

Common Wealth

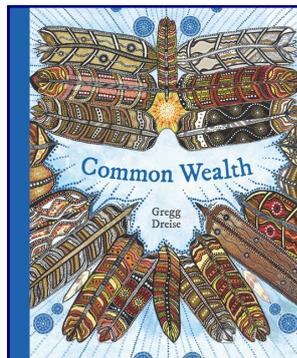
By Gregg Dreise
Publisher: Omnibus Books/Scholastic
ISBN 9781760975166 SCIS: 5358294
\$24.99

**SECONDARY BOOK
OF THE MONTH**

Blurb:

All that I'm wishing, Is that you take a moment to listen... A slam poetry persuasive and powerful vision of unity from award-winning First Nations creator Gregg Dreise. Passionate, yet peaceful, *Common Wealth* is a compelling plea for a future of truth, togetherness and respect for our nation's deep history.

- A picture book for mature readers.
- From multi award-winning author and artist, Gregg Dreise - a proud descendant of the Kamilaroi and Euahlayi people.
- Valuable resource for discussion about the importance of moving forward together as a nation, with truth and respect for our history and Traditional Custodians.
- Timely themes for National Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week.
- Themes: Indigenous history; Australian history; Australia Day; Australian anthem; unity; community. Contains some confronting images.



Lamont Review:

“Common Wealth” takes the words from our anthem and turns them into a vision for the future. Through the use of slam poetry, award-winning First Nations creator Gregg Dreise’s book is a call for unity and togetherness at a time when division is prevalent. The importance of including the history of First Nations people as part of history education in schools is championed, and the ideas for changes to be made to the flag, anthem and the date of Australia Day, and the reasons for these changes, are put forward passionately and persuasively.

The book is a heartfelt argument for breaking down division, coming together, and uniting for the future of Australia, and provides a great platform for teens to talk and learn more about Australia’s past, whilst considering suggestions for the future. I recommend reading it 2-3 times, each time focusing on a different aspect of the book; first the poem, for the great wording; then the illustrations and accompanying notes which add to it; then finally pulling it all together.

A thought-provoking read, with brilliant illustrations. It does discuss some confronting topics, particularly through the illustrations, but is overwhelmingly a positive read with optimism for a better future together. This is a book that is overflowing with discussion points for students in all secondary levels, that would make a great starting point for class discussion with the many themes that can be explored.

Reviewed by Ben

The Other Side of Perfect

By Mariko Turk

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760526252 SCIS: 5355503

\$19.99

Blurb:

Alina Keeler was destined to dance, but one terrifying fall shatters her leg - and her dreams of a ballet career along with it. After a summer spent healing (translation: eating vast amounts of Cool Ranch Doritos and bingeing ballet videos on YouTube), she must trade her preprofessional dance classes for normal high school, where she reluctantly joins the musical. Rehearsals are nothing compared to Alina's past life at the acclaimed Kira Dobrow Ballet School. But the stage does offer more than she expected - namely her castmate Jude. He's annoyingly attractive, ridiculously optimistic and, worst of all, Alina just might be falling for him. However, finding a new normal means making peace with her past and acknowledging the racism she faced. Deep down, Alina still yearns for the world of ballet she left behind. But what does it mean to love something beautiful, yet broken? And as broken as she feels, can she ever open her heart to someone else?

Lyrical, romantic and peppered with humour, this debut novel explores the tenuousness of perfectionism, the possibilities of change and the importance of raising your voice.



Lamont Review:

How to move on when your whole future and reason for living is shattered?

This is what Alina is faced with when she breaks her leg and her looming professional ballet career is gone.

Back in normal high school, she has joined the school musical and it is opening up new options and friendships. But this doesn't get close to replacing the sense of perfection that she felt when performing ballet at her peak.

Can meeting the gorgeous Jude, her dance partner in the musical, help?

The Other Side of Perfect is a journey through her healing process. Alina's relationships with her sisters, her new best friend, and her old ballet best friend are central to the story and helps Alina to realise that life is what you make it!

Overall, a terrific romantic novel with themes of personal development, racism, perfectionism, friendship, love, and self growth, and will most appeal to teenage girls aged 14+.

Reviewed by Rob

Can't Say It Went to Plan

By Gabrielle Tozer

Publisher: Harper Collins

ISBN 9781460758533 SCIS: 5355536

\$19.99

Blurb:

From the award-winning author of *The Intern*, *Faking It* and *Remind Me How This Ends*. School's out. Forget study, exams and mapping out the future. For the next seven days, the only homework is partying with friends, making new ones and living in the moment. There are no parents or curfews - and no rules. Zoe, Samira and Dahlia are strangers, but they have something in common: their plans for a dream holiday after their final year of school are flipped upside-down before they even arrive at the beach. From hooking up and heartache, to growing apart, testing friendships and falling in love, anything can go down this week.



Lamont Review:

This is a terrific novel following the journey of three girls at 'schoolies week'.

With vastly different backgrounds, our characters are each there with their own friendship groups, but do occasionally interact as they are in the same town for the end of school celebrations.

Samira begins her week being dumped by her boyfriend and discovering that her friends are not really friends. Luckily she meets up with the nerdy group from next door, and discovers a true connection.

Highly driven Zoe is hoping to get into medicine at university, but things don't always go to plan. When her strict parents decide to ban her from going because they have heard what happens at schoolies, she decides enough is enough, and goes anyway. She is, after all, going with her cousins, so what can go wrong? Right?

Dahlia, whose best friend Stevie died of a brain tumour 12 months ago, and her two friends are really living their lives as a memory to Stevie. Will they learn that they can live their own dreams, whilst not forgetting Stevie?

As is to be expected in a schoolies week story, the girls are out and about, and there is drinking and partying, but mostly this is a journey of discovering their individual identities.

With themes of self discovery, friendship, family, hopes and dreams, this novel will best suit readers aged 14 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

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

The Ones We're Meant to Find

By Joan He

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781911231332 SCIS: 5355512

\$19.99

Blurb:

A clever, thrilling YA about two sisters searching for each other and for truth, against a backdrop of environmental disaster.

Two sisters. An unputdownable story.

Cee woke up on the shores of an abandoned island three years ago with no idea how she got there. Now eighteen, she lives in a shack with an ageing android, and a single memory - she has a sister, and she has to escape to find her.

From the safety of the eco-city floating above Earth, now decimated by natural disasters, sixteen-year-old Kasey mourns Cee whom she's sure is dead. She too wants to escape - the eco-city is meant to be a sanctuary for people who want to save the planet, but its inhabitants are willing to do anything for refuge, even lie. Is Kasey ready to use technology to help Earth, even though it failed her sister?

Cee and Kasey think that what they know about each other and their world is true. Both are wrong. If you loved *We Were Liars* or *Black Mirror*, you'll love *The Ones We're Meant to Find*, a clever, inspirational thriller.



Lamont Review:

Set in a futuristic world where many have already perished from climate catastrophe, this is a story of two sisters trying to find each other.

Cee has been gone for three years. Her younger sister Kasey is a science genius, who needs to find out what happened to her. But can she?

With Earth completely decimated by natural disasters, drastic steps need to be taken by Kasey to save what is left of the planet.

With a deserted island setting and a mysteriously and gorgeous arrival, super bots, the ocean and so many unexpected twists, this is an epic thriller.

What is real and what is not will keep you guessing right up until the last page.

With questions regarding climate change, scientific advancement and humanity, and themes of family, trust and hope, with some sexual references, this novel is best suited to readers 15 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

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

Oddity

By Eli Brown

Publisher: Walker Books

ISBN 9781406389272 SCIS: 5358284

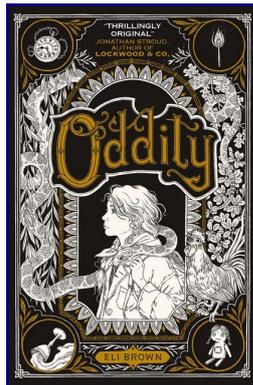
\$18.99

Blurb:

The daughter of a murdered physician vows to protect the magical Oddity he left behind – if only she knew what it was – in an alternate nineteenth century in which the United States is at war with Napoleon's France.

When her physician father is murdered, thirteen-year-old Clover Elkin embarks on a perilous mission through warring frontier territories to protect the one secret Oddity he left behind. And as she uncovers the truth about her parents and her past, Clover herself emerges as a powerful agent of history.

A rich, startling, funny fantasy adventure, powered by an irresistible force-of-nature heroine; Clover Elkin is a born fighter – a heroine to rival Lyra Belacqua or True Grit's Mattie Ross.



Lamont Review:

Set in an alternative version of nineteenth century USA, this is the story of Clover Elkin, both her past and her present. When her father is murdered, the last thing he tells Clover is to protect the one Oddity he left behind. The problem is, Clover has no idea what it is!

All she knows is that Oddities have strange magical powers, and some are more dangerous and deadly than others.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and I loved Clover. She is feisty, smart, kind, compassionate, strong and determined. The story weaves through the wonderful world Eli Brown has created, and is filled with a host of great supporting characters, who all have a part to play in helping Clover uncover the mystery of her past.

Perfect for fantasy lovers, *Oddity* will appeal to readers in Year 8 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

Shackleton's Endurance: An Antarctic Survival Story

By Joanna Grochowicz

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760526092 SCIS: 5355522

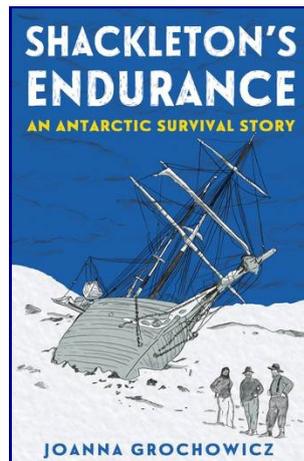
\$16.99

Blurb:

Adrift on the Antarctic pack ice with no means of escape and no hope of rescue, Ernest Shackleton and his men are surely doomed.

In August 1914, Ernest Shackleton and his men set sail for Antarctica, where they plan to cross the last uncharted continent on foot. In January 1915, his ship, the Endurance, becomes locked in pack ice. Later, it sinks without a trace.

To survive, Shackleton and his crew of twenty-seven men must undertake a trial even more extreme than their planned crossing of the frozen continent. Their aim is to make it home against tremendous odds, with only lifeboats to cross the heavy seas of the South Atlantic - and the life-saving power of Shackleton's extraordinary leadership skills.



Lamont Review:

When Ernest Shackleton and his men set out on a remarkable journey to Antarctica, they know it will be a dangerous trip, but what they experience and survive is remarkable.

This truly is an amazing story of survival, perseverance, ingenuity and endurance. When their boat becomes stuck in the ice they are in mortal peril, and the subsequent battle to then get to land in order to have any hope of surviving is, at times, truly unbelievable.

This is a fascinating story, and what really shines through the entire book is Shackleton's leadership and attitude in the face of disaster. His determination to get all his men to safety is foremost in his mind, and his ability to stay positive and keep his team together in the incredibly challenging circumstances they found themselves in was extraordinary.

Joanna Grochowicz has done a brilliant job of bringing this true story to life, and this will be enjoyed by all secondary students, especially lovers of true stories and adventure.

Reviewed by Sam