

The Year The Maps Changed

By Danielle Binks

Publisher: Lothian Children's Books/Hachette

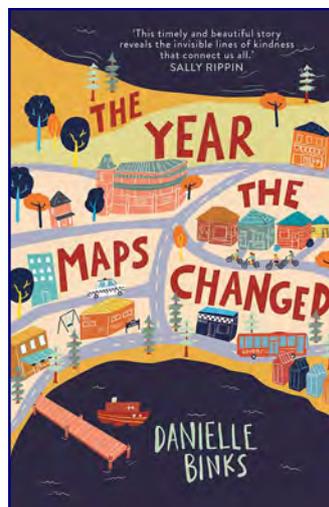
ISBN 9780734419712 SCIS: 1958505

\$17.99

**SECONDARY BOOK
OF THE MONTH**

Blurb:

One extraordinary year will change them all... Sorrento, Victoria, 1999. Fred's family is a mess. Her mother died when she was six and she's been raised by her Pop and adoptive father, Luca, ever since. But now Pop's had to go away, and Luca's girlfriend Anika and her son have moved in. More and more it feels like a land-grab for family and Fred is the one being left off the map. Even as things feel like they're spinning out of control for Fred, a crisis from the other side of the world comes crashing in. When a group of Kosovar-Albanian refugees are brought to a government 'safe haven' not far from Sorrento, their fate becomes intertwined with the lives of Fred and her family in ways that no one could have expected.



Lamont Review:

Fred, short for Winifred, lives in Sorrento with her Grandfather and her adoptive dad, Luca. Her world is changing fast, as Luca's girlfriend and her son Sam have just moved in. When they announce they are having a baby together, Fred is not sure where she fits in anymore.

To make matters more complicated, 400 Kosovar refugees have just arrived in Point Nepean and when Luca volunteers to help them, their lives become entwined.

This is a wonderful story set on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula and based around the events of 1999 when refugees were sent to Point Nepean. It is a story of family, love, hope, compassion and kindness. Full of characters that you will wish you knew and a story that will relate easily with readers.

It also shows the tiny things that you do, and the impact they can have on the people around you, in ripples that spread far and wide. A perfect middle grade reader and one I'm sure will become a favourite.

Reviewed by Michelle

The Tell

By Martin Chatterton

Publisher: Puffin/Penguin

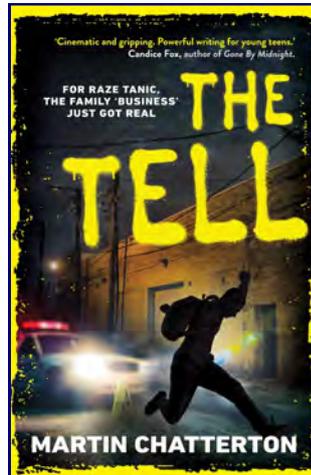
ISBN 9781760895945 SCIS: 1958625

\$16.99

Blurb:

The world turns on moments like these. Crossroad moments; a toss of the coin... I see half my face in deep shadow, eyes glittering like diamonds, the resemblance to my father never stronger.

Rey Tanic is not like other 14 year olds. His dad is a mafia boss. His dad is also in jail. When Rey's life explodes, every decision he makes will shape the rest of his life. How far does the apple really fall from the tree?



Lamont Review:

Being the son of Sydney's most famous criminal, jailed gangster Dejan Tanic, is no bed of roses. But it gets even harder for 14-year-old Rey when his Dad is busted out of his maximum security jail by helicopter.

Rey's world is turned upside down and his only help is coming from his girlfriend Candy, whose Dad is the cop leading the chase to find Dejan.

Now time is running out, and the truths that they uncover leave them with no choice. But can they turn against their own families?

This is a daring, action-fuelled adventure, which is reminded me of Tristan Banck's brilliant novels. There is a huge gap in our market for quality books like this aimed squarely at teenage boys, that are real and current. There is no need for any swearing or violence, when a novel is this cleverly written for the lower to middle secondary reader.

With themes of family, honour, friendship and doing the right thing, it is simply a terrific and engrossing read.

Reviewed by Rob

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available for this title on our website
www.lamontbooks.com.au

When It Drops

By Alex Dyson

Publisher: Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN 9781760505042 SCIS: 1958609

\$19.99

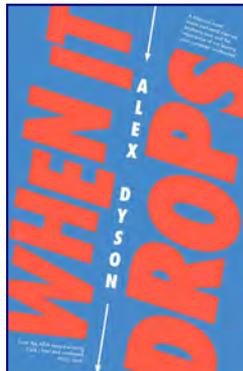
Blurb:

Caleb Clifford has earbuds, not real buds. And he prefers it that way.

1. They always give him what he wants to hear.
2. He can adjust the volume.
3. If things get tangled, it's relatively easy to straighten them out again...

Sixteen-year-old songwriter and aspiring social outcast Caleb Clifford fills his world with music, but – like most things – keeps his songs to himself. That is until his little brother leaks Caleb's most personal track online; a track that's quite obviously about his secret crush. Having his innermost feelings (accompanied by a funky bassline) go viral is not Caleb's idea of a good time. But is this the end of everything, or the start?

A hilarious and touching coming-of-age debut novel from ARIA award-winning triple j host Alex Dyson about family, friends, fame, and the importance of never leaving your computer unattended.



Lamont Review:

Caleb is an awkward teenager, with few friends, who keeps to himself. High school has been a tough ride for him, and having to deal with the death of his Dad and the grief associated with it, has not made it any easier.

Caleb's one escape is his music, which has always been private, until his little brother gets his hands on it... Suddenly, Caleb's inner-most feelings about Ella, the girl he has always liked, are laid bare for everyone to hear—including Ella. How is he ever going to get over this?

But the world can work in mysterious ways. Could this be the big break that he never saw coming? Or will it really turn out to be the disaster that Caleb is sure it will be?

Caleb is a character who you will absolutely love and feel for. What he goes through is so relatable, and most teenagers will be able to resonate with him in some way, and feel his lows and his highs. Whilst Caleb's journey and his challenges are the central themes of the book, it does also touch lightly on themes of underage drinking, as well as sexuality through Caleb's friend Miralee.

Overall, this is a story about growth, acceptance, confronting the past, friendship, family, grief and resilience, and as there are some mature themes and swearing, it will be thoroughly enjoyed by all teenagers 15 +, but it is sure to strike a chord with teenage boys in particular.

Reviewed by Sam

Please Don't Hug Me

By Kay Kerr

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922268051 SCIS: 1958614

\$19.99

Blurb:

Erin is looking forward to schoolies, at least she thinks she is. But her plans are going awry. She's lost her job at Surf Shack after an incident that clearly was not her fault, and now she's not on track to have saved enough money. Her licence test went badly, which was also not her fault - she followed the instructor's directions perfectly. And she's missing her brother, Rudy, who left almost a year ago. But now that she's writing letters to him, some things are beginning to make sense.

Kay Kerr's *Please Don't Hug Me* depicts life on the cusp of adulthood - and on the autism spectrum - and the complexities of finding out and accepting who you are and what's important to you.



Lamont Review:

Erin writes letters to her older brother Rudy, who left them about a year ago. This was an idea from Erin's therapist to help her process her new normal.

But normal is not something Erin easily understands. She is an overachieving 17-year-old on the autism spectrum, who doesn't really understand when to talk and when not to, and whether to talk the truth when she does speak. Most people just don't understand her.

Sure, she has her best friend Dee who always looks out for her, but their world is evolving too and Erin is not sure that this eagerly anticipated schoolies thing is really for her.

We see Erin's friendships and relationships change and develop throughout the story as she moves toward adulthood. We hope for her future, and gain an understanding of the challenges that she faces.

Handling many topics, including autism, friendships, grief, independence and being fulfilled in your life, *Please Don't Hug Me* will resonate with many teenagers, particularly girls 14 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

The Verindon Alliance

By Lynne Stringer

Publisher: Rhiza Edge

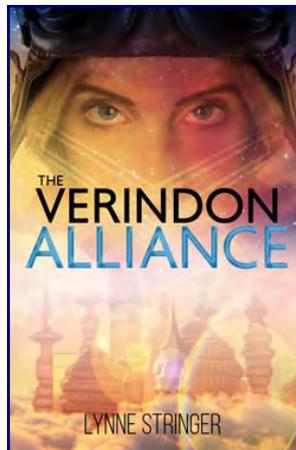
ISBN 9781925563993 SCIS: 1958590

\$19.99

Blurb:

As Princess Vashta of the Vendel finishes her combat training, she hopes she will lead their forces into battle against her race's deadly enemy, the Verindal. But when Brandonin, the heir to the Verindal throne, comes to see her father, it's clear he desires peace, not war.

When a new enemy arises, striking at all who call their planet home, each race blames the other, even though the princess is sure this danger comes from somewhere new. She seeks Brandonin's help in fighting this menace, but what can they do when both Vendel and Verindal refuse to work together? Can they defeat this deadly threat themselves or will it mean the end of life on Verindon?



Lamont Review:

The Vendel and the Verindal share a planet and many similarities, but for hundreds of years they have been at war with each other.

Hostilities have increased and the injuries they are receiving are much worse than ever before. Both are blaming the other but Vashta, who is a Vendel princess, and Brandonin, the Verindal heir, believe that an unknown force is responsible this time.

Can they convince anyone to listen to them or will they need to overcome their fear of each other and join forces to save their planet?

This is a wonderful sci-fi book that has great characters and fast moving story. It is action-packed from the first page and will appeal to readers who love a good sci-fi adventure.

Best suited to Year 8 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available for this title on our website
www.lamontbooks.com.au

Goldfields Girl

By Elaine Forrestal

Publisher: Fremantle Press

ISBN 9781925816495 SCIS: 1958628

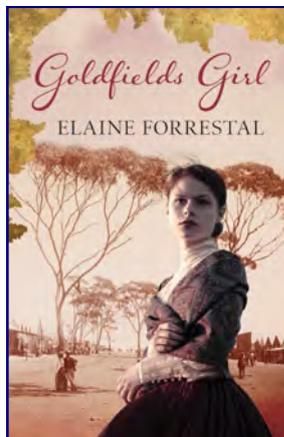
\$16.99

Blurb:

It's 1892. Amid a fevered gold rush, fourteen-year-old Clara Saunders is in search of adventure in the new outback town of Coolgardie.

A friendship with cheeky young water carter Jack is a promising start, but the goldfields are a harsh place, where water is scarce, disease is common and where many men will never find the fortune they've come to seek.

With unforeseen tragedies on the horizon, Clara's time in the dusty town will truly test the limits of her fierceness and determination.



Lamont Review:

Set in the late 1800's in Western Australia, the gold rush is in full swing. When 14-year-old Clara gets offered a job working in Coolgardie, she jumps at the chance for adventure.

She soon makes friends, especially with Jack, but the goldfields are an unforgiving and harsh place, and it will take all her courage and determination to survive.

I love historical novels and this is a beautifully written account, based on Clara Saunders own handwritten notes, which she called Memories. It highlights the amazing resilience of the early settlers who had so much courage to venture into the outback in search of elusive gold.

Clara is a wonderful character that readers will love and Elaine Forrestal's descriptions of the goldmining towns bring them vividly to life.

Highly recommended, and will most appeal to girls who enjoy historical fiction in lower secondary and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available for this title on our website
www.lamontbooks.com.au

Worse Things

By Sally Murphy

Publisher: Walker Books

ISBN 9781760651657 SCIS: 1958492

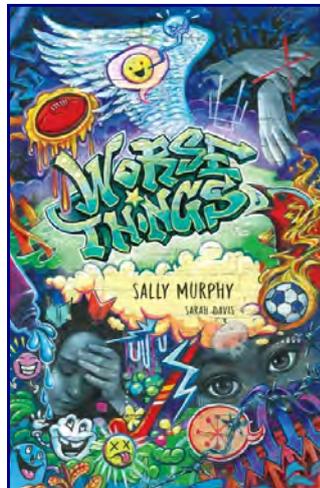
\$14.99

Blurb:

Worse Things is a story about connections, the ways they are made, and what happens when they are lost or illusive, from the award-winning author of *Pearl Verses the World* and *Toppling*.

When you're part of the team the sideline is a place of refuge, of rest, of reprieve. But when you're out of the team the sideline changes. Suddenly it's the loneliest place of them all.

After a devastating football injury, Blake struggles to cope with life on the sideline. Jolene, a gifted but conflicted hockey player, wants nothing more than for her dad to come home. And soccer-loving refugee, Amed, wants to belong. On the surface, it seems they have nothing in common. Except sport. A touching and inspirational story about the things that bind us all.



Lamont Review:

The setting is an Australian country town where three kids lives are not always as they seem.

Blake has always been mad on footy but when he badly breaks his arm, he needs to find meaning in his life another way.

Jolene is brilliant at hockey, a sport that her Mum loves. Jolene, not so much. Both of her parents are doctors, and she is seen as spoilt, but she misses her Dad, who is always off saving people in the third world countries.

Amed is a refugee and is new to their school, but he is finding it impossible to fit in, mainly due to his difficulties communicating in English.

We gain an in-depth understanding of their circumstances and see a bond slowly develop between them through adversity. With themes of sport, loneliness, connections, friendship and family, this is an ideal read for those 9 - 15 years. It is beautifully written, and a fast read that will be a favourite of many reluctant teenage readers.

Reviewed by Rob