

## Future Girl

By Asphyxia

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760294373 SCIS: 1980414

\$24.99

**SECONDARY BOOK  
OF THE MONTH**

*Blurb:*

Piper's mum wants her to be 'normal', to pass as hearing and get a good job. But when peak oil hits and Melbourne lurches towards environmental catastrophe, Piper has more important things to worry about, such as how to get food.

When she meets Marley, a CODA (child of Deaf adult), a door opens into a new world - where Deafness is something to celebrate rather than hide, and where resilience is created through growing your own food rather than it being delivered on a truck.

As she dives into learning Auslan, sign language that is exquisitely beautiful and expressive, Piper finds herself falling hard for Marley. But Marley, who has grown up in the Deaf community yet is not Deaf, is struggling to find his place in the hearing world. How can they be together?

*Future Girl* is the art journal of sixteen-year-old Piper, a visual extravaganza of text, paint, collage and drawings, woven into a deeply engaging coming-of-age story set in near-future Melbourne.



*Lamont Review:*

*Future Girl* is the coming of age story of sixteen-year-old Piper, a Deaf girl finding her way in the world. The journal format of the book shows that Asphyxia is both a talented writer and brilliant artist, and *Future Girl* is a wonderful, unusual and inspiring own voices novel.

The story is set in the near-future and takes a timely look at governmental control. In this world, everyone is too busy to prepare their own food. While having every meal provided - meals that are not only nutritious, but also contain anti-obesity and cancer prevention qualities - may sound great in theory, the reality is not so great...

The story is enthralling and Piper is a great character, and you cheer for her as she discovers her true self and her voice. With themes of sustainability, regulation, being Deaf, communication, and finding your place in the world presented so beautifully, this is a terrific read that will be loved by many teenagers.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## Before the Beginning

By Anna Morgan

Publisher: Lothian Children's Books / Hachette

ISBN 9780734419651 SCIS: 1970491

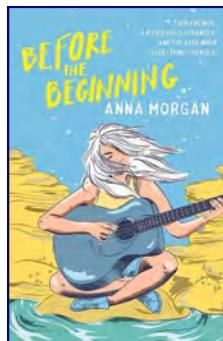
\$19.99

*Blurb:*

Schoolies week: that strange in-between time when teenagers move from school into the adult world. It's a week when anything is possible, and everything can change.

Grace is questioning everything she thought about herself, and has opted not to join her clique of judgemental friends for schoolies, instead tagging along with her brother Casper and his friends. Casper, an artist, is trying to create the perfect artwork for his uni application folio. Overachieving, anxiety-ridden Noah is reeling from a catastrophe that might have ruined his ATAR result. And Elsie is just trying to figure out how to hold their friendship group together.

On the first night of the trip, they meet Sierra, a mysterious girl with silver-grey hair and a magnetic personality. All of them are drawn to her for different reasons, and she persuades them to abandon the cliched schoolies experience in favour of camping with her on a remote, uninhabited island. On that island, each of them will find answers to their questions. But what does Sierra want from them?



*Lamont Review:*

This is a fantastic coming of age novel following the story of four Australian teenagers who experience a different kind of schoolies week, and perhaps discover the next chapter of their lives.

Told in parts by all four, we first hear from Grace. She is just tagging along with her brother Casper and his two friends, Noah and Elsie - who didn't even know that Grace was coming. Grace is due to start a religious internship next year. But does she want more in her life than just the church?

Casper is loved by everyone, particularly his best friend Elsie. But he needs to find the true meaning in his life, and maybe do more than just dream of an Art course.

Noah was always top of the class but is suffering from severe anxiety. He has always been under pressure to achieve at the end of school. But will he? And what does he really want to do with his life after school anyway?

Lastly, Elsie - she wants more than just being Casper's BFF, but really doesn't know where she wants to go next now that school is finished, and she can't even tell Casper the truth.

But their schoolies week all changes when they meet the beautiful Sierra, who entices them to go out to a deserted island to spend the week camping instead.

So begins a voyage of discovery for them all. Truths are revealed. Feelings are hurt. Friendships are made, and allegiances changed. But after everything, a new hope for the future is instilled in all of them. And who is the mysterious Sierra anyway?

This is a great coming of age novel with themes of friendship, trust, truth and hope, while finding your own path. Will most appeal to teens 16 and older, but there is nothing that would make it unsuitable for any teenage reader.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## **The Left-Handed Booksellers of London**

By Garth Nix

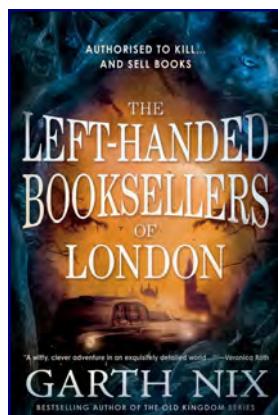
Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760631246 SCIS: 1980813

\$24.99

*Blurb:*

Eighteen-year-old art student Susan Arkshaw arrives in London in search of her father. But before she can question crime boss Frank Thringley he's turned to dust by the prick of a silver hatpin in the hands of the outrageously attractive Merlin. Merlin is one of the youngest members of a secret society of booksellers with magical powers who police the mythic Old World wherever it impinges on the New World - in addition to running several bookshops, of course! Merlin also has a quest of his own: to find the Old World entity who arranged the murder of his mother. Their investigations attract attention from enemies of the Old and New Worlds. Soon they become involved in an even more urgent task to recover the grail that is the source of the left-handed booksellers' power, before it is used to destroy the booksellers and rouse the hordes of the mythic past. As the search for the grail becomes strangely intertwined with both their quests, they start to wonder... Is Susan's long-lost father a bookseller, or something altogether more mysterious?



*Lamont Review:*

Susan Arkshaw leaves her quiet English village to go to London in search of her father. Instead she meets Merlin, who is gorgeous and a member of a mysterious secret society of magical booksellers, who is on a quest of his own.

Strangely, their searches seem intertwined and Susan becomes immersed in the secret world of magic. But where will their search lead them?

This is another excellent book from master storyteller Garth Nix. I love the way he creates mystical worlds, but then weaves it all so seamlessly into the real world.

Readers will love the brilliant characters and the quest of good versus evil, as well as the mystery that will keep you turning every page eagerly.

Fantasy lovers will thoroughly enjoy this book, and it is best suited to readers in middle-secondary and up.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## This One Is Ours

By Kate O'Donnell

Publisher: University of Queensland Press

ISBN 9780702260285 SCIS: 1980823

\$19.99

*Blurb:*

Sixteen-year-old Sofie is a dreamer, an artist and a romantic. So when she goes on exchange to Paris, she is expecting magnificent adventures of the heart and mind. Yet France isn't what she imagined. It's cold and grey, and speaking another language is exhausting. Sofie's more homesick than lovesick.

But then her host sister, Delphine, and fellow artist Olivier show her a different side of Paris, and Sofie starts to question her ideas of art, beauty and meaning. Of everything. There's truth in what her best friend, Crow, has been saying all along - the world is in crisis and people need to take notice. And when a catastrophe strikes close to home, Sofie realises she needs to act.

But what can one girl do? Will Sofie be able to find the courage to fight for change?

*This One is Ours* is a call to action for anyone who feels helpless about the state of society, as well as an ode to all the tiny beautifuls that make our world worth saving.



*Lamont Review:*

Art student and romantic Sofie is off to Paris on exchange, and she's not sure if she is terrified or excited, or maybe both!

At first, everything feels strange and overwhelming, but her host family make her feel welcome and as she makes new friends realise the things that really matter to her.

This is a wonderful story of spreading your wings and finding your way in the world. Many people feel overwhelmed and helpless about climate change, but this story shows that if everyone plays a small part then it might not be quite so daunting.

Sofie finds beauty in the smallest things, and with art as her main inspiration throughout the book, this is a thoroughly enjoyable and uplifting read and will most appeal to girls in mid-secondary and above.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## **Watch Over Me**

By Nina LaCour

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922330604 SCIS: 1980783

\$19.99

*Blurb:*

Eighteen-year-old Mila has been in the foster system since her mother abandoned her. Now that she's graduating high school she has nothing to do and nowhere to call home. When she gets an offer to work as an intern on the Farm she readily accepts.

Her main job is to take care of eight-year old Lee. At first the Farm seems like an idyllic paradise, a remote place on the cliffs with view of the sea far below. But Mila soon realises there's something more sinister going on. Lee's recent trauma causes Mila's own frightening memories to bubble to the surface. Then there's Billy and Liz. What is it they want from her? How much is she willing to give?

Whispered secrets. Sideways glances. A dangerous undertow of violence, complicity, desire, and fear.



*Lamont Review:*

Our main character Mila has had a very tough life. Even before her Mum abandoned her into foster care for the last three years, her life wasn't great.

Now that Mila is turning eighteen she needs something to do and somewhere to go. She heads off to the farm where they teach kids from 8 - 12. For most of the story, Mila's main charge is eight-year-old Lee.

The farm is run by a couple who have fostered dozens of kids over the years, with many of their former foster kids returning, often for major events. They were one huge family.

But everything is not as it would seem on the surface. The residents of the farm must face their ghosts, before they can be released from their hold. And the residents all have ghosts they need to face...

The author has a knack of creating atmosphere and depicting loneliness. You really feel for the characters, especially Mila and her student, Lee, and you will feel like you know them by the end of the book.

With themes of loneliness, resilience, trauma, acceptance and healing with help, this will be best suited to readers in Year 9 and up.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## **Every Little Piece Of My Heart**

By Non Pratt

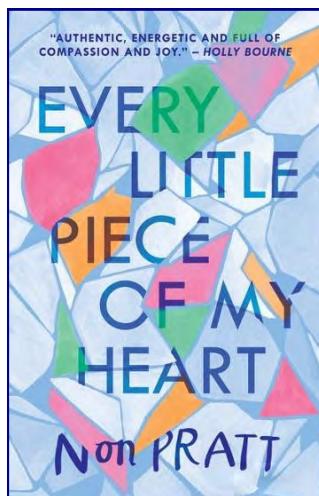
Publisher: Walker Books

ISBN 9781406366945 SCIS: 1981962

\$18.99

*Blurb:*

When Sophie receives a parcel from her best friend, Freya, she expects it to contain the reason why Freya left town so suddenly, without goodbyes and without explanation. Instead, she finds a letter addressed to Win, a girl Freya barely knew – or did she? As more letters arrive for more people on the periphery of Freya's life, Sophie and Win begin to piece together who Freya was and why she left. Sometimes it's not about who's gone, but about who they leave behind...



*Lamont Review:*

This is an intriguing story, looking at the lives of four teenagers after the sudden disappearance of Freya - an important person in all of their lives.

Our central character is Sophie, she was Freya's best friend and is now suffering from the debilitating disease, lupus. Sophie has pretended to everyone that she is still in contact with Freya, as it was unthinkable that Freya would leave without so much as a note or a goodbye.

Ryan feels similarly betrayed. He had only just started a relationship with Freya, who was his tough cousin Kellan's recent ex-girlfriend.

But then a parcel arrives, promising treasure at the end, and forces our characters - who had not been friends before - to work together. As the mysterious parcel reveals hidden secrets, will there be a treasure at the end?

With themes of loss, betrayal, chronic illness, and diversity, this will be loved and will particularly appeal to teenage girls 14 and older.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## All This Time

By Rachael Lippincott

Publisher: Simon & Schuster

ISBN 9781471192197 SCIS: 1985320

\$17.99

### *Blurb:*

From the authors behind *Five Feet Apart*, a #1 New York Times bestseller and hit movie, comes a gripping new romance, perfect for fans of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and *The Fault in Our Stars*. Can you find true love after losing everything? Kyle and Kimberly have been the perfect couple all through high school, but when Kimberly breaks up with him on the night of their graduation party, Kyle's entire world upends - literally. Their car crashes and when he awakes, he has a brain injury. Kimberly is dead. And no one in his life could possibly understand. Until Marley. Marley is suffering from her own loss, a loss she thinks was her fault. As Kyle and Marley work to heal each other's wounds, their feelings for each other grow stronger. But Kyle can't shake the sense that he's headed for another crashing moment that will blow up his life as soon as he's started to put it back together. And he's right. An unforgettable novel perfect for fans of John Green, Nicola Yoon, David Levithan and Jenny Han.



### *Lamont Review:*

Kyle used to have everything - he was assured a sport scholarship at UCLA and he had Kim, the perfect forever girlfriend. But perfection never lasts, as Kyle receives a career ending shoulder injury and then, on graduation night, Kim drops a bombshell. She is not going to UCLA, in fact, she didn't even apply there and just needs some space.

In a temper, Kyle flees in his car, but Kim jumps in with him, and in torrential rain they park on the side of the road. A truck crashes into them. And what happens next is our story...

This is a story that you just have to read for yourself. It is full of twists that I didn't see coming, as well as being a tragic love story that drags you in. Filled with messed-up characters, trying to find a connection after they have faced a world of trauma.

The real theme is finding your true love, and with the endless help of family and friends, we see how this can be achieved. Full of heartache, angst and ultimately hope, teenagers who love romance and tragedy in stories will devour this.

Best suited to readers 14 and older.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## **Skydragon: Skydragon 1**

By Anh Do

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760876364 SCIS: 1983347

\$15.99

*Blurb:*

Amber knew she'd been given an incredible power, but was it a freak accident, or was there something she was supposed to do with it?

Controlling her new ability might be the hardest thing Amber has ever done. Especially when she is running for her life.

Who is her mysterious enemy? What connection does he have to Amber's past? And, most importantly, does Amber have what it takes to truly become... Skydragon?



*Lamont Review:*

Anh Do has done it again! *Skydragon* is a gripping, fast-paced middle-grade story that is a joy to read.

Told predominantly from the perspective of fourteen-year-old Amber, who is coming to terms with the loss of her parents while also discovering her newfound powers, this story is adventurous and fresh, but still explores meaningful themes including family, survival, friendship and identity.

*Skydragon* has something for everyone, but especially those with a keen sense of adventure and imagination. It will also greatly appeal to lovers of nature and fans of the superhero genre, with the two merging together seamlessly. Coupled with some unexpected twists and turns, this book will leave readers excited for the story to follow in Book 2!

With short chapters and great characters, it is suitable for any upper primary or lower secondary readers who enjoy a great adventure story.

*Reviewed by Ben*

## **The Courtyard Children**

By Marija Poljak

Publisher: Rhiza Edge / Wombat Books

ISBN 9781925563962 SCIS: 1980159

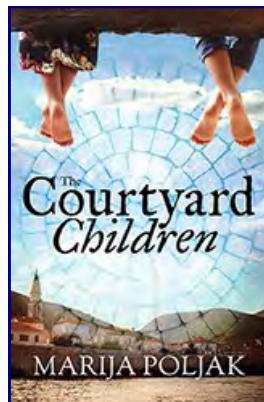
\$19.99

*Blurb:*

Mileva Marinković was born into a family descended from resistance fighters and patriots, and from a young age was already bestowed with an identity formed on the values of brotherhood and unity. Marko Ivanić was born into a family where love is earned, not given, and was branded early on as a troublemaker and somewhat of a lost cause.

Despite conflicting upbringings, the two find a common ground and develop a formidable friendship. As they grow older, almost inevitably their attraction to one another transforms into a deep love and understanding. Yet as Mileva and Marko approach the turn of the 1990s they find themselves, like the rest of the population, facing the collapse of their country.

Forced into opposing directions, their separation changes both their lives forever, leading to a tragic event that neither could foresee. As she struggles to make sense of her identity moving forward, Mileva attempts to salvage all that is left of the life and love she once had.



*Lamont Review:*

Set in Yugoslavia, at first when the country was united, and then when it wasn't, this is a moving and powerful story of how identity and belonging can cause so much conflict and heartache in our lives.

Mileva (known as Mara) and Marko have grown up together, and have spent much of their life in and around the courtyard where they both lived. Although coming from very different family dynamics, with Mara coming from a loving and supportive family, and Marko from a harsh family who didn't think he would amount to anything, they formed a bond early in life that seemed unbreakable.

But when the country is torn apart by war, their heritage determines what side they are on and where their allegiances lie, and for Mara and Marko this has devastating consequences. With a tragic and confronting end to Marko's story, can Mara find a way to come to terms with the loss of her love and forge her own identity?

It is a story of family, identity, belonging and loss. With an ending that is tragic and quite confronting, this book is best suited to those 16+.

*Reviewed by Sam*

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

## The Inheritance Games

By Jennifer Lynn Barnes

Publisher: Penguin

ISBN 9780241476178 SCIS: 1985326

\$16.99

*Blurb:*

*She came from nothing.*

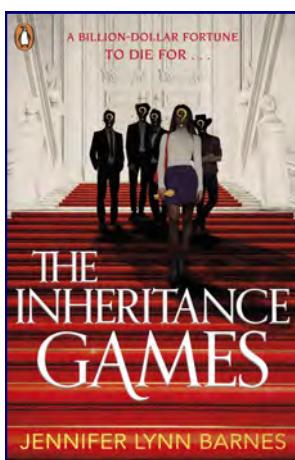
Avery has a plan - keep her head down, work hard for a better future. Then an eccentric billionaire dies, leaving her almost his entire fortune. And no one, least of all Avery, knows why.

*They had everything.*

Now she must move into the mansion she's inherited. It's filled with secrets and codes, and the old man's surviving relatives - a family hell-bent on discovering why Avery got 'their' money.

*Now there's only one rule - winner takes all.*

Soon she is caught in a deadly game that everyone in this strange family is playing. But just how far will they go to keep their fortune?



*Lamont Review:*

Avery is a normal teenage girl, living with her stepsister and just hoping to survive high school.

That is until she finds out that a billionaire that she doesn't even know has left her his entire fortune. The only catch - she must live in his mansion with the relatives he left out of his inheritance for one year.

This is a wonderful, addictive thriller that is full of plot twists. The characters and storyline grab you from page one, and there is no putting this book down until you get to the end.

Full of family secrets and hidden agendas, as well as some underlying romantic attractions, not to mention the billions of dollars at stake, it is perfect for readers in middle-secondary and above who love fast paced mysteries. I can't wait for the sequel!

*Reviewed by Michelle*