

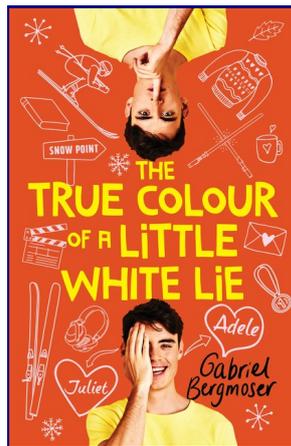
The True Colour of a Little White Lie

By Gabriel Bergmoser
Publisher: Harper Collins
ISBN 9781460759097 SCIS: 5356429
\$19.99

**SECONDARY BOOK
OF THE MONTH**

Blurb:

From the super-talented young author of the best-selling *The Hunted* comes a book that reminds you just how tough adolescence can be. After a catastrophic attempt to ask out his crush, fourteen-year-old Nelson is desperate for any chance to escape the daily humiliations of his small-town high school. And with his parents taking over a nearby ski lodge, that chance seems to have arrived. Up at the lodge he discovers a whole new freedom in a world where nobody knows he's a loser and he can be whatever he wants. But reinvention is complicated, especially when a few white lies land you in the middle of an unexpected love triangle which leads you to sign up for a ski race that you're nowhere near good enough for. As Nelson's new world spirals out of control, he'll slowly discover that no matter where you are, sometimes the hardest thing to run away from is yourself.



Lamont Review:

I think every teenager will relate to this book!

Nelson is the main character and this is the story of his winter on the mountain. During the week Nelson goes to school in town, and every weekend is spent on the mountain - skiing, meeting new people, and getting himself into all sorts of problems by pretending to be someone he's not!

It is a story of friendship, first love, new emotions and unexpected relationships.

I thoroughly enjoyed it and I'm readers will too. Set in the Australian ski slopes, this is a story of growing up and finding out who you are, and more importantly, who you don't want to be. Perfect for readers in Year 8 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

Dirt Circus League

By Maree Kimberley

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922330253 SCIS: 1999446

\$19.99

Blurb:

Take a trip into a dystopian Far North Queensland with this wildly exciting YA novel by Brisbane author Maree Kimberley.

I stumbled towards the Meat House, my body shaking with the violence that raged within me, as the realisation of the mistake I had made in coming here rose to the surface of my mind. This was the last place I should be. That thought was crossed by another, even more terrifying.

This is exactly where I belong.

Asa's running from a troubled past. To a remote outback town, a disappointing father and a fresh start that's already souring.

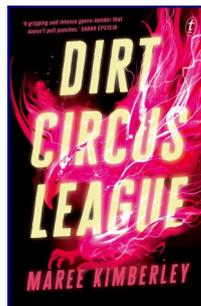
But then the notorious Dirt Circus League arrives. A troupe of outcast teens performing spectacular fight sequences and challenging any who dares to take part.

They're ruthless. Menacing. Thrilling. And led by the magnetic Quarter. He's dark, powerful and intensely attractive - and he faces a threat only Asa can see.

Will Asa be drawn into the league's mysterious community?

And, as she discovers the violent secrets at its heart, will she delve into her own untapped abilities to save herself - and heal those caught in its evil web?

Dirt Circus League is a compelling and fast-paced novel about the powerful allure of danger and the battles we face with our demons in a world beyond our control.



Lamont Review:

Asa has endured a tough upbringing. Finally sick of the abuse inflicted by her Mum's many boyfriends, she heads north to her Dad in a town called Dirt Creek in far North Queensland.

With a martial arts background, Asa is intrigued when the Dirt Circus League come to town to fight any takers, and ultimately fleece the locals. Strangely attracted to their leader, Quarter, Asa decides to join their group.

But little does she know she is not joining a fight club, but a cult, who literally sacrifice themselves for Mother Earth. Asa must act fast to save herself and those caught up in the cult. But can she succeed?

With themes of abuse, violence and human sacrifice, cults, and living with the land, this is not a story for the faint-hearted. It is, however, a compelling Australian thriller that many will love, although given the themes it will best suit those aged 15+.

Reviewed by Rob

When We Are Invisible

By Claire Zorn

Publisher: University of Queensland Press

ISBN 9780702263132 SCIS: 1999448

\$19.99

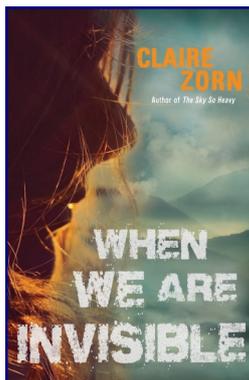
Blurb:

The sequel to Claire Zorn's acclaimed debut *The Sky So Heavy*. A heart-stopping dystopian YA set in the Australian bush.

Instinct has kept us alive so far. It's like a compass and I tune in to the needle often - trust/don't trust, run/stay.. I can't read the needle right now. The warmth of the room is clouding my judgment.

In the midst of a nuclear winter, Lucy, Fin and Max flee the chaos of Sydney with blood on their clothes, a gun and handwritten directions to safety. When they reach Wattlewood, it seems like their struggle to survive might be over. There is food, warmth and adults in charge. So why can't Lucy shake the feeling they're still in danger?

Lucy's survived the apocalypse, but can she escape a more insidious threat?



Lamont Review:

This book is the sequel to *The Sky So Heavy*, which I have not read, and this book certainly stands alone and I had no trouble following along with the story.

Lucy and Fin are the brilliant main characters, displaying courage, moral strength and resourcefulness in the midst of a nuclear winter. After barely managing to flee Sydney, they escape to a farm in the bush. But Lucy is not sure she can trust those in charge...

The story is fast-paced, with twists and turns right throughout. Readers who enjoy dystopian novels will love this book and probably read it in one sitting like I did! I thoroughly enjoyed this book and found it really hard to put down.

It is perfect for readers in Year 9 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

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

A Million Things

By Emily Spurr

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922330505 SCIS: 1999447

\$32.99

Blurb:

Rae is ten years old, and she's tough. She's had to be - life with her mother has taught her the world is not her friend. Now suddenly her mum is gone and Rae is alone, except for her dog Splinter.

Rae can do a lot of things pretty well for a kid. She can take care of herself and Splinters, stay under the radar at school and keep the front yard neat enough that the neighbours won't get curious. But she is gnawed at by fear and sadness; haunted by the shadow of a terrible secret.

Lettie, who lives next door, might know more about Rae than she lets on. But she has her own reasons for keeping the world at arm's length. When Rae finds out what they are, it seems like she and Lettie could help each other.

But how long can a friendship last when it's based on secrets?

Tender, funny, heartbreaking - *A Million Things* is a story of grief and resilience, told with eloquent simplicity. In brave, spiky Rae, Emily Spurr has created a character you will never forget.



Lamont Review:

This is a truly heart-wrenching story that you will not want to put down!

Rae is ten, and finds herself alone, apart from her dog Splinter, who is her rock and always by her side. She is resourceful, resilient and smart and, despite what is going on in her life, is determined to not let the outside world in or ask for anyone's help.

However, the inner battles of fear, sadness and anger that she faces on a daily basis are never far from the surface and as time goes on there is a sense of desperation about the situation she is in. Memories of her Mum, both good and bad, are always on her mind and she is determined to try and keep the house a home, but this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Her neighbour, Lettie, who Rae has always thought of as a 'nosy old goat', is having her own battles. The unlikely relationship that forms between these two is an absolute highlight, and ultimately, it is this friendship and the conversations and insights into life that they have, that end up helping both of them.

Rae is a character that will stay with you long after you finish this book. She is brave and sassy, but underneath it she is really just a little girl who wants to be loved. This is a highly emotional read that has a real mix of themes including grief, resilience, community, friendship, suicide, hoarding and mental illness, and will best suit readers aged 15 and up.

Reviewed by Sam

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

Off The Map

By Scot Gardner

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

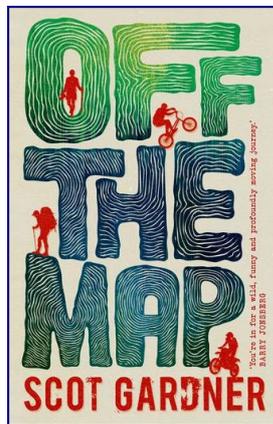
ISBN 9781760877101 SCIS: 1999443

\$19.99

Blurb:

Our home town. Sometimes it feels like the centre of the universe, sometimes it's the bum-end of nowhere. We are her sons and daughters. These are our triumphs and our heartaches, our fears and hopes for a better life.

Getting lost, falling in love, pushing boundaries, exploring the world - powerfully honest stories to make you think and feel, from the award-winning author of *The Dead I Know* and *Changing Gear*.



Lamont Review:

Scot Gardner is one of my favourite authors and so when the advance reading copy of *Off The Map* arrived I thought I would treat myself to some Christmas Eve reading!

Well, after three great chapters, I was not sure how Scot was going to link these characters. Unperturbed, but sure of Scot's ability to bring it all together, I continued. Luckily, after the fourth, I glanced at the back of my advance reading copy to see a quote from Barry Jonsberg referring to 'a stunning smorgasbord of short stories' and I had my answer!

This problem arose because usually I try not to read blurbs or quotes as I eagerly anticipate the author revealing their story. Well, in this case, I was elated, as I love short stories and we are starved of them in our YA market. So I relaxed, went back to the start, and savoured each story for what they were - individual, short and wonderful.

It is a real skill to create compelling stories in as few as five pages, like *Thingless* - that makes you wonder if we really need all of our 'things'.

Scot's stories are typically punchy and will especially resonate with many teenage boys, but also with all teenagers.

With many themes covered, including identity, family, peer pressure, masculinity, and life and death, it is easy to just read one story, but you will want to read them all.

A perfect novel for reluctant readers, but with the language Scot uses - which is in context and relevant to the characters - it would be best suited to readers 14 and above.

Reviewed by Rob

Sunburnt Veils

By Sara Haghdoosti

Publisher: Wakefield Press

ISBN 9781743057766 SCIS: 1999463

\$24.95

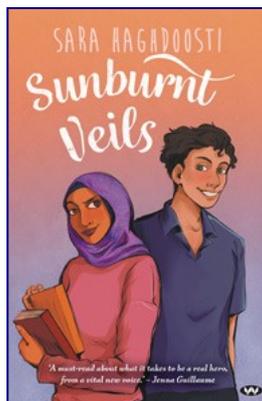
Blurb:

Sunburnt Veils is a smart, funny, character-based exploration of Islamophobia through a heroine who's the kind of girl who reads at parties, but pushes herself to take a visible stand after a fellow student calls in a bomb threat on her first day of university, after she leaves a bag in a lecture theatre to take a phone call.

Girl meets boy, ghosts his text messages, then convinces him to help her run for the student union. Just your typical love story with a hijabi twist.

Tara wears hijab even though her parents hate it, and in a swipe right world she's looking for the 'will go to the ends of the earth for you' type of love. Or, she would be, if she hadn't sworn off boys to focus on getting into med. Besides, what's wrong with just crushing on the assassins, mages and thieves in the fantasy books she reads?

When a bomb threat on her first day of university throws her together with totally annoying party king and oh-so-entitled politician's son Alex, things get complicated. Tara needs to decide if she's happy reading about heroes, or if she's ready to step up and be one herself.



Lamont Review:

Sunburnt Veils is a wonderful story of diversity and acceptance.

Our hero is the book-loving, super-intelligent Tara, who chooses to wear hijab. She is a Sydney University first year med student, but when she momentarily leaves her backpack in a lecture she finds that a bomb threat has been called in.

Following this incident she decides to run for the Student Union, but she is later attacked by a stupid, super-wealthy prankster.

Tara and her best friend Mitra are the real core of the story, but it explores so many wonderful characters and relationships. The highlight is Tara's growing, but sometimes difficult, love story with Alex, who just happens to be the son of the NSW Premier.

With a touch of humour, *Sunburnt Veils* effortlessly tackles themes of discrimination, Islamophobia, and explores Tara's determination to try to make the world a truly more accepting and better place.

It contains the occasional swearing, but always in context, so it will be best suited to readers 15 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

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

The Prison Healer

By Lynette Noni

Publisher: Penguin

ISBN 9781760897512 SCIS: 1999459

\$24.99

Blurb:

Here at Zalindov, the only person you can trust is yourself.

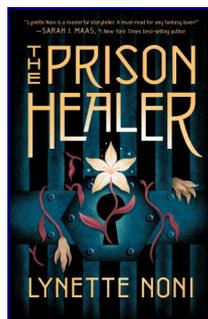
Seventeen-year-old Kiva Meridan has spent the last ten years fighting for survival in the notorious death prison, Zalindov, working as the prison healer.

When the Rebel Queen is captured, Kiva is charged with keeping the terminally ill woman alive long enough for her to undergo the Trial by Ordeal - a series of elemental challenges against the torments of air, fire, water and earth, assigned to only the most dangerous of criminals.

Then a coded message from Kiva's family arrives, containing a single order - Don't let her die. We are coming. Aware that the Trials will kill the sickly queen, Kiva risks her own life to volunteer in her place. If she succeeds, both she and the queen will be granted their freedom.

But no one has ever survived.

With an incurable plague sweeping Zalindov, a mysterious new inmate fighting for Kiva's heart, and a prison rebellion brewing, Kiva can't escape the terrible feeling that her trials have only just begun.



Lamont Review:

This is a wonderful fantasy novel set in a very harsh world. Seventeen-year-old Kiva has been in Zalindov prison for ten years. Most only last weeks. She has been made the prison healer, which gives her certain privileges, but means that she is distrusted by the other prisoners.

When the deathly ill Rebel Queen arrives at the prison, Kiva must keep her alive so that she can face the Trial by Ordeal - a sentence that pits the person against the four elements of Earth, Fire, Water and Air. A trial that only someone with magical powers could possibly survive.

Seeing the senseless death the sick woman would endure, Kiva offers to stand in as her champion and face the ordeals herself.

This should be the end of the Kiva, but with the help of a Prince she survives the first ordeal. But surely she will soon meet her end...

With themes of good and evil, and a terrific, brave and optimistic female lead character, a new prisoner love interest, an overbearing and powerful warden, and mostly horrible and cruel guards, Kiva's story is slowly revealed. But it is the ending that makes the book great, with a twist that I certainly did not see coming!

Containing abuse, death, blood and violence, but also hope, great relationships, and wonderful characters, it will best suit a reader 14+.

Reviewed by Rob