

The What On Earth Institute

By Lisa Nicol

Publisher: Puffin / Penguin

ISBN 9781761041556 SCIS: 5372946

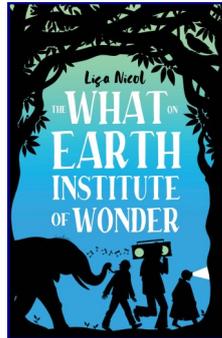
\$16.99

Blurb:

A mind-boggling expedition into the secrets of the Animal Kingdom with only an invisible map of the human heart as a guide. (Unless, of course, you count the talking parrot.) What on Earth could possibly go wrong...?

Sal has always had an affinity with animals - especially the lost kind. But when two rare and endangered creatures appear out of nowhere, life takes a detour into strange and uncharted territory...

One elephant, one kakapo, one unlicensed teenage driver, one boy waiting for the world to end and a twelve-year-old girl with a very special gift.



Lamont Review:

Twelve-year-old Sal has always had an affinity with animals, but this goes up a notch when a Kakakpo - a rare bird from New Zealand - turns up at her window and they can talk to each other.

Then an equally rare African elephant walks into town seemingly following her neighbour, fourteen-year-old Bartholomew. How strange!

Sal's younger brother is worried about the end of the world, but his doomsday preparations help them hide the elephant.

But when the elephant is discovered the postmaster of the town, Mr Longhorn, decides to use him as a tourist attraction. This is a great moment for the usually unlucky town of Larry.

The kids can see this is a terrible idea and want to free the elephant. When they discover that many of the town of Larry's problems are being caused by the evil postmaster, can they find a way to reveal Mr Longhorn's behaviour and save their elephant, all in one go?

This is a wonder-filled novel with themes of the environment, endangered and rare animals, working together to overcome challenges, community, friendship and family dynamics, that will suit all readers aged 9 - 13.

Reviewed by Rob

Wednesday Weeks and the Crown of Destiny

By Cristy Burne and Denis Knight

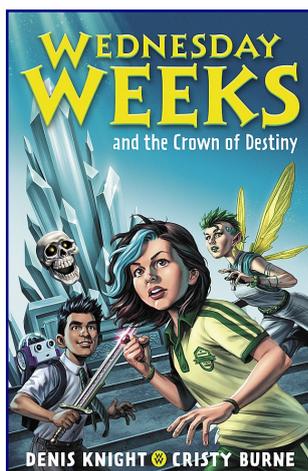
Publisher: Lothian Children's Books / Hachette

ISBN 9780734420213 SCIS: 5372939

\$16.99

Blurb:

Wednesday Weeks is just starting to get the hang of this whole magic thing. But Gorgomoth the Unclean is on the loose again and he's out to ruin everything, for keeps. When Gorgomoth steals the Crown of Destiny and turns Grandpa into a frog, it's up to Wednesday and Alfie - with help from Bruce and their new friend Adaline - to track him down. But wormholes, giant pinball machines and a stolen crown are only the beginning. Throw in a floating fortress full of goblins, some misbehaving magic and a missing pair of eyebrows, and Wednesday and Alfie are going to have to take their magic - and their science - to the next level. Book 2 in the brilliant Wednesday Weeks series, which asks the question: In a world of magic, can science save the day?



Lamont Review:

Following on from Wednesday and Alfie's adventures in *The Tower of Shadows*, which was included in your May package, these two young friends find themselves in trouble again!

Just as Wednesday and Alfie are settling back into school life, as well as continuing their magic lessons with Grandpa, Gorgomoth the Unclean is suddenly causing havoc again.

This time he has stolen the Crown of Destiny from Queen Shard, the Faery Queen, and is determined to enslave all of the Nine Realms. But Gorgomoth cannot use the powers of the Crown on his own, and he needs the power of faery Adaline to make it work.

Wednesday and Alfie, together with Bruce the skull and Faery Adaline, have their work cut out for them if they are going to save the Crown. Gorgomoth has turned Grandpa into a frog and also has his magic Ruby Ring. They are going to need to use all the magic, maths and science they know to solve this problem...

This is not only a fabulous fantasy adventure, but a wonderful story of friendship. Wednesday and Alfie are two characters that you will love! Perfect for readers in upper primary and lower secondary.

Reviewed by Sam

The School Between Winter and Fairyland

By Heather Fawcett

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760526542 SCIS: 5372951

\$16.99

Blurb:

Twelve-year-old Autumn is a beastkeeper at Inglenook School for Magicians, which she secretly dreams of attending as a student. Instead, she must care for Inglenook's menagerie of dangerous creatures so the king's future monster hunters can study them. But when she isn't mucking out the griffin stalls, Autumn searches for clues about her twin brother's mysterious disappearance. Everyone else thinks that he was devoured by the terrifying Hollow Dragon, but Autumn isn't so sure.

Enter Cai Morrigan, the famous young magician prophesied to one day destroy the Hollow Dragon. When Cai comes to Autumn with a secret problem, Autumn agrees to help on one condition: that the 'Chosen One' join her quest to find her brother. Together they uncover the dark truth that lies at the heart of Inglenook School - because every school has its secrets...



Lamont Review:

Set in the school of the Inglenook School for Magicians, and the surrounding forest, this is a story full of mythical and magical creatures.

Autumn, her brothers and her Gran are beastkeepers - they care for the creatures that are kept at the school for the magicians to practice their spells on. But her twin brother Winter has been missing for some time, and Autumn is determined to find him. She uses every opportunity she can to search for him, even though everyone thinks he has been taken by the Hollow Dragon who lurks in the forest.

But Autumn and Winter have a bond, and Autumn can feel that he is still alive. And she may just have some untapped magic skills of her own...

When Cai Morrigan, the famous young magician who is slated to save them all from the Hollow Dragon, asks Autumn for her help she sees this as her chance to find Winter.

But little did they know that they would set off a chain of events that no one would see coming, as well as exposing secrets of both their families. This is a fabulous magical mystery story that is wonderfully told. Autumn is feisty and determined, and you will love her sense of loyalty and willingness to not give up.

All fantasy loving, middle grade readers will thoroughly enjoy this tale!

Reviewed by Sam

Mel and Shell

By Julia Lawrinson

Publisher: Fremantle Press

ISBN 9781760990725 SCIS: 5369233

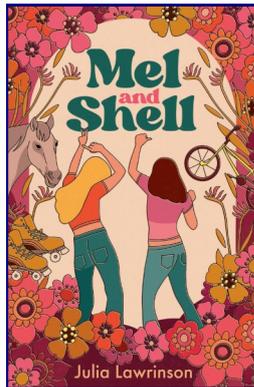
\$16.99

Blurb:

Mel and Shell is the latest book for middle readers from award-winning author Julia Lawrinson.

Shell and Mel are best friends, united by their love of ABBA. But when Scary Sharon decides she wants to be friends with Shell, and Mel begins acting strangely, things start changing fast.

Confiding in her pen pal from 1829, Shell discovers she has a lot to learn about loyalty, honesty and roller skating.



Lamont Review:

Set in 1979, best friends Mel and Shell are no different to many their age, just spending time together and obsessing over ABBA!

When they are given the task of writing to a real person who lived 150 years ago, explaining what life is like now and questioning what life was like then, Shell is given Mary Ann Swift, who was aboard the boat the HMS Sulphur.

And so Shell starts telling Mary all about her daily life, including the friendship issues that are now arising with Mel, the bully Sharon, as well as her other friends, Jody and Lisa.

Being told through Shell's eyes, we get an insight into life in 1979, as she tries to explain her life at the time to Mary. It is a history lesson not only of things that happened 150 years ago, but of life in the late 70's, which will be an eye opener for many younger readers. For me, being a similar age to that of the girls in 1979, it brought back many memories!

Can Mel and Shell navigate all that comes with dealing with change, growing up and confronting bigger issues than just worrying about the next ABBA song?

But there is more to this story than just the girl's friendship issues. There are also themes of bullying, family issues and racism.

Perfect for students in Year 5 to 8.

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

Reviewed by Sam

The Song of Lewis Carmichael

By Sofie Laguna & Illustrated by Marc McBride

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760878573 SCIS: 5372935

\$16.99

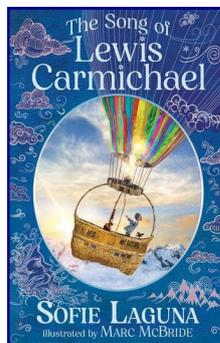
Blurb:

Matthew stood on the snowy peak and stared out at the world spread before him. Every picture in his books had been limited by the size of the page, contained within frames. Here, there was no frame. Here, the picture didn't end. Beyond those icy plains, the sea, and beyond the sea, a land that floated on the ice, drifting northwards. Matthew put the binoculars to his eyes and saw valleys and cliffs and rivers all made of snow. Everywhere was white.

Matthew has dreamed and read and thought about the North Pole for as long as he can remember. And he has done it secretly. It is a place that cannot be tarnished by the world in which he lives - a world in which he struggles to find answers and make friends, while everything seems to come easily to other children.

But one day, a crow called Lewis Carmichael lands at Matthew's window - a crow who believes in Matthew in the most simple and ordinary ways. Soon, the unexpected voyage of a lifetime begins, and it will change everything...

An unforgettable adventure story from award-winning children's book author Sofie Laguna, with enchanting illustrations by Marc McBride.



Lamont Review:

Imagine a young boy who struggles in the real world, both at school and in making friends. Someone who feels like he is not enough even for his parents. This is how Matthew feels before a crow named Lewis Carmichael lands on his window.

Lewis Carmichael encourages Matthew to come out onto the roof to take a hot air balloon ride to the North Pole. The North Pole and everything related to the Arctic are indeed Matthew's one obsession!

Then, with encouragement, often in the form of song, Lewis persuades Michael to face challenge after challenge. We witness Michael's growth into a much more adventurous and outgoing boy.

The Song of Lewis Carmichael is a beautifully written and magical story, about an incredible journey.

Giving a real insight into Arctic conditions, and with themes of resilience, friendship, imagination and family, this is a terrific story suitable to all readers aged 8 and above.

Reviewed by Rob

Always

By Morris Gleitzman

Publisher: Viking / Penguin

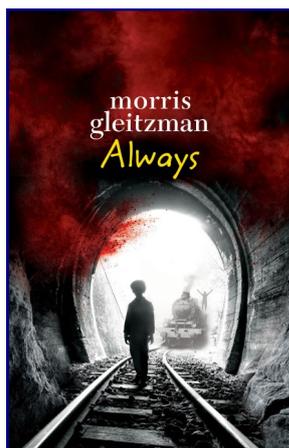
ISBN 9780143793243 SCIS: 5372937

\$19.99

Blurb:

The much-anticipated final journey in the story of Felix, hero of Morris Gleitzman's multi-award-winning *Once, Then, Now, After, Soon and Maybe*.

It's fifteen years since readers were first introduced to Felix in *Once* and across six celebrated books, our brave young hero has survived many unforgettable and emotional journeys. Now comes the seventh and final part of Felix's story, bringing to a powerful climax a series that countless young readers around the world will remember - *Always*.



Lamont Review:

Always seeing the best in people.

Always helping those in need.

Always facing problems head on.

Always telling a great story to add to the life of the incredible Felix.

Now 90 years old, Felix still finds it in his heart to help others. When Wassin arrives at his door, Felix knows that he must help this young boy as they take a journey across the globe to fix problems, both of today and the past.

For 16 years we have been delighted to share the miracle of Felix, on his journey from childhood to being lucky enough to become an old man.

This book is a lovely story to read alone, but for those of us that have shared in Felix's life journey, it is a must read and a terrific final instalment.

A great read for anyone aged 9 - 90.

Reviewed by Rob

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