

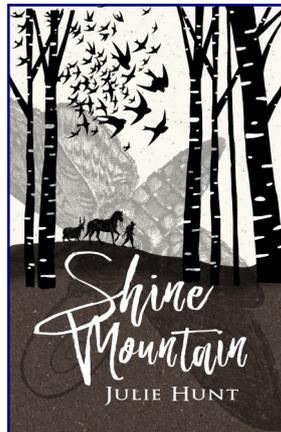
## Shine Mountain

By Julie Hunt  
Publisher: Allen & Unwin  
ISBN 9781760291501 SCIS: 1859958  
\$16.99

**SECONDARY  
BOOK OF THE  
MONTH**

### *Blurb:*

On his deathbed, Ellie's pop reveals a secret - a magical button-box. It's a musical instrument from the Gleam country - a land far from Spit Farm and the mountains, with talking goats, sweet grass and corn that grows so high you have to fell it with an axe. But the button-box's magic is sinister. When Ellie plays it, flowers bloom and crops spring up overnight - but soon the farm is cursed by drought and her beloved Oma is gravely ill. To save her Oma and discover the truth about her own identity, Ellie must embark on a dangerous journey to the Gleam country - the only place where the evil button-box can be destroyed.



### *Lamont Review:*

Julie Hunt is highly skilled at creating a world of characters and settings that draw you in, and make you want to keep reading, making *Shine Mountain* a perfect fantasy novel for lower secondary readers.

When Ellie's grandfather realises his time to die is fast approaching, he gathers all his family around him one last time. When he plays a magical button-box just before his death, this sets off a chain reaction across the land.

Ellie must take the button-box back to where it was made so she can destroy it and save the land from destruction.

Along the way, Ellie must face the story of who her true family really is and where this path will lead her.

Full of adventure and truly wonderful characters, this story of perseverance, courage, friendship and family will stay with you long after you close the covers.

I highly recommend *Shine Mountain* to anyone who enjoys a good fantasy story.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## Stone Girl

By Eleni Hale

Publisher: Penguin

ISBN 9780143785613 SCIS: 1859291

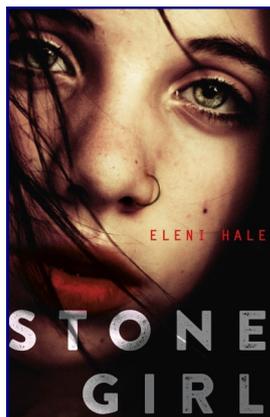
\$19.99

### *Blurb:*

A heartbreaking novel of raw survival and hope, and the children society likes to forget. A stunning and unforgettable debut YA for older readers.

An unspeakable event changes everything for twelve-year-old Sophie. No more Mum, school or bed of her own. She's made a ward of the state and grows up in a volatile world where kids make their own rules, adults don't count and the only constant is change.

Until one day she meets Gwen, Matty and Spiral. Spiral is the most furious, beautiful boy Sophie has ever known. And as their bond tightens she finally begins to confront what happened in her past.



### *Lamont Review:*

Wow! This is a must read novel for older teens, but a word of caution - it is definitely a YA title aimed at teens 15 years and older.

It took me back to my school days reading *Go Ask Alice*, which I found totally confronting, but at the same time an educational and inspirational cautionary tale. *Stone Girl* is certainly that as it takes us on Sophie's downhill journey through institutional care as a ward of the state from when she is 12 until she is 16.

It is written with a real understanding and depth of character, as it is inspired by the real life experiences of the debut author, journalist Eleni Hale. Many dark topics are covered including death, poverty, heartbreak and substance dependence. But shining through the story is identity, survival, resilience and ultimately a coming of age empowerment.

I will not give the story away but suffice to say you cannot help but be swept along by the incredible Sophie, as the world continues serving up crap to her. She often stumbles and is so very nearly broken, but we continue to hold out hope for her throughout the story.

*Stone Girls* will change the way you look at the homeless, and hopefully enlighten young minds as to the plight of wards of the state.

This is a brilliant debut, but as it does contain extreme language, mature themes and substance abuse, it is suited to older teens, 15 years and up.

*Reviewed by Rob*

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

## **LIFEL1K3**

By Jay Kristoff

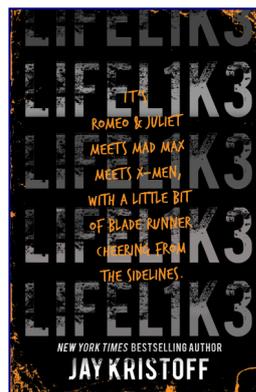
Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760295691 SCIS: 1859281

\$19.99

### *Blurb:*

On an island junkyard beneath a sky that glows with radiation, a deadly secret lies buried in the scrap. Seventeen-year-old Eve isn't looking for trouble - she's too busy looking over her shoulder. The robot gladiator she spent months building has been reduced to a smoking wreck, she's on the local gangster's wanted list, and the only thing keeping her grandpa alive is the money she just lost to the bookies. Worst of all, she's discovered she can somehow destroy machines with the power of her mind, and a bunch of puritanical fanatics are building a coffin her size because of it. If she's ever had a worse day, Eve can't remember it. The problem is, Eve has had a worse day--one that lingers in her nightmares and the cybernetic implant where her memories used to be. Her discovery of a handsome android named Ezekiel-called a 'Lifelike' because they resemble humans--will bring her world crashing down and make her question whether her entire life is a lie. With her best friend Lemon Fresh and her robotic sidekick Cricket in tow, Eve will trek across deserts of glass, battle unkillable bots, and infiltrate towering megacities to save the ones she loves... and learn the truth about the bloody secrets of her past.



### *Lamont Review:*

I must admit that for the first 50 pages of *Lifel1k3*, I found the story somewhat confusing because of the fictional language it contains.

However, I am very glad that I persisted with it as it quickly turned into an action-packed thrilling adventure story set in a post-apocalyptic world.

The action sequences reminded me of a Matthew Reilly novel, but *Lifel1k3* also includes a tragic love story, questions of the future of our world, the limits of how far science can or should go, and the unforeseen consequences that can follow.

The characters were wonderful, and it has an amazing twist at the end that will have readers hanging out for the next instalment in what is to be a trilogy.

A great read for all teenagers who love sci-fi and those that don't probably will when they finish this!

*Reviewed by Rob*

## **Finding Kerra**

By Rosanne Hawke

Publisher: Rhiza Press

ISBN 9781925563474 SCIS: 1864313

\$15.99

### *Blurb:*

It's been six months since Jaime Richards' best friend died. Everyone still gives the incident a wide berth with a polite 'How are you now?' But she's not all right. So for the school holidays, Jaime decides to head Far North to Blake Townsend's station home. He has always been the one to listen, but she soon realises that Blake isn't always the guy she knew at school. Not only does she find out he has a sister, Kerra, whom he's never mentioned, but Jaime discovers what a devastating effect a mysterious secret has on the Townsend family. Kerra has believed a lie all her life and through storytelling, Jaime hopes to unearth the secret before it's too late. Sometimes we just need to know we are loved. A heartfelt tale of belonging, love and the healing power of story.



### *Lamont Review:*

Jaime is struggling to come to terms with the death of her friend, so when she gets invited to Blake Townsend's outback station for the holidays, she jumps at the chance.

Blake has been her friend at school, but she soon sees a different side of him at home. Why did he never mention his sister, Kerra? What is the story about his Mum's death that no one will tell her? But, more importantly, why do Kerra and Blake seem to hate each other?

This is a beautiful story of growing up, loyalty and the amazing strength and resilience of families. The heart of this story is that we all need to know that we are loved and where we belong, and *Finding Kerra* does a wonderful job of showing this.

Will be most loved by girls in Year 8 and above.

*Reviewed by Michelle.*

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

## **I Was Born For This**

By Alice Oseman

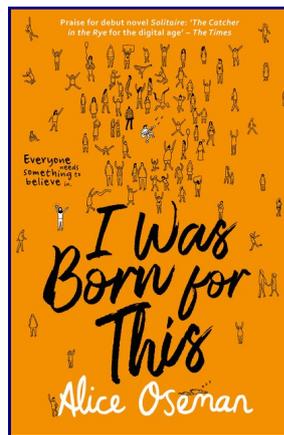
Publisher: Harper Collins

ISBN 9780008244095 SCIS: 1864468

\$17.99

### *Blurb:*

The third novel from the phenomenally talented Alice Oseman – one of the most talked about YA writers in recent years. For Angel Rahimi life is about one thing: The Ark – a pop-rock trio of teenage boys who are taking the world by storm. Being part of The Ark's fandom has given her everything she loves – her friend Juliet, her dreams, her place in the world. Jimmy Kaga-Ricci owes everything to The Ark. He's their frontman – and playing in a band with his mates is all he ever dreamed of doing. But dreams don't always turn out the way you think and when Jimmy and Angel are unexpectedly thrust together, they find out how strange and surprising facing up to reality can be. A funny, wise, and heartbreakingly true coming of age novel. *I Was Born for This* is a stunning reflection of modern teenage life, and the power of believing in something – especially yourself.



### *Lamont Review:*

Anyone who has ever fallen in love with a pop singer will love this book.

Angel lives and breathes everything about The Ark, a boy band taking the world by storm. When she and her online friend Juliet meet up for a concert and get to actually meet the boys, it is a dream come true.

But Dreams are not always the way you imaged them to be... as they soon find out. This story is told in alternating chapters from the perspectives of Angel and also Jimmy, the lead singer.

This is a thoroughly entertaining book and the focus is on friendship and following your dreams, even when those dreams don't quite match reality. Funny, emotional, sad, melodramatic and with wonderful characters who are all trying to figure out exactly where they fit in this world, this is a great story.

In the end, they all need to believe in something, but maybe the most important thing might be to believe in yourself...

I really enjoyed this book and expect it will be a hit with those in Year 9 and up.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## **The Things We Can't Undo**

By Gabrielle Reid

Publisher: Ford Street Publishing

ISBN 9781925736045 SCIS: 1860199

\$19.95

### *Blurb:*

There's no backspace key for life's decisions. Samantha and Dylan are in love – everyone knows it. So it's no big deal when they leave a party for some time out together. But when malicious rumours surface about that night, each feels betrayed by the other. Will Sam make a decision she can't take back?



### *Lamont Review:*

Gabrielle Reid is another wonderful debut Australian young adult author, who has produced an incredible and topical novel. Written from the alternate perspectives of two teenagers in love, Sam and Dylan. Imagine, first, Sam the daughter of strict Asian parents who want their daughter to be the perfect student, with no distractions from boys. Then secondly, Dylan, who thinks of himself as a nice guy madly in love with Sam, his girlfriend of a year.

They get together at Sam's urging in a bedroom at a party and Dylan thinks this is it, and so they do it. Dylan is happy, but Sam seems upset and leaves the party without talking to anyone. Soon rumours of rape circulate and without ruining the story the rumours escalate quickly until the whole thing becomes far bigger than anyone could have imagined.

With themes of consent, sexual assault, suicide and social media at the core of this story, it is hugely relevant in today's teenage world and I highly recommend it both as a classroom discussion opener or just an intriguing story for YA's 15 and older.

*Reviewed by Rob*

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

## **The Smoke Thieves**

By Sally Green

Publisher: Penguin

ISBN 9780141375397 SCIS: 1864485

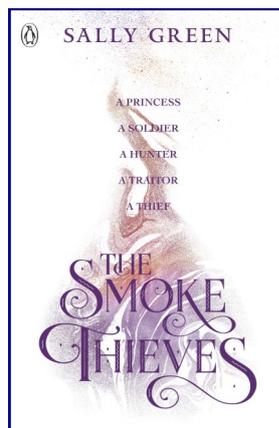
\$17.99

### *Blurb:*

A princess, a traitor, a soldier, a hunter and a thief. Five teenagers with the fate of the world in their hands. Five nations destined for conflict.

In Brigant, Princess Catherine prepares for a political marriage arranged by her brutal and ambitious father, while her true love, Ambrose, faces the executioner's block. In Calidor, downtrodden servant March seeks revenge on the prince who betrayed his people. In Pitoria, feckless Edyon steals cheap baubles for cheaper thrills as he drifts from town to town. And in the barren northern territories, thirteen-year-old Tash is running for her life as she plays bait for the gruff demon hunter Gravell.

As alliances shift and shatter, and old certainties are overturned, our five heroes find their past lives transformed and their futures inextricably linked by the unpredictable tides of magic and war. Who will rise and who will fall? And who will claim the ultimate prize?



### *Lamont Review:*

This is being compared to *Game of Thrones*, and in many ways I can understand why.

We have a fantasy land controlled by rival kings, one of whom is particularly brutal. There is a good-hearted but illegitimate prince about to meet his father (whose legitimate children have recently died), and a princess who is being used as a pawn to win a kingdom. We have a feisty young demon hunter who is used to lure out demons so that her master can kill them to catch the mysterious smoke that escapes them upon death. And the powers that this smoke holds are just being uncovered.

All that said, it is an exciting story set around young people who are embroiled in a fight for survival in a rather scary and somewhat mystical world.

I thought the story and characters were engrossing, but the use of the some obscene language in an seemingly historical world was probably a bit out of place. Many teenagers, who are the target audience, will love this story.

It is best suited to those in Year 9 and above.

*Reviewed by Rob*