

When Rain Turns to Snow

By Jane Godwin

Publisher: Lothian Children's Books / Hachette

ISBN 9780734420053 SCIS: 1967978

\$16.99

**SECONDARY BOOK
OF THE MONTH**

Blurb:

A runaway, a baby and a whole lot of questions... Lissa is home on her own after school one afternoon when a stranger turns up on the doorstep carrying a baby. Reed is on the run - surely people are looking for him? He's trying to find out who he really is and thinks Lissa's mum might have some answers. But how could he be connected to Lissa's family - and why has he been left in charge of a baby? A baby who is sick, and getting sicker... Reed's appearance stirs up untold histories in Lissa's family, and suddenly she is having to make sense of her past in a way she would never have imagined. Meanwhile, her brother is dealing with a devastating secret of his own. A beautiful and timely coming-of-age story about finding out who you are in the face of crisis and change.



Lamont Review:

As a complete bibliophile, I am always taken in by an author's magical use of rarely used words, and Jane is a master of this.

Lissa is a thirteen-year-old struggling with friendship issues, when she discovers Reed, who is a similar age, on her doorstep with a baby in his arms. Reed has recently found out that he was adopted, and with his drug addicted brother's baby in tow, searches them out as he believes that Lissa's mum is also his mum.

Lissa's family situation is already complicated enough. Harry is Lissa's seventeen-year-old brother, and he is being slammed on social media for something he didn't do. He is facing his own identity issues and emotional turmoil. Lissa's Dad has a new wife and new life in Beijing, and twins are now on the way. And then there are Lissa's Mum and her new boyfriend, Troy.

But the absolute highlight and crux of this story is Lissa's own journey and identity. I do not want to give anything away - you simply must read it yourself. The friendship and bond formed by Lissa, Reed and baby Mercy is paramount to this story, and it a beautiful story of friendships formed through hardship, and links that will last a lifetime.

Jane has truly written a classic Australian story that will be read for years to come. With themes of family, identity, the impact of social media, and personal development, this is a great read for those aged 12-15.

Reviewed by Rob

Metal Fish, Falling Snow

By Cath Moore

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922330079 SCIS: 1967984

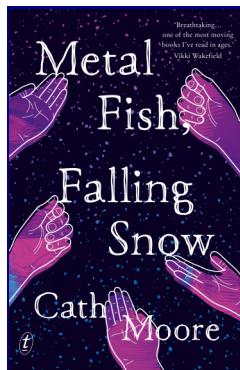
\$19.99

Blurb:

Dylan and her adored French mother dream of one day sailing across the ocean to France. Paris, Dylan imagines, is a place where her black skin won't make her stand out, a place where she might feel she belongs.

But when she loses her mother in a freak accident, Dylan finds herself on a very different journey - a road trip across outback Australia in the care of her mother's grieving boyfriend, Pat. As they travel through remote towns further and further from the water that Dylan longs for, she and Pat form an unlikely bond. One that will be broken when he leaves her with the family she has never known.

Metal Fish, Falling Snow is a warm, funny and highly original portrait of a young girl's search for identity and her struggle to deal with grief. Through families lost and found, this own-voices story celebrates the resilience of the human heart and our need to know who we truly are.



Lamont Review:

Metal Fish, Falling Snow is a journey of discovery and a search for identity for fourteen-year-old Dylan. Dylan has always dreamed of going to France with her French mother. But her mother's sudden death means that is a journey they will not take together.

Filled with grief, Dylan still dreams of making the journey to Paris anyway. Unfortunately, for the time being, Dylan is on a trip of a different kind - across the outback of Australia with her mother's grieving, pokie-addicted boyfriend, Pat. They are going to meet Dylan's family - her relatives through her Guyanese-born father, who walked out forever ago. But although they might be family, Dylan knows nothing of these people, or what it will be like when she gets there.

Dylan has a gift of seeing things in her world, with visions of what happened in the past, and her gift helps her to slowly find her place - through friendship with her cousin Joni, her connections to her family, and even to Pat, who is trying to get his life together.

A story of self-discovery, identity, loss, grief, family and finding your place in the world, with an incredibly engaging and unique main character in Dylan, you cannot help but get swept up in her journey. A wonderful debut novel from Cath Moore, this is a great read that will particularly appeal to girls 14 years and older.

Reviewed by Rob

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

Stars Like Us

By Frances Chapman

Publisher: Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN 9781760504700 SCIS: 1967989

\$19.99

Blurb:

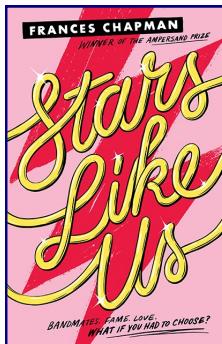
From the winner of the Ampersand Prize comes this smart, swoony LGBTQ YA novel about a teenage band on the way to the top – so long as they can hold it together.

Liliana's hitting all the wrong notes. She's a sixteen-year-old exchange student with a secret crush on Carter, her new band's smoking hot guitarist – but she's also got a girlfriend back home.

So when she writes a song about him and it lands the band a record deal, she quickly realises she's in hot water.

Soon, Liliana will have to choose – between an alluring boy and the girl she left behind, between love and lust, and between the fame that beckons and staying true to the music that's in her heart.

With shades of hit TV series Nashville, the musical passion of Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist and the band drama of Fleetwood Mac, this brilliant own-voices YA debut is perfect for music lovers everywhere.



Lamont Review:

When sixteen-year-old Australian schoolgirl Liliana Donadi wins a prestigious scholarship to an English performing arts school, her life will change forever.

Soon after arriving she auditions for a band, and becomes their vocalist and guitar player. But she is torn between her feelings for Ellie, the girlfriend she left behind, and her gorgeous new band mate, Carter.

Her band, Lady Stardust, win a battle of the bands competition and quickly get a recording contract with Beatnik Records. This is very exciting as Beatnik Records also look after Liliana's idol, Addie Marmoset, and her band Perfect Storm. With a number one record, a friendship forming with her idol Addie, and an off and on relationship with Carter, who loves to party, Liliana is thrust into a new rollercoaster life of stardom. What could possibly go wrong?

Her Dad is clearly worried - asking her to promise not to get involved with alcohol, drugs, and all that pop stardom brings with it. Can Liliana keep her promise to her Dad, figure out her love life, seize her opportunity for stardom, all while staying true to herself? Is stardom even worth it?

Liliana is a wonderful, feisty main character and with such a fast-paced storyline, you can see why *Stars Like Us* was the winner of the Ampersand Prize for an unpublished manuscript. A great debut from Frances Chapman that will appeal to music lovers aged 15 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

The Lost Soul Atlas

By Zana Fraillon

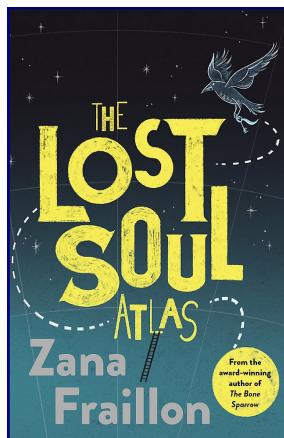
Publisher: Lothian Children's Books / Hachette

ISBN 9780734419934 SCIS: 1967980

\$19.99

Blurb:

Loyalty is tested, and a cruel twist of fate leads to an act of ultimate betrayal in this epic story that spans a city, a decade, and the divide between life and death itself. Twig is all alone after his dad goes missing. But when he meets Flea, a cheerful pickpocket, the pair become fast friends. Together, Twig and Flea raise themselves on the crime-ridden streets, taking what they need and giving the rest to the even-poorer. Life is good, as long as they have each other. But then Twig wakes up in the Afterlife. With just a handful of vague memories, a key, a raven, and a mysterious atlas to guide him, he tries to piece together what happened, and to find his way home... A powerful story of hope and friendship from the award-winning author of *The Bone Sparrow*.



Lamont Review:

Twig awakens in the Afterlife, with a bossy raven to guide him and a whole bunch of partial, vague memories.

What is he supposed to do now? Where is his Da, and who is Flea? How does the mysterious atlas that the Gatherer gives him help? And, most importantly, can Twig somehow figure out how to put his life back together and find his way home?

It is clear that Twig's life has been hard, fending for himself on the streets, but his is a story of friendship, hope, resilience, memories and love, all entwined in a fantasy story that switches between Twig's memories from his life, and what he is now facing in the Afterlife. You will love the determination and humour of the characters, especially Twig and Flea.

With the added layer of the puzzle of the Atlas of Lost Souls to solve as well, this is a wonderful, thoroughly enjoyable, adventurous fantasy story from Zana Fraillon, that will not disappoint her many fans, and is best suited to readers in lower secondary and above.

Reviewed by Michelle

The Last Paper Crane

By Kerry Drewery & Illustrated by Natsko Seki

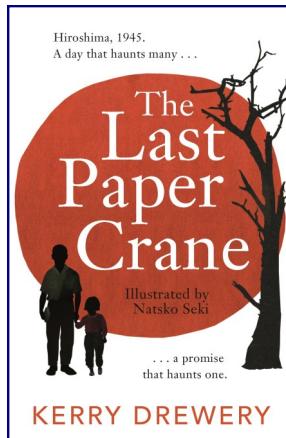
Publisher: Hotkey / Bonnier

ISBN 9781471408472 SCIS: 1970845

\$16.99

Blurb:

A Japanese teenager, Mizuki, is worried about her grandfather who is clearly desperately upset about something. He says that he has never got over something that happened in his past and gently Mizuki persuades him to tell her what it is. We are taken to 1945, Hiroshima, and Mizuki's grandfather as a teenage boy chatting at home with his friend Hiro. Moments later the horrific nuclear bomb is dropped on Hiroshima. What follows is a searing account of the blinding flash, the harrowing search for family and the devastation both human and physical. There is also the very moving and human story as the two teenage boys with great bravery search for and find Keiko, Hiro's five-year-old sister. But then Keiko is lost when Mizuki's grandfather has no option but to leave her in a safe place while he goes for help... Despite a desperate search in the aftermath of the bomb, where he leaves origami folded paper cranes for Keiko with his address on everywhere a survivor could be, he cannot find her... A powerful novel that, despite its harrowing subject matter, has hope at its heart.



Lamont Review:

This is such an incredibly moving, powerful and touching story, that I could not put it down and read it in one sitting.

Told in two timelines, from the point of view of Mizuki, who is concerned about her grandfather Ichiro's wellbeing, as well as from the point of view of Ichiro himself, who lived through the bombing of Hiroshima. *The Last Paper Crane* takes the reader on an intense journey of how the scars, grief and never-ending guilt of those who survived this act of war stayed with them for a lifetime.

The use of verse adds to the beautiful way that this story is told. The situation after the atomic bomb is dropped is devastating, however this is ultimately a touching story of how one broken promise has shaped Ichiro's entire life, and Keiko's life too. In the end, it is truly a story of hope.

With the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima in August, this is a timely novel for all secondary students to reflect and learn from the past.

Reviewed by Sam