

Coastwatcher

By David Hill

Publisher: Puffin / Penguin

ISBN 9780143775966 SCIS: 5368870

\$17.99

Blurb:

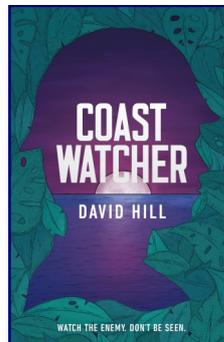
A tense, exciting war adventure inspired by the coastwatchers of Operation Pacific, from award-winning author David Hill.

'It's not going to be a cushy job, young Benson. You're on your own. Japs will be looking for you. Far as they're concerned, you're spies. And when a spy gets captured, remember . . .'

It's 1943, and 19-year-old radio operator Frank Benson is shipped out to an enemy-occupied island in the Solomons with two other soldiers. Their mission is to spy on the Japanese.

In dense jungle they meet a Solomon Islander who says he has information that will shatter Japanese defences. But he could be working for the enemy. What if it's a trap to get them killed?

No training could have prepared Frank for this decision. Their lives - and Operation Pacific - depend on his next move.



Lamont Review:

New Zealand author David Hill has written a terrific novel inspired by the coast watchers of Operation Pacific, that looks at the allies trying to overcome the Japanese on the Solomon Islands in 1943 during WWII.

Frank, who has recovered from Tuberculosis, has faked a clean bill of health to enlist in New Zealand army as a wireless operator.

He is sent on a mission with his mate Wally and experienced Aussie soldier Les, to become a coast watcher. This essentially means to bunker down in potentially enemy territory and observe the coming and going of battle enemy ships and planes.

They were discovered by A'ata, a local, who wants them to visit his village and meet his elders. Once there, they discover a recently parachute dropped enemy radio and secret code books. Frank can't believe their luck, as this could change the war in their favour.

But with the Japanese desperately searching for it, what can they do to get it back to their commanders?

With some fighting, the story tackles the reality of war as well as camaraderie, mateship, and empathy - even with the enemy - this is a terrific novel that is suitable for all 11 - 14 year olds.

Reviewed by Rob

The Wolf's Howl: A Maven & Reeve Mystery

By A.L Tait

Publisher: Penguin

ISBN 9781761041792 SCIS: 5368875

\$16.99

Blurb:

Bestselling author A. L. Tait is back with the next Maven and Reeve Mystery.

A secret mission.

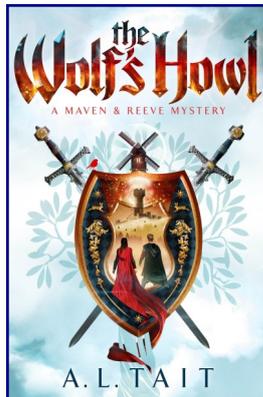
A missing cook.

A hostile landscape.

A mystery to unravel.

Maven and Reeve find themselves at the far-flung and gloomy Glawn Castle while Sir Garrick secretly searches for supporters of the rebellion. But when a cook goes missing and the Airl's personal guards take more than a passing interest in the disappearance, danger looms and the potential for discovery grows.

Can Maven and Reeve solve the mystery... or will they be unmasked and sentenced with treason?



Lamont Review:

The Fire Star, the first book in this series, was included in the 2021 CBCA Book of the Year Notables list and *The Wolf's Howl* is a tremendous follow up.

This journey sees us follow Maven and Reeve to the outermost wind swept village of Glawn, accompanying Sir Garrick and Lady Cassandra as they seek to gather supporters to overthrow the King.

With the help of the secret society of women, The Beech Circle, Maven gets into the middle of things once again. But she must tread carefully as one wrong step could see her put to death for treason!

With themes of resilience, medieval life, secret societies, codes and ciphers, and trust, all set in a hostile and exciting time and place, this is an action packed story.

It is a great second book in the series, but can easily be read as a stand alone novel that will best suit readers aged 11 - 15 years.

Reviewed by Rob

Exit Through The Gift Shop

By Maryam Master

Publisher: Pan Australia / Pan Macmillan Australia

ISBN 9781760983512 SCIS: 5364617

\$16.99

Blurb:

Anahita Rosalind Ghorban-Galaszczuk (yes, that really is her name but you can call her Ana) is discovering that life is absurd. As if dying of cancer at the age of 12.5 isn't bad enough, she still has to endure daily insults from her nemesis, Alyssa (Queen Mean) Anderson. Ana's on a wild roller-coaster of life and death, kindness and cruelty, ordinary and extraordinary. And she's got a few things to do before she exits...



Lamont Review:

Ana is twelve and a half, and she is dying of cancer. She has sworn her best friend, Al, and her parents and step-parents across both her two households to secrecy about her illness.

So her worst enemy, Alyssa (Butt Breath) Anderson continues to bully her everyday. She is experiencing the very best and worst of people, but she has plans of her own before she goes, and with Al to help her, what could go wrong!

This is a beautifully written book, exploring one young girl's journey of facing her own death. She does confront her own mortality through the story so whilst it is deep content it is written with so much humour, joy and love, that you will remember this book long after you put it down. It is a truly joyous affirmation to make the most of everyday and to be the best person you can.

Ana chooses to be happy with what she has and find joy in everyday, something we should all strive for.

Perfect for students in Year 7 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

The Summer I Robbed a Bank

By David O'Doherty

Publisher: Puffin / Penguin

ISBN 9780241362235 SCIS: 5368889

\$14.99

Blurb:

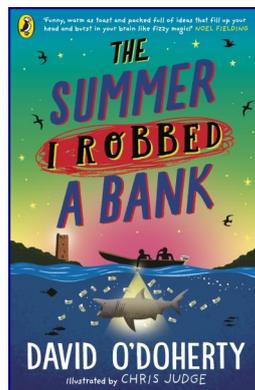
Millions meets Gangsta Granny.

There's a feeling of relief that comes just after you've robbed a bank...

Rex's parents have split up and, to make matters worse, he has to spend his summer holiday on a remote and rainy Irish island - with only unruly sheep for company. The only upside - he'll be staying with his strange and brilliant Uncle Derm.

Then Rex discovers Uncle Derm is about to execute his most hair-brained plan yet... To rob the island's travelling bank!

Like the local legend of medieval Pirate Queen Grace O'Malley, Uncle Derm plans to redistribute the money to local needy causes on the island. And he needs Rex's help...



Lamont Review:

When 12-year-old Rex is sent to a remote island to stay with his eccentric Uncle Derm for two weeks over the summer holidays, his life is turned upside down.

Normally Rex is prevented from doing anything by his overprotective mother. But now, with the help of his new friend Kitty, he is getting up to all sorts of adventures.

It turns out that Uncle Derm is terribly sick, and with developers trying to build a hotel in the Old Coastguard station that serves as the island's hospital, they need money now to save it. Uncle Derm really doesn't want to have to leave his beloved island.

Eventually their hairbrained ideas for making money culminate in a plan to rob the island's travelling bank van. To say everything goes wrong is an understatement. But you have to love their persistence and passion!

This is a hilariously funny, easy to read adventure that has themes of friendship, right and wrong, illness, living life to the full and family ties that will be loved by readers aged 10-14 years.

Reviewed by Rob