

The Peski Kids 1: The Mystery of the Squashed Cockroach

By R.A. Spratt
Publisher: Puffin/Penguin
ISBN 9780143788812 SCIS: 1874898
\$16.99

PRIMARY FICTION
BOOK OF THE
MONTH

Blurb:

Life is hard enough without having to spend time with your siblings. But there is no other way for Joe, Fin and April Peski to solve the mystery of the cockroach catastrophes that is rocking their new home town of Currawong.

Along with Loretta, their stunningly beautiful yet sociopathic next-door neighbour, and Pumpkin, the world's worst trained dog, they set out to catch the culprit. Together they are The Peski Kids.



Lamont Review:

Imagine your whole life being turned upside and everything that you have ever known about your family not being true...

Joe, Fin and April find themselves in exactly this situation, when they discover their palaeontologist mother may not be as meek and mild as they think.

They find themselves living in the country town of Currawong with their meek, mild and scared Dad, who they haven't seen in a very long time. Life here is completely different to their life in the city, and fitting in is not easy.

The town's obsession with the upcoming cockroach race is something that they just do not understand, but they soon find themselves caught up in the middle of the whole thing, in particular the mystery of who is killing all the cockroaches.

This is a fabulous new mystery series from the author of *Friday Barnes*, that is full of interesting and unique characters. Each of the Peski kids have their own distinct personalities, and readers 8+ will be eagerly awaiting their next adventure.

Reviewed by Sam

Natural Born Loser

By Oliver Phommavanh

Publisher:

ISBN 9780143505730 SCIS: 1873309

\$16.99

Blurb:

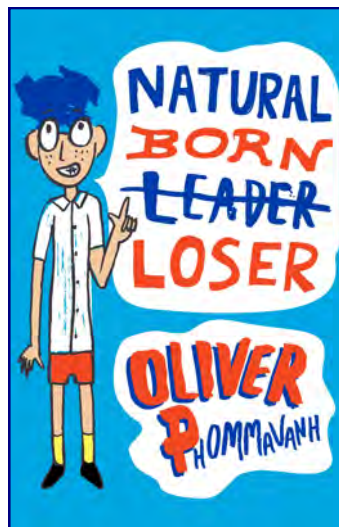
I'm Raymond, and my school is a joke. It's full of bullies and troublemakers.

My solution? Be a nobody and fade into the background.

But our new principal has blown my cover because he's chosen me as a prefect!

It was looking pretty bad, until I made a crazy promise to get new air con for the classrooms.

Now I'm REALLY in trouble!



Lamont Review:

Raymond's school is full of troublemakers and bullies. They've had a different principal every few months and no one has any pride in the school. When a new principal arrives and selects four students to be prefects, everyone's world is turned upside down, especially Raymond's! How did he possibly end up a prefect?

What follows is a wonderful story of friendship, team work, trying to be inclusive of all ages and in true Oliver style, it's fun and crazy.

This is a book about the power of being true to yourself and the amazing things that happen when each person does their best and you work together to change things.

Perfect for readers in Year 4 and up, who enjoy a great story as well as a laugh.

Reviewed by Michelle

Off The Track

By Cristy Burne

Publisher: Fremantle Press

ISBN 9781925591743 SCIS: 1878871

\$14.99

Blurb:

From the author of *To The Lighthouse* comes a new adventure for young readers about falling in love with the bush, and with hiking and being in the wild. It's about disconnecting from technology and discovering yourself.

Harry's perfect life was straying way off-track. He looked pleadingly at Mum. Surely she could see? Spending an entire weekend tramping around stinking-hot, snake-filled scrub was a horrible mistake. But doing it without a phone? That was just brutal.

As it turns out, it was only the beginning ...



Lamont Review:

Poor Harry! He is going to be forced to spend the entire weekend bushwalking and camping with people he doesn't know, and all without his phone or any technology. He is sure that this won't be good.

So begins their outside adventure. Harry, his Mum (who bought her phone, as she can't live without it!), his Mum's friend Ana and her overtalkative daughter Deepika.

After a rusty start, Harry comes to the realisation that nature is pretty good and that he could get used to being outdoors! He and Deepika are allowed to venture ahead of Ana and his Mum, and they start to enjoy each others company. Which is just as well, as they soon find themselves in a world of trouble and they have to work together and make mature decisions to fix the problem.

This is a fabulous book that highlights that sometimes you just have to have a go and step outside your comfort zone (and put your device down!) to really enjoy what life has to offer.

It will be thoroughly enjoyed by middle to senior primary students.

Reviewed by Sam

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available on our website for this title.

Yours Troolie, Alice Toolie

By Kate Temple & Jol Temple and Illustrated by Grace West

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760523756 SCIS: 1871157

\$12.99

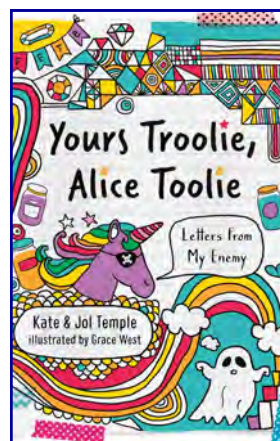
Blurb:

Meet Alice Toolie - seriously famous youtotuber, and lead jellyfish in the school jazz ballet - and absolutely not a good friend of Jimmy Cook in this stand-alone humorous story from the CBC award-winning writers of the Captain Jimmy Cook Discovers series. Something very bad has happened to Alice Toolie. Her secret diary has been read by her worst enemy - Jimmy Cook.

It's war! Until Ms Fennel decides that Alice and Jimmy need to make peace and become pen pals for the term.

And it works. Before long, Alice and Jimmy are planning to make billions of dollars for the school fete - and with a captured ghost and jars full of unicorn vomit, it's sure to be their time to shine.

A laugh-out-loud book filled with sparkle and slime, from the CBCA award-winning writers of the Captain Jimmy Cook Discovers series.



Lamont Review:

Anyone with a big imagination is going to love this book!

Jimmy Cook and Alice Toolie really do not like each other. And when Jimmy is caught reading Alice's private diary, things only escalate. But their teacher Ms Fennel has a plan! Jimmy and Alice must write to each other and they must try to be nice.

What follows is a series of highly humorous exchanges between the two, who ultimately find that they have more in common than think, although they wouldn't want to admit that.

Follow Jimmy and Alice on their adventures as they catch, and then try to get back, the ghost that was haunting the Level 2 toilets, as they endeavour to raise money for the school fete, and make sure that their Mums are definitely not friends!

Readers aged 7 + will absolutely love this story, with the letter writing format of the book only adding to its appeal.

Reviewed by Sam

Maximus

By Steve Heron & Illustrated by Tash Macfarlane

Publisher: Serenity Press

ISBN 9780648146612 SCIS: 1866724

\$16.99

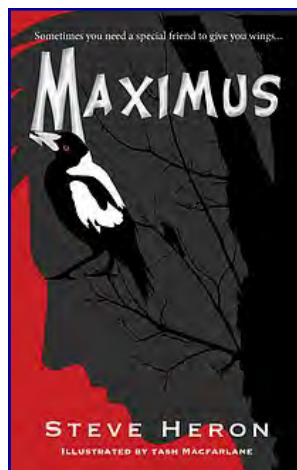
Blurb:

Mitch says stuff sucks.

His life has been turned upside down since his dad started working FIFO at the mines.

From a messy bedroom to a close footy match; an annoying little sister to incredible Anzac projects; losing friends and losing face, Mitch deals with an explosion of feelings associated with bullying, fighting, suspension, family conflict and his first crush, all in the space of eight days.

Will an encounter with a surprising new feathered friend and the reliability of old ones help Mitch get his mojo back?



Lamont Review:

This book will really resonate with readers, particularly those that might be going through a rough patch and feel isolated in their troubles.

Mitch thinks that the whole world is against him. Not only is he having trouble with the kids at school, but his life at home is just as frustrating. His FIFO Dad has changed and is now always angry and volatile, and his relationship and interactions with his little sister just annoy him. The only thing that brings him peace and happiness is the magpie, who he names Maximus, that now keeps frequenting his backyard.

It is not until Mitch has a massive meltdown, and lets all his built up anger and frustration out, that things start to turn around for him. This book really does highlight that there are people around all of us that are there to help, and each and every person has their own struggles that they deal with in different ways.

It has extremely strong themes of friendships, loyalty, family conflict and conflict resolution, bullying and self-confidence, and it is a book that will suit all those aged 9 and above.

Reviewed by Sam

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available on our website for this title.

His Name Was Walter

By Emily Rodda

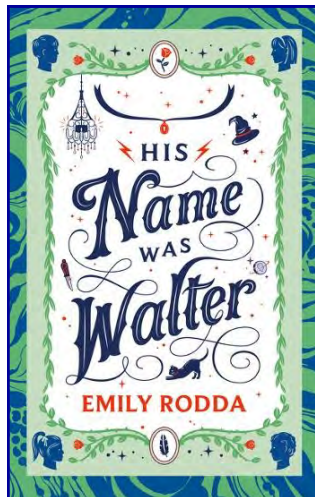
Publisher: Harper Collins

ISBN 9781460756188 SCIS: 1871162

\$22.99

Blurb:

From Australia's favourite storyteller comes a story, within a story, that shows us the extraordinary power of true love and solves a decades-old mystery. 'Once upon a time, in a dark city far away, there lived a boy called Walter, who had nothing but his name to call his own ...' The handwritten book, with its strangely vivid illustrations, has been hidden in the old house for a long, long time. Tonight, four kids and their teacher will find it. Tonight, at last, the haunting story of Walter and the mysterious, tragic girl called Sparrow will be read - right to the very end... From one of Australia's most renowned children's authors, comes an extraordinary story within a story - a mystery, a prophecy, a long-buried secret. And five people who will remember this night as long as they live.



Lamont Review:

This story within a story, written by the incredible Emily Rodda, is full of mystery and intrigue. In the story, the children couldn't put the old book down and they read through the night, and neither could I!

This is a wonderful historical novel where four children and a teacher on a history excursion get stranded overnight in a spooky house. When they find a hidden, incredibly illustrated book and start reading the story of Walter, they slowly uncover the truth of his story and reveal the shocking crimes and twists that occurred in the very house they are now in.

It is a tragic love story with Walter escaping an awful childhood to live for a time with a kind witch and ultimately fall in love with the beautiful bird-girl Sparrow.

Sparrow wrote the story locked away from the world in her greedy, pig like father's castle. Many characters are hidden by their animal likenesses and the detail of their individualism is lovely to read.

This beautifully presented hardback will be a marvellous addition to your library, and readers aged 8-12 will marvel at this enchanting story.

Reviewed by Rob