quan's therapist.



'powerful and moving'

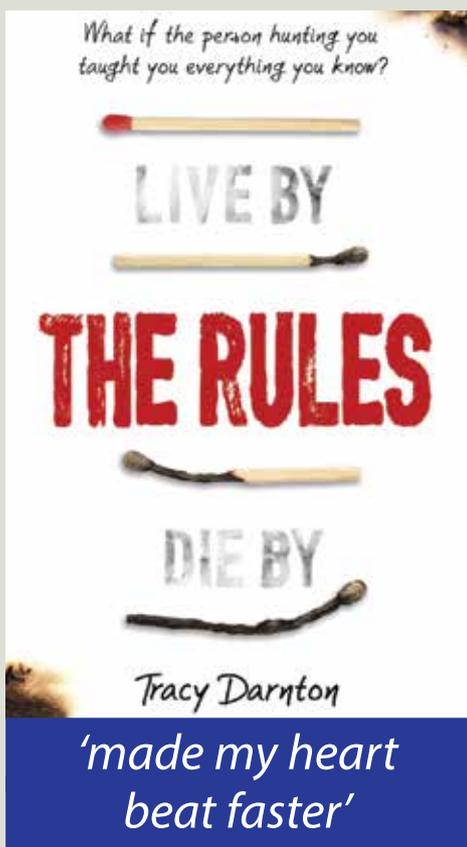
This book is my type of book, but it is sad when Quan goes to jail for murder. I found the book interesting and upsetting – interesting in the way Quan was the top favourite with all his teachers and that he finds a new friend called Justyce, upsetting because of the way he misses his father and the way Quan's stepfather reacts towards his family. I feel that it is a disgrace that Quan is sent to prison just because of the colour of his skin.

GRACE CHUKWU
Forrester High

I found this book to be quite powerful and moving. It showed an unfair and unfortunately realistic outlook of the American justice system. It educates us on upsetting and disgraceful things people of colour experience every day. I would definitely urge people to read this.

KATIE ROWAN MILLAR
Forrester High

THRILLERS & CHILLERS



The Rules

Tracy Darnton
Stripes £7.99 ISBN 9781788952149

Amber lives in care and gets a nasty shock when she receives a letter from her dad. He's wanting to meet up and she wants to disappear. She doesn't trust him, but others do. She has spent too long in the past living with his extreme survivalist rules but will the most important one TRUST NO ONE keep her safe? Is there anyone to help her keep safe but herself?



This was a brilliant book about a girl who is trying to escape from her abusive father. It has very large plot twists which surprised me and some scenes which I found slightly disturbing and that made my heart beat faster!

EN-YI LEE
Liberton High

The Cure for a Crime

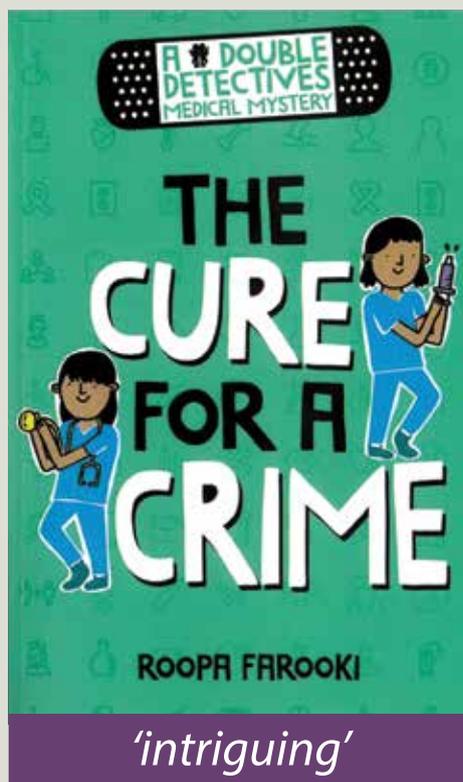
Series: Double Detectives Medical Mystery
Roopa Farooki
OUP £6.99 ISBN 9780192773593

Twins Ali and Tulip are worried about their doctor mum who since her creepy new boyfriend Dr Sturgeon moved in has been like a zombie robot. When they spot Dr Sturgeon at school, and others there show

the same sleepy sickness, they decide to investigate to see if it is just a strange virus or if he is up to something diabolical.

The book was intriguing and quite funny in my opinion. Nan-Nan was my favourite character. I think this book would be good for 11 years and older.

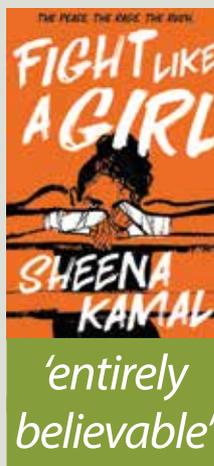
AMBER HEAVEY
Wester Hailes Education Centre



Fight Like a Girl

Sheena Kamal
Hot Key £7.99 ISBN 9781471408854

Trish's only escape from her family and especially her violent dad is in Thai boxing training at the gym. One night her dad is killed when he drunkenly walks in front of the car Trish is driving. As she starts afterwards to lose her grip on reality, will fighting be able to save her?



I quite fancied this book as it is not the kind of book that I would usually read. I think a lot of people would be able to or could relate to this book as the author makes it entirely believable. The second

reason I liked this book was because it is the type of novel that makes you think of reading it all in one go. After her dad passes away, Trish becomes concerned about her mum and her neighbour's behaviour and reaction towards the situation, and she really begins to think to herself if she really knows her family in the way she thought she did. I would recommend this novel highly to young adults.

GLORY IMMANUEL-OGIE
Wester Hailes Education Centre

Punching the Air

Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam
HarperCollins £7.99 ISBN 9780008422141

In this verse novel, which is based on a true story, Amal, a 16-year old black teenager, is wrongfully put on trial for a crime that he did not commit and sent to prison.

Punching the Air is an incredibly moving book and really highlights the hardships black people face in comparison to white people. I really enjoyed the book and I was very touched by the character of Amal and the challenges he faced. The authors do an incredible job making his character feel real and relatable. I like the unique layout of the book and how each page is its own story, but how they then flow together to create an incredibly thought-provoking plot. *Punching the Air* highlights the problems in our justice system and society but most of all highlight the hope we all have for a better future without prejudice and racism. It is a moving book that will touch your soul.

BROGAN MACDONALD
Wester Hailes Education Centre



TOP TEEN TITLE

Burn

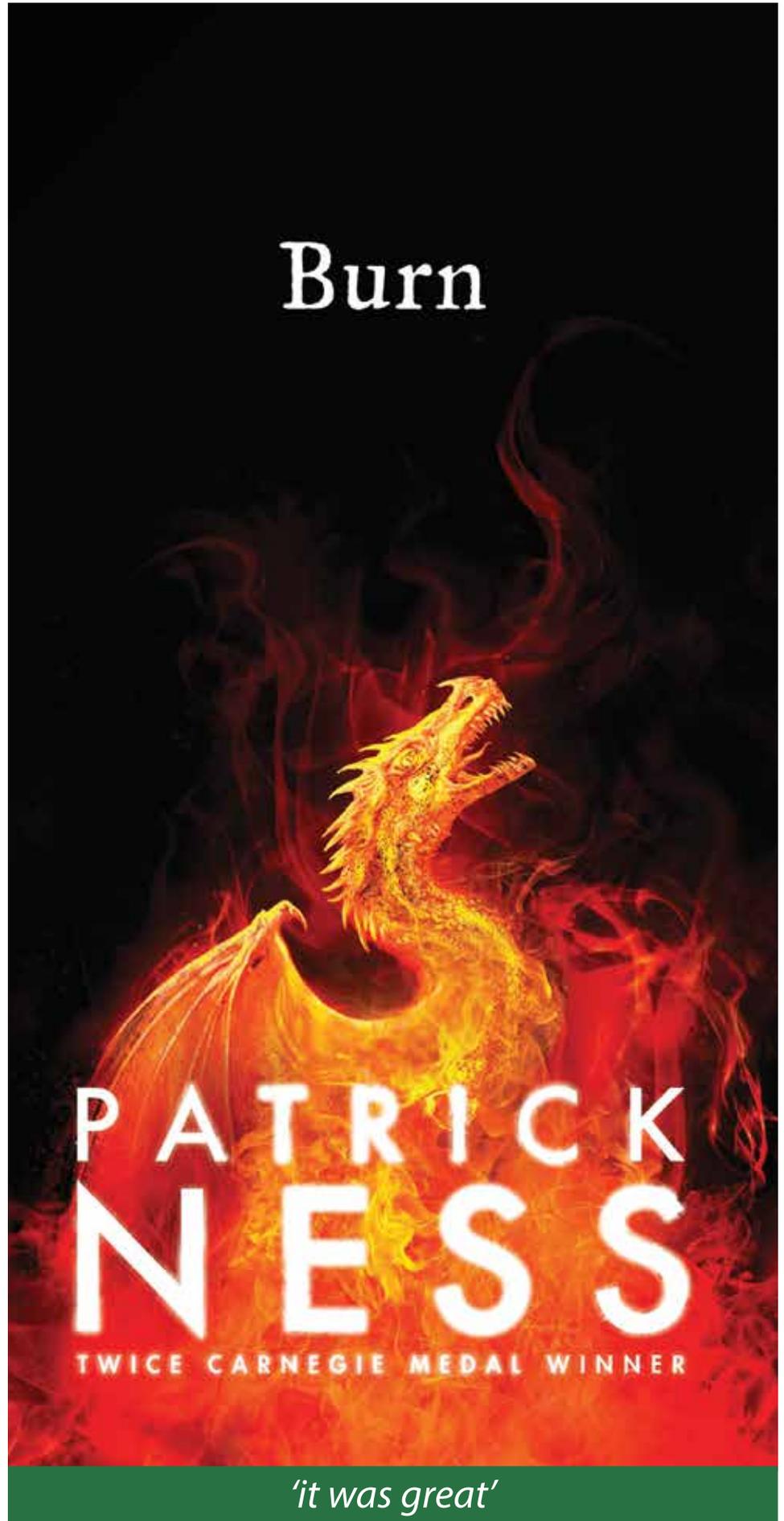
Patrick Ness
Walker £12.99

ISBN 9781406375503

It's 1950s America, and the Cold War reigns as a prophecy is about to be fulfilled in this alternate world fantasy. Malcolm is on a quest to save the world. He must assassinate a young girl Sarah to prevent a sacred prophecy from coming true. But things don't go to plan when he finds her and Kazimir, the dragon who is working on her dad's farm.

I really enjoyed this book. It had a lot of bits that weren't predictable, and I find that enjoyable in a book. Some parts I wish were explained in greater detail like the details of the dragons but other than that it was great. I enjoyed the fact that, instead of it being horses doing farm work and labour work, it was dragons that were hired with gold and who flew in from all over the world. Sarah and her dad had to hire a Russian Blue dragon called Kazimir to do work on their farm. If I was offered the opportunity to read this book again, I would take it in a heartbeat.

TRAVIS INNES
Forrester High



AUTHOR FACTFILE



Victoria Williamson

Victoria Williamson

Victoria is a primary school teacher with a Master's degree in special needs education. Victoria's experiences teaching young children in a deprived area, many of whom were asylum seekers, inspired her first novel, *The Fox Girl and the White Gazelle* (reviewed on page 14). You can also read a review of *The Boy with the Butterfly Mind* on page 5.

Michael Pryor

Michael was born in Swan Hill, Victoria and currently lives in Melbourne with his wife and two daughters. He has been short-listed nine times for the Aurealis Awards and eight of his books have been CBCA Notable Books. See page 13 for a review of *Graveyard Shift in Ghost Town*.

Michael Pryor



Bali Rai

Bali has written over forty novels about teenagers and children. Born in Leicester, his writing is inspired by his working-class, multicultural background. A leading voice in UK teen fiction, Bali is a passionate advocate of libraries, reading for pleasure and promoting literacy. *Mohinder's War* is reviewed on page 10.

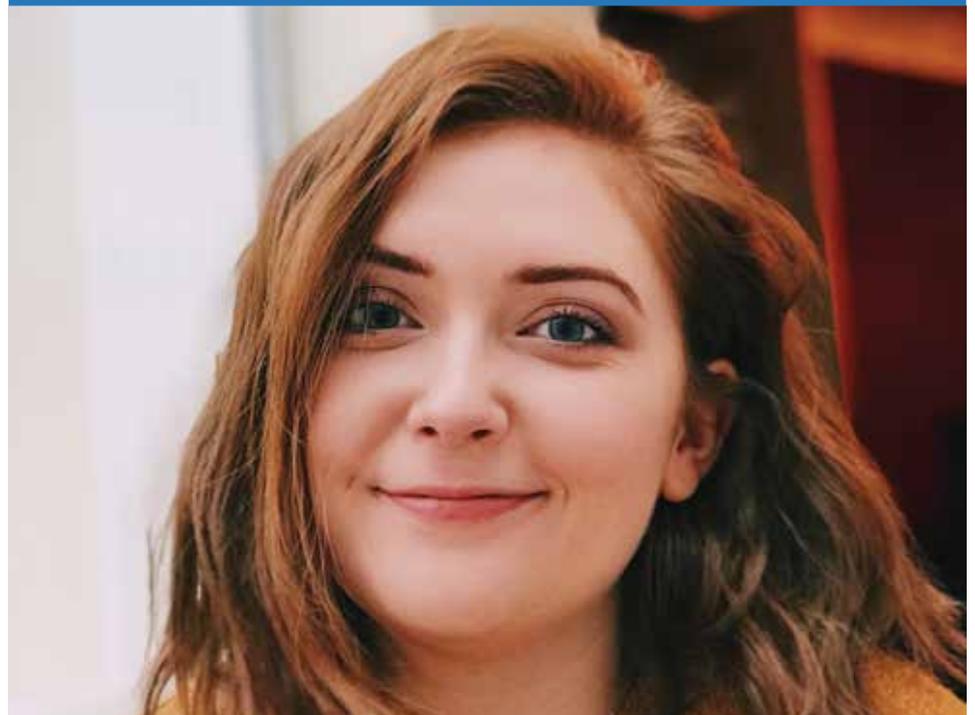


Bali Rai

Alice Oseman

Alice was born in 1994 in Kent. She completed a degree in English at Durham University in 2016 and is currently a full-time writer and illustrator. Alice's first book, *Solitaire* was published when she was nineteen. You can read reviews of *This Winter* on page 4, *Loveless* and *Nick and Charlie* on page 16.

Alice Oseman



AUTHOR FACTFILE



William Hussey

William Hussey

William is an award-winning author of books for children and young adults. As an active member of the LGBTQ+ community and a visiting author, he has spoken to hundreds of LGBTQ+ students worldwide. Hearing their stories of modern intolerance, prejudice and the tragic consequences this can lead to, inspired him to write *Hideous Beauty* (reviewed on page 15).

A J Hartley

Andrew James Hartley, author of *Impervious* (reviewed on page 11), is a British-born American novelist, who writes bestselling and award-winning fiction for children and adults. He blogged regularly for the writers' site *Magical Words* from 2009 until 2012 and is a regular presenter at *Thrillerfest* and *Dragon Con*.

A J Hartley



Sheena Kamal

Sheena Kamal was born in the Caribbean and immigrated to Canada as a child. Sheena worked as a crime and investigative journalism researcher for the film and television industry before beginning a career as a novelist. *Fight Like a Girl* is reviewed on page 22.

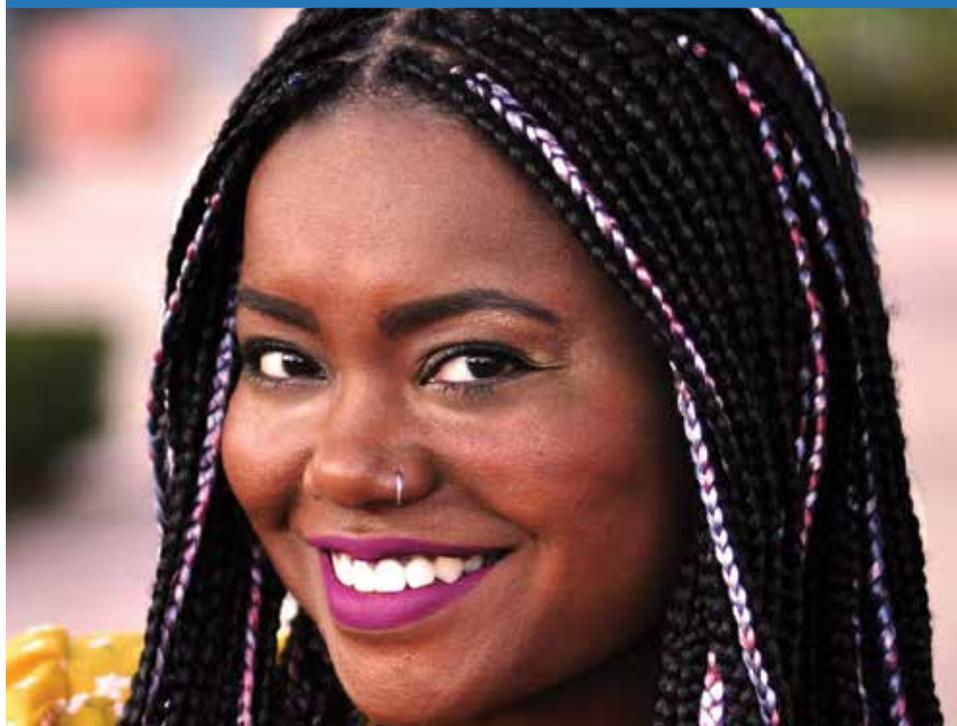


Sheena Kamal

Christina Hammonds Reed

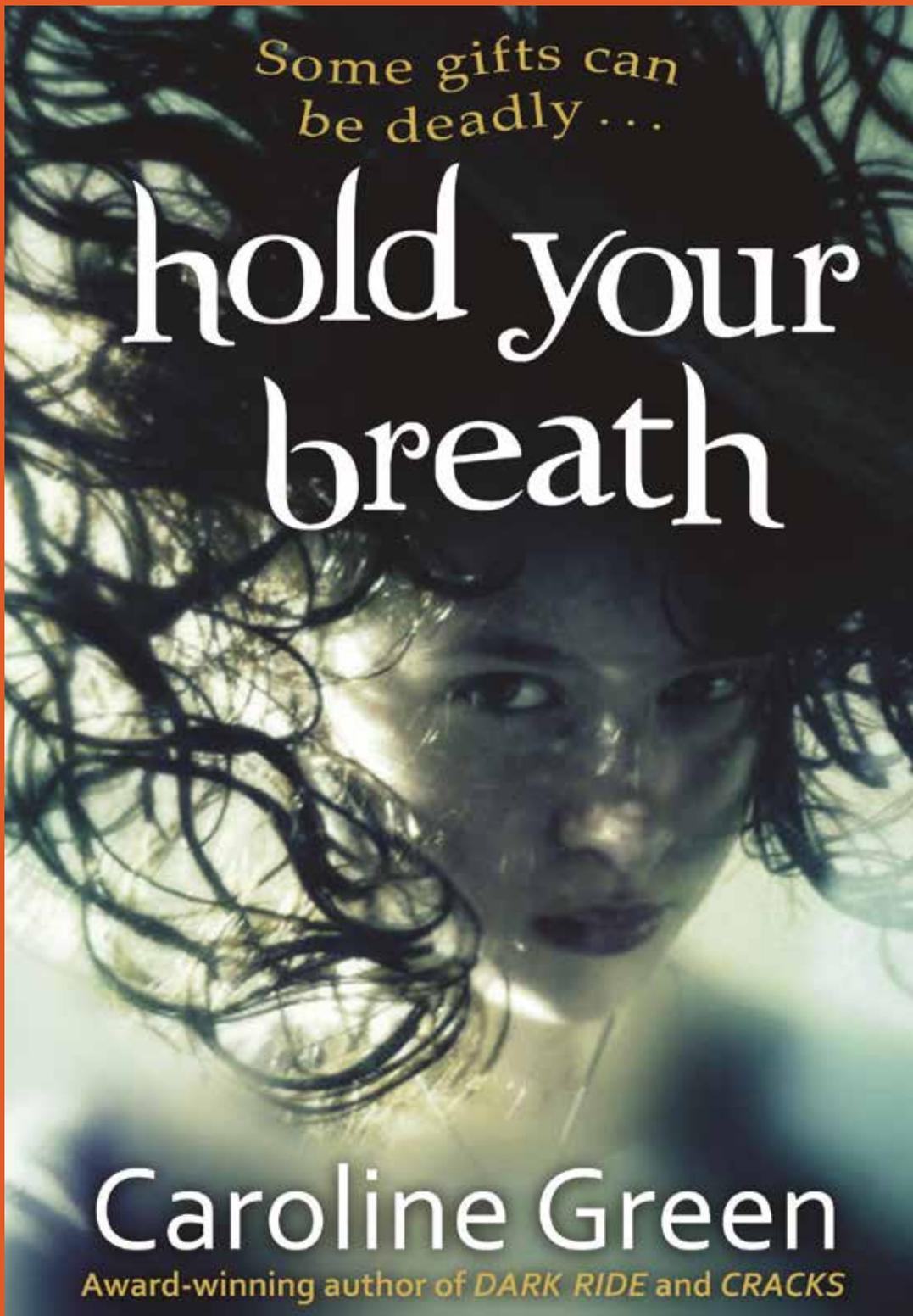
Christina holds an MFA from the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts. A native of the Los Angeles area, her work has previously appeared in the *Santa Monica Review* and *One Teen Story*. Her first novel, *The Black Kids* (reviewed on page 14), was a *New York Times* bestseller and William C Morris Award Finalist.

Christina Hammonds Reed



READERS WRITE

We are delighted to publish reviews from Cardinal Allen High School in Fleetwood. Many thanks to all who sent reviews in. If you would like to see your reviews in print, please send them to us!



Frankie Williamson, Cardinal Allen rates...

Hold Your Breath

Caroline Green

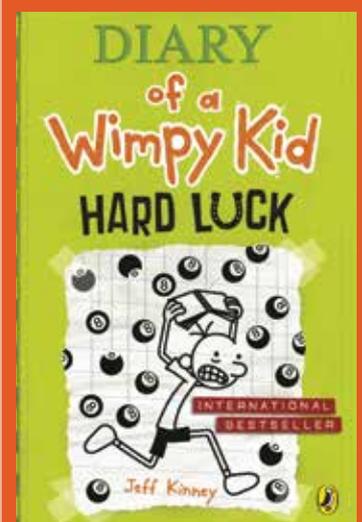
This book is about a young girl called Tara who has special 'powers'. These 'powers' makes her see things that are lost but unfortunately the things she sees get her into a lot of trouble. It took me about 3-4 weeks to read but it was so worth it. The plot is amazing and has you on the edge of your seat.

Benjamin Wardle, Cardinal Allen rates ...

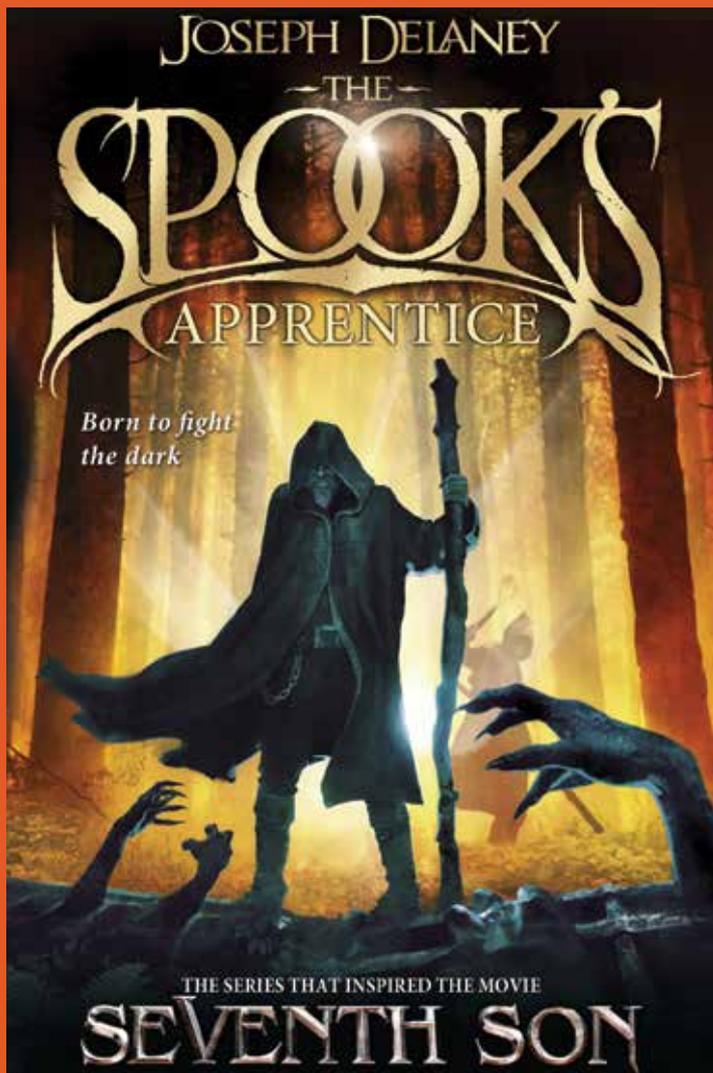
Hard Luck

Jeff Kinney

The story is about a boy called Greg who has a best friend called Rowley. The friends have fallen out because Rowley gets a girlfriend called Abigail. It was a good story because it described a situation that could happen to anybody at any time in real life. I think the writer wanted to tell this story because it might help children figure out what to do in a similar situation.



READERS WRITE



Rhiannon Sobala, Cardinal Allen rates ...

The Spook's Apprentice

Joseph Delaney

This book follows the journey of Tom as a spook's apprentice, as he tries to prove that he will one day be able to be a spook. I felt quite intrigued reading the story and I liked that it had a happy ending. I am looking forward to reading the other books in this series.

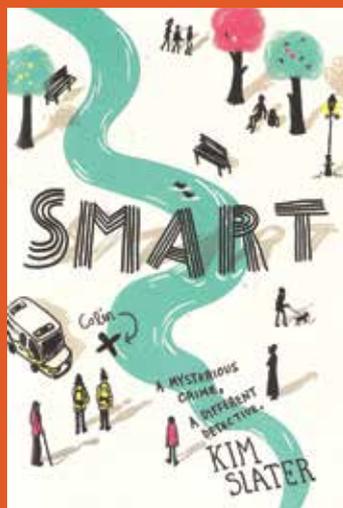
Lauren Gray, Cardinal Allen rates ...

Smart

Kim Slater

The story is about a boy called Kieran, who lives with his mum, his step-brother and his abusive step-

dad. A homeless man was killed at the embankment and he uses his detective skills to help him find out who killed him. This book shows that children who are different can do extraordinary things. It is really moving and uplifting, and made me think about how difficult things can be for other people.



Jennifer Beaumont, Cardinal Allen rates ...

Journey to the River Sea

Eva Ibbotson

The plot begins with a girl called Maia, whose parents died two years previously, being sent to live with her relatives in the Amazon. Her relatives, the Carters, however, turn out to only want Maia with them for her money. This story is based in the 1900s and this is important because the ending would have been completely different were it to be set in the present. It is written in the third person so we can get the viewpoints of different characters instead of just one. The scenery around the characters and in the Amazon is described

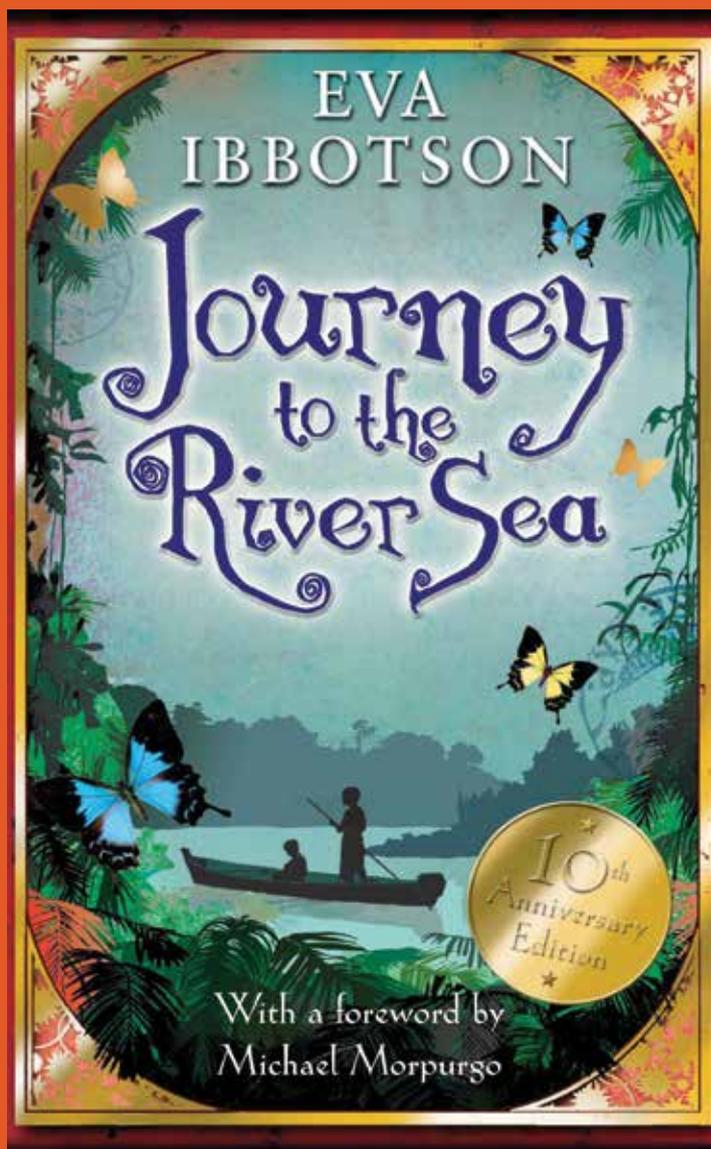
in thorough detail. Compared to other books I've read, I was able to visualise this story more because of the descriptions and style of writing.

Glixing Diep, Cardinal Allen rates ...

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

JK Rowling

This story tells how Harry Potter gets his way through his fifth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I would recommend this book to other people because it is a thrilling adventure and even if you don't like reading it is fun way to spend your time.



THANK YOU

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Hannah Telford

Craigmount

Maya Campbell
Emily Kelt
Orla O'Neill
Filip Strzalka

Craigroyston

Seána Breathnach
Nicole Czerwinska
Rala Hamied
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Joanne Reeves

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Gracemount

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Jennifer Ross

Holy Rood

Alicja Gavin
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Gabriela Rot
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James Gillespie's

Chika Nwafor

Liberton

En-yi Lee

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Jack Pearson

Tynecastle

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harper Mayrium

WHEC

Amber Heavey
Glory Immanuel-Ogie
Brogan MacDonald
Eboni McFarlane
Kori Williams

Escape, Connect, Relate



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GET IN TOUCH

Teen Titles would love to hear from you. Send us your book news, reviews and views. We welcome all contributions, although because of space constraints we cannot guarantee to print everything we receive.

OUR ADDRESS

Teen Titles, Publications Team, City of Edinburgh Council, Central Library, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EG



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