

Growing Up Disabled in Australia

By Carly Findlay

Publisher: Black Inc

ISBN 9781760641436 SCIS: 1963771

\$29.99

**SECONDARY BOOK
OF THE MONTH**

Blurb:

'My body and its place in the world seemed normal to me. Why wouldn't it?'

'I didn't grow up disabled; I grew up with a problem. A problem that those around me wanted to fix.'

'We have all felt that uncanny sensation that someone is watching us.'

'The diagnosis helped but it didn't fix everything.'

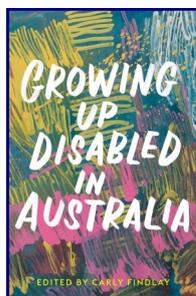
'Don't fear the labels.'

'That identity, which I feared for so long, is now one of my greatest qualities.'

'I had become disabled - not just by my disease, but by the way the world treated me. When I found that out, everything changed.'

One in five Australians has a disability. And disability presents itself in many ways. Yet disabled people are still underrepresented in the media and in literature. In *Growing Up Disabled in Australia* - compiled by writer and appearance activist Carly Findlay OAM - more than forty writers with a disability or chronic illness share their stories, in their own words. The result is illuminating.

Contributors include senator Jordon Steele-John, paralympian Isis Holt, Dion Beasley, Sam Drummond, Astrid Edwards, Sarah Firth, El Gibbs, Eliza Hull, Gayle Kennedy, Carly-Jay Metcalfe, Fiona Murphy, Jessica Walton and many more.



Lamont Review:

Growing Up Disabled in Australia is a wonderful and eye-opening collection of stories from a broad group of Australian writers with a disability or chronic illness.

The real highlight and strength of the *Growing Up Disabled in Australia* collection of stories, like the other titles in this series, is that it shows just how diverse the individual experiences of the writers are. The stories featured in this collection span a wide variety of experiences, from those who grew up with a disability from their childhood, to those who became disabled later in life, or who came to identify as disabled as adults. The stories also encompass a wide range of disabilities - both physical and mental, and from the invisible to the obvious.

There are many wonderful stories, but one of the highlights for me was the story from Kit, who has cerebral palsy, and her message that she does not have to wear the hopes of other people, she has her own.

Although the stories are individual there are many themes in this collection that appear across the stories. One example that appears in a number of the stories is a frustration at how other people feel the need to 'heal' the writer or 'make them better', and how this perspective can impact on their lives.

This collection grabbed me from the first story, and in all my years of reading and selecting books for Standing Order, this is the best anthology that I have read. A brilliant book that will stay with me for a long time, and I highly recommend it. It does contain some stronger language, so will be best suited to readers aged 15 and up.

Reviewed by Rob

Influence

By Sara Shepard & Lilia Buckingham
Publisher: Atom/Hachette
ISBN 9780349003573 SCIS: 1996902
\$17.99

Blurb:

Delilah is Internet-famous, in LA and at the start of something incredible. Everything is going to change... but not necessarily in the way she imagines.

Jasmine is a child star turned media darling. Her selfies practically break Instagram. But if the world knew who Jasmine really was? Cancelled.

Fiona is everyone's best friend, always smiling. But on the inside? The girl's a hot mess. If they discovered her secret, it wouldn't just embarrass her: it would ruin her.

Scarlet isn't just styled to perfection: she is perfection with a famous boyfriend and an online fanbase devouring her every move. But every perfect thing has a fatal flaw.

To everyone clicking, DMing, following and faving, these girls are living the dream; but are they really? The sun is hot in California... and someone's going to get burned.



Lamont Review:

Set in the glitzy and wealthy world of influencers in LA, our two authors draw on their unique talents to write a real thriller.

Influence looks at the lives of four young 16 to 18 year-old stars of the social media influencer scene.

There are dark secrets that they hope to keep from their adoring fans, and interactions and jealousies that are impossible to hide.

Behind the perfect image of themselves that they cultivate online, behind the scenes things are not as perfect as they might seem...

And as the reader you turn the pages of this book so easily, and the plot thickens and the 'whodunnit' intrigue intensifies throughout the story.

This is a real eye opener into the online world of influencing, that will be loved by those already invested in the online world. It also serves as a cautionary tale about the pressure behind the scenes, about what you can be forced to do and what can go wrong when chasing online fame.

Will most appeal to girls aged 14 and up.

Reviewed by Rob

Game Changer

By Neal Shusterman

Publisher: Walker Books

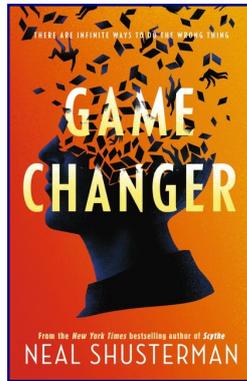
ISBN 9781406398632 SCIS: 1996903

\$18.99

Blurb:

An ambitious and magnetic novel from the New York Times bestselling Neal Shusterman, about a teenage American football player forced into a series of a parallel lives.

As a star player on his high school American football team, Ash is used to taking some hard hits. But that one run in his last game must have knocked him a little loose, because suddenly his life doesn't look quite the way he remembers it. As Ash bounces into worlds that are almost-but-not-really his own, he starts to question everything, including his own perceptions and place in his own reality. But can he even work out how to get back there?



Lamont Review:

Readers are going to love Ash in all his various forms! In *Game Changer*, Ash is knocked into numerous parallel universes that are similar to, but not quite, his own. In the process, he also becomes many different versions of himself - slightly different in each universe.

Ash is the universe's latest 'Subjective Locus' or sub-loc - think the centre of the universe - and when a hard gridiron tackle puts him into a different but similar universe for the first time, he begins to realise that he has the power to change the world.

In these alternate universes, many things are different and Ash realises that to really make a difference, he has to go back to near the beginning. He has to risk everything to save the world...

Many themes are explored in the book including racism and segregation, toxic relationships, sexuality, sexism, wealth and love are all explored in this incredible book that will stay in your head for a long time after you finish the last page.

I love books that make you think and make you consider the vast and endless possibilities that our world presents.

It is best suited to readers 14 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

The Hatmakers

By Tamzin Merchant

Publisher: Puffin/Penguin

ISBN 9780241509029 SCIS: 1996906

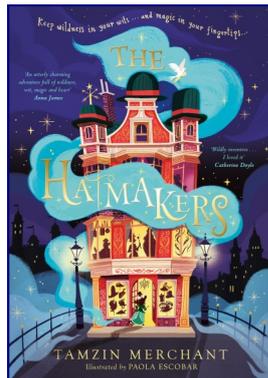
\$16.99

Blurb:

Cordelia comes from a long line of magical milliners, who weave alchemy and enchantment into every hat. In Cordelia's world, Making - crafting items such as hats, cloaks, watches, boots and gloves from magical ingredients - is a rare and ancient skill, and only a few special Maker families remain.

When Cordelia's father Prospero and his ship, the Jolly Bonnet, are lost at sea during a mission to collect hat ingredients, Cordelia is determined to find him. But Uncle Tiberius and Aunt Ariadne have no time to help the littlest Hatmaker, for an ancient rivalry between the Maker families is threatening to surface. Worse, someone seems to be using Maker magic to start a war.

It's up to Cordelia to find out who, and why...



Lamont Review:

“Keep Wildness in your wits and magic in your fingertips”. This is what Cordelia’s Dad tells her before he disappears. Cordelia is the youngest Hatmaker, one of the few magical Maker families left.

But someone seems to be trying to bring back an ancient rivalry between the Maker families, and Cordelia needs to find out why. Together with her friend Goose, who belongs to the Bootmaker family, they must solve this mystery and fast!

This is a wonderful story, perfect for readers who love magic, mystery and adventure. Cordelia and Goose are great characters that you cannot help but adore, and with a supporting cast of loving family and friends, as well as a few evil villains, this book races along at a cracking pace.

A perfect magic and fantasy story for readers in lower secondary and above.

Reviewed by Michelle

Tiger Daughter

By Rebecca Lim

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760877644 SCIS: 1990751

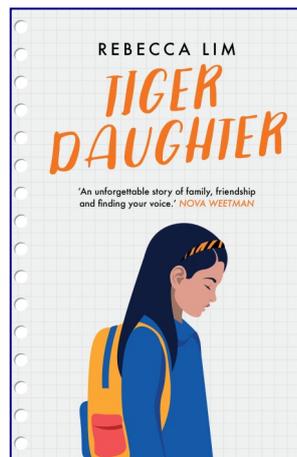
\$16.99

Blurb:

My study buddy, Henry, has made it his mission to get me to an A in maths the way I'm trying to get him to an A in English.

Wen Zhou is the daughter and only child of Chinese immigrants whose move to the lucky country has proven to be not so lucky. Wen and her friend, Henry Xiao - whose mum and dad are also poor immigrants - both dream of escape from their unhappy circumstances, and they form a plan to sit an entrance exam to a selective high school far from home. But when tragedy strikes, it will take all of Wen's resilience and resourcefulness to get herself and Henry through the storm that follows.

Tiger Daughter is a novel that will grab hold of you and not let go.



Lamont Review:

This is a truly touching story that is heart wrenching, but also full of hope.

Wen and her friend Henry are dealing with the struggles of being the children of immigrants, where the values and expectations of their parents that don't always align with the 'free and easy' lifestyle in Australia.

Life is extremely hard for Wen and her mother, who are constantly on edge around Wen's aggressive father. Australia has not been the place he thought it would be for his family. Once a skilled Doctor in China, he now finds himself working at the local Chinese restaurant, and the only thing he can now control is his wife and daughter.

But Wen is a feisty, determined and resilient girl, and you will love her ability and willingness to not give up and to force her father to see things from a different perspective. She finds the courage to stand up for herself, for her friend Henry whose family is facing an unspeakable tragedy, and also to help her mother find her voice.

This really is a wonderful story about friendship, family, the struggles that can be faced by immigrant families, and ultimately hope for a better life. It will be enjoyed by those in lower to middle secondary.

Reviewed by Sam

The Girls I've Been

By Tess Sharpe

Publisher: Hodder Children's Book / Hachette

ISBN 9781444960112 SCIS: 1996909

\$17.99

Blurb:

Soon to be a Netflix film starring Stranger Things' Millie Bobby Brown - this must-read psychological thriller, perfect for fans of One of Us Is Lying, will leave you guessing until the final page. 'Slick, stylish and full of suspense' - Sophie McKenzie. As an ex con artist, Nora has always got herself out of tricky situations. But the ultimate test lies in wait when she's taken hostage in a bank heist. And this time, Nora doesn't have an escape plan... Meet Nora. Also known as Rebecca, Samantha, Haley, Katie and Ashley - the girls she's been. Nora didn't choose a life of deception - she was born into it. As the daughter of a con artist who targeted criminal men, Nora always had to play a part. But when her mother fell for one of the men instead of conning him, Nora pulled the ultimate con herself: escape. For five years Nora's been playing at normal - but things are far from it when she finds herself held at gunpoint in the middle of a bank heist, along with Wes (her ex-boyfriend) and Iris (her secret new girlfriend and mutual friend of Wes ... awkward). Now it will take all of Nora's con artistry skills to get them out alive. Because the gunmen have no idea who she really is - that girl has been in hiding for far too long...



Lamont Review:

This is an absolute edge of your seat thriller! It grabs you from the first scene, where we find our heroine Nora entering a bank with her best friends, Wes and Iris, only to get stuck in the middle of a robbery.

Nora immediately starts calculating possible scenarios as to how they can all leave the bank alive, as things get worse and worse.

We discover more about all of the girls Nora has been, as her con-artist mother used her from an early age as part of her criminal plans that had them constantly changing address and identity. For Nora, this changed at 12 when she was saved by her half-sister who had endured the same upbringing.

Chapters swap between the 'now' of the bank robbery and Nora's past that has given her the ability to react under these extreme circumstances.

Nora is a kick-ass character with cunning and fortitude that you cannot help but love and cheer on, while feeling sorry for the struggles she faced in her earlier life.

This is a gripping psychological thriller that does contain a level of violence and subtly referred to themes that make it best suited to readers aged 14 and above.

Reviewed by Rob

The Sad Ghost Club

By Lize Meddings

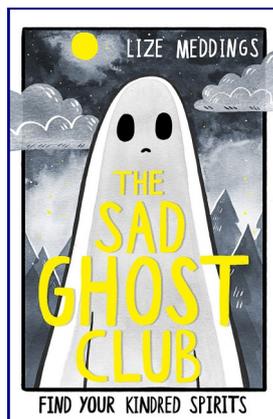
Publisher: Hodder Children's Book / Hachette

ISBN 9781444957358 SCIS: 1996919

\$22.99

Blurb:

Ever felt anxious or alone? Like you don't belong anywhere? Like you're almost... invisible? Find your kindred spirits at The Sad Ghost Club. (You are not alone. Shhh. Pass it on.) This is the story of one of those days - a day so bad you can barely get out of bed, when it's a struggle to leave the house, and when you do, you wish you hadn't. But even the worst of days can surprise you. When one sad ghost, alone at a crowded party, spies another sad ghost across the room, they decide to leave together. What happens next changes everything. Because that night they start The Sad Ghost Club - a secret society for the anxious and alone, a club for people who think they don't belong. For fans of Heartstopper and Jennifer Niven, and for anyone who's ever felt invisible.



Lamont Review:

The Sad Ghost Club is a sensitive, insightful and easy to read graphic novel dealing with themes of anxiety, self-doubt and self-acceptance, loneliness and friendship.

Our ghost is sad. The ghost is trying to do well at school, but sometimes it easier not to want to leave the house and face the world. It is easier to just turn invisible. Like when you're invited to a party. Should you go? What if...?

But an encounter with another sad ghost might just change our ghost's life...

With themes of engagement, self-doubt, loneliness and hope, *The Sad Ghost Club* will reverberate strongly with many secondary students who may also find themselves struggling. The graphic novel format draws you in to the story, and so it will also be a great book for more reluctant readers.

Reviewed by Rob