

## **Growing Up In Flames**

By Zach Jones

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922458360 SCIS: 5387407

\$19.99

**Secondary Book  
of the Month**

*Blurb:*

This contemporary YA novel is perfect for fans of Mark Smith and Vikki Wakefield, and tackles grief, belonging and mental illness.

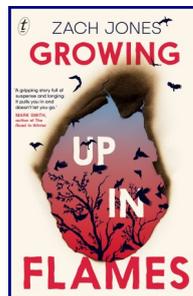
I've heard of Noah the way you hear about car accidents. A series of whispers, theories and rumours...

Kenna's mother Ava was killed in a bushfire not long ago. Now Kenna's living with her uncle and his young family in the small town where Ava grew up, and she feels like an intruder.

Noah's mother has a mental illness that makes him both carer and jailer - constantly watchful, keeping things on an even keel.

One night Kenna sees the general store on fire, and a boy standing watching as it burns. It takes her a while to notice he's holding a petrol can, but then things move fast. She's tackled him and run off with his bag before she even knows what's happened.

The bag belongs to Noah, and he really wants it back. Kenna wants something too. To make someone else burn the way her mum did. And there's something she doesn't know - how Noah can help her find out the truth about her family.



*Lamont Review:*

This is a gripping, contemporary and thoroughly Australian YA novel. I loved it.

Told mainly from the perspective of two main characters, Kenna and Noah, who are older teenagers living in a small Australian country town.

Kenna is living through the grief of losing her Mum in a bushfire. She has the added burden of believing that she might be the one who threw the cigarette into the bush that caused the bushfire.

Sent to live with her uncle, his wife and their young son, in a house that her Mum grew up in, she starts to slowly unravel the many pieces of her Mum's life that led to her leaving town and never coming back.

Noah is his mentally ill Mum's carer, after his Dad took off. He meets Kenna while his family's disused general store is burning, in a fire that he lit.

They start out as enemies. But can Noah help Kenna on her quest to find the truth about her Mum?

With themes of family, small town prejudices, mental illness and discovering your origins, it is a wonderful novel for all teenagers 14 and older.

*Reviewed by Rob*

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

## Radha & Jai's Recipe for Romance

By Nisha Sharma

Publisher: Little Tiger Press

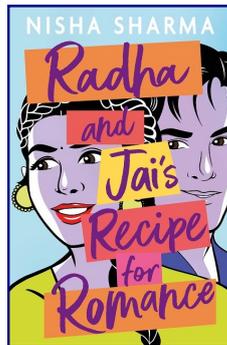
ISBN 9781788952132 SCIS: 5388746

\$19.99

### Blurb:

Radha was on the verge of winning the world's biggest kathak dancing competition when a family betrayal shattered her dreams, and her confidence. Now, she's made a deal with her mum: study dance for a year at the Princeton Academy of Arts and Sciences and then leave that world forever. But if she's not a dancer, what is she? Could learning to cook – a way to connect with her absent father – become her new passion?

Jai, captain of the academy's Bollywood Beats dance team, is putting his hopes of going to medical school on hold because money is tight at home. But then Jai meets Radha and as sparks fly, he soon realizes she could be the ingredient he and Bollywood Beats need for a life-changing year. Can Radha and Jai figure out their dreams and choreograph their happily ever after?



### Lamont Review:

Radha is a world class kathak dancer. But when she walks out of a competition in London because of her mother, she loses all her confidence and her ability to believe in herself.

Radha and her Mum leave Chicago and her Dad behind, and go to New Jersey so that Radha can spend a year at the Academy of Arts. Here she meets Jai, who is the leader of the Bollywood Beats dance team, and who is struggling with his own issues with his family.

Radha and Jai have an instant attraction to each other, but can they overcome their fears enough to follow their dreams?

I really enjoyed this story. I loved all the characters, especially Radha and Jai, and the interactions with their families. It's a romance, but also a story of following your heart and dreams, and believing in yourself enough to give it a go. It is also about family, their expectations and dealing with change.

A wonderful coming of age story that all those who love a bit of romance will really enjoy.

Perfect for those in Year 9 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

## **Those Kids From Fawn Creek**

By Erin Entrada Kelly

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922458506 SCIS: 5394593

\$16.99

### *Blurb:*

From Newbery medallist Erin Entrada Kelly comes a contemporary school story about friendship, family, deception, and being true to yourself.

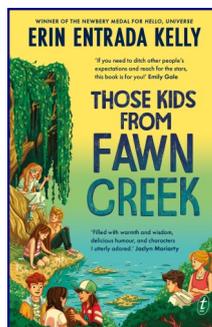
Every day in Fawn Creek feels exactly the same - until Orchid Mason arrives.

There are twelve kids in the seventh grade at the Fawn Creek school. They've been together all their lives. In this tiny manufacturing town where everyone knows everything about everyone, that's not necessarily a great thing.

There are twelve kids, but thirteen desks. That's because Renni Dean moved to Grand Saintlodge - the next-door town - last year. Renni might have left Fawn Creek, but she still knows their secrets. She's still pulling their strings.

When Orchid Mason arrives and slips gracefully into Renni's desk, the other seventh-graders don't know what to think. Orchid is new and exciting. She was born in New York City and has travelled the world. She has lived in Paris, and she tells them stories of the Eiffel Tower and the Love Lock Bridge. She seems to float. Her dress skims the floor. She wears a flower behind her ear.

Orchid's arrival is about to upset the tightly knit friendship groups and challenge the hold Renni has over them. Who will claim Orchid Mason? Will she save them? Or will they save her?



### *Lamont Review:*

Set in the sleepy hollow of Fawn (aka Yawn) Creek, where there are only twelve kids in Year 7. The same twelve have been together forever, although their used to be thirteen until Renni moved schools. But then the mysterious Orchid arrives...

Having lived around the world, in places like Paris and Thailand, she is truly a breath of fresh air. To our main characters, Grayson and Dorothy, best friends forever, Orchid brings change and hope.

Greyson is tired of fitting into his family's macho world of duck shooting, fishing and football, and dreams of designing and making his own clothes.

Dorothy has always lived in the shadows, but when Orchid suggests a new name suddenly Didi shines so much brighter.

Orchid may not be all she seems, but she is imaginative and kind, and brings positive change to the entire class. Covering topics like acceptance, toxic friendships, change, and most importantly, kindness. This is a great classroom novel that is suited to a 10 to 14 year old reader.

The characters are wonderful, and the writing and message inspirational.

*Reviewed by Rob*

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

## League of Liars

By Astrid Scholte

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760630799 SCIS: 5387401

\$19.99

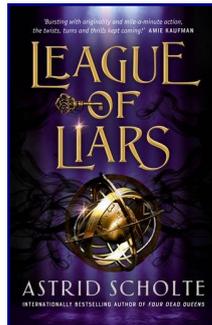
### Blurb:

Shadows are dangerous. Edem is illegal. And liars are cowards.

Ever since his mother was killed in a freak edem-based crime, seventeen-year-old Cayder Broduck has had one goal: to have illegal users of extradimensional magic brought to justice. Cayder dreams of becoming a prosecutor and, when he secretly accepts an apprenticeship under the city's best public defender, he plans to learn every legal trick he can to one day dismantle defence arguments. Then he'll finally be able to make sure justice is served.

But when he meets all three criminals he is to defend, he finds they are teenagers, like him, and their stories are... complicated, like his. As their cases unfold, Cayder must race to separate the truth from the lies and uncover what really happened the night his mother died.

From the bestselling author of *Four Dead Queens* comes a heart-pounding mystery rife with secrets and danger, where nothing is as it seems...



### Lamont Review:

Cayder and his sister Leta have never really got over the death of their Mum in a freak edem crime. Edem is illegal, and such magic must never be used. But both have dealt with it in different ways.

Cayder wants all illegal edem users to face justice, but Leta thinks there is more to edem than the rulers are telling them.

When Leta ends up in the high security prison, charged with using edem to kill 300 people, Cayder doesn't believe she could be responsible. When he tries to help her, he gets entwined in two other cases and suddenly everything is complicated.

Can Cayder find the truth to save his sister and discover what really happened to his Mum?

This is a fast-paced, thrilling fantasy novel with amazing characters that readers will love. It is full of twists and turns, set in a mystical world. Throw in a good jail break, and this book will appeal to a wide range of readers. Perfect for those who love fantasy in Year 8 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

## The Words We Keep

By Erin Stewart

Publisher: Simon & Schuster

ISBN 9781471184512 SCIS: 5394611

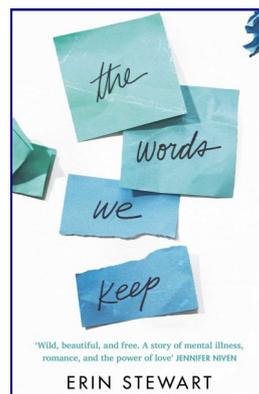
\$17.99

### Blurb:

A beautifully realistic, relatable story about mental health and the healing powers of friendship and art, perfect for fans of Kathleen Glasgow's *Girl in Pieces* and Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places*.

It's been two months since the Night on the Bathroom Floor – when Lily found her sister, Alice, hurting herself. Now Alice is coming home after treatment and it's getting harder for Lily to outrun the compulsive thoughts she's having.

Meeting Micah, a guy with a troubled past of his own, the pair embark on a poetry project that helps Lily to see that the words she's been holding back, desperately want to break through. But what will Micah think if he finds out who she really is?



### Lamont Review:

Lily is a very high achiever who is all set for Berkeley University next year - she is brilliant both on the track and at English.

Lily is already without a Mum, who died in childbirth six years earlier, and she must now try to cope with finding her older sister Alice in the bathroom after she self-harmed.

Lily is just trying to keep herself together, and continually struggles with anxiety and her own self-harm.

With Alice now home and Lily slowly falling for Micah, who was previously in the same facility as Alice with his own struggles, Lily's life should be getting better - but is it?

Tackling tough themes of suicide, self-harm and a family's struggle after attempted suicide, this novel will only suit readers aged 15 and older. However, it is so well-written and really delves not only into the heart of their struggles, but also the way out, that it tells a really important and hopeful story.

Reviewed by Rob

## **Children of the Wild**

By Michael Grey

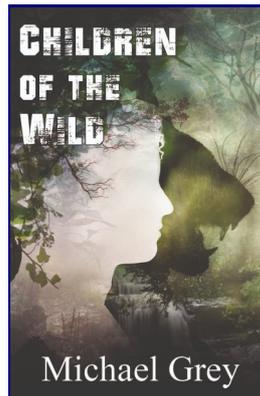
Publisher: Eagle Books / Christmas Press

ISBN 9780648815433 SCIS: 5387369

\$19.99

### *Blurb:*

To Matthew, the village he lives in, his friends, their families and the jungle which surrounds it is the entire world. What's beyond that great green canopy with its host of dangerous animals is a mystery, but a mystery only he has any interest in solving. Then one day a stranger walks out of the forest, bringing with her questions and a deadly virus, and the village elders are forced to reveal their knowledge for the outside world. When the first expedition to find a cure doesn't return, Matthew and his friends must journey into the unknown wilderness before the virus kills everyone he loves. But what he finds out there changes everything he thought he knew about his home. A gripping, powerful speculative fiction novel for young adults, by a talented new author.



### *Lamont Review:*

Matthew and his friends live in a village surrounded by a jungle. It's the only world they have ever known and as far as they know there is nothing else beyond it. But Matthew ventures further than anyone else and is always curious of what might be out there.

One day a stranger walks out of the forest. Where did she come from? Then a virus arrives in the village and the elders must finally explain what they have been hiding all these years...

With the illness spreading, an expedition is sent to bring back an antidote. When they don't return, Matthew and some of the younger villagers must journey into the unknown to try to find them. What Matthew and his friends find will change their view of the world forever. But can they help the people they find, or will they end up being killed themselves?

This a wonderful novel that will enthrall readers from the first page. Matthew is an intriguing character, and his friendship with Adam and Alex is central to the story. The village is a world of simple living with almost no machinery or technology, and when they venture outside of it they find a world beyond their imagination, but in ruins. This is a book that will stay with you long after you put it down, and really makes you think. It would make a great classroom text for Year 8 and up.

*Reviewed by Michelle*