

## **The Unstoppable Flying Flanagan**

By Felice Arena

Publisher: Puffin / Penguin

ISBN 9781761044366 SCIS: 5398472

\$16.99

**Primary Fiction**  
**Book of the**  
**Month**

### *Blurb:*

The war seems a long way away to Maggie Flanagan. Her brother is somewhere across the sea, flying to protect England from the Germans and the Italians. But Maggie is more interested in kicking the footy and finding out who's going to play for St Kilda this season.

But when the war comes to Australia and Maggie sees what she's sure is a Japanese spy plan in the skies of Melbourne, it all gets very real. The Japanese attack Australia up north, raining bombs on Darwin and Broome, and American soldiers start appearing on the streets. Worst of all, it looks like the football season will be cancelled!

When Maggie decides to stage an all-girl football game to raise money for the troops, she's breaking all the rules. Everyone knows that girls can't play footy! But the rules aren't going to stop the unstoppable Flying Flanagan...



### *Lamont Review:*

Maggie loves kicking the footy with her older brother, Patrick. But Patrick is now away defending his country, and the war is getting closer to home.

Maggie dreams of actually playing a match herself. So an idea to raise money for the troops by staging an all women's game evolves, and Maggie is surprised by how many girls and women are eager to participate.

Set in the time of the Second World War, when women had to take on many chores and jobs that used to be solely men's work. The women's movement was well underway, and this terrific story gives us a picture of a changing Australia at an important time in our history.

Always well-researched and wonderfully written, this is another fantastic historical fiction book from Felice Arena, aimed squarely at middle grade readers in upper primary and lower secondary.

*Reviewed by Rob*

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

## **The Homecoming Horse**

By Jackie Merchant

Publisher: Walker Books

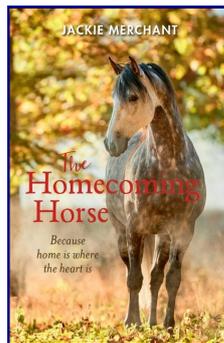
ISBN 9781760653569 SCIS: 5398467

\$16.99

### *Blurb:*

A touching novel about finding your home, even if it doesn't look the way you expected.

Kennedy and Dad have been on the move since Mum left and their farm had to be sold. When Dad takes on a horse called Ugly, the plan for the horse is clear from the start – train him up, sell him off and put the money toward their new farm deposit. Despite knowing the clock is ticking, the bond between Kennedy and Ugly (or Douglas, as she calls him) becomes unbreakable. In the face of all uncertainty, Douglas has become her home and her haven, but will they have to sell him to have a home of their own?



### *Lamont Review:*

Kennedy and her Dad have been working the stock route and living in their truck after their farm was sold.

When her Dad gets a horse called Ugly, who Kennedy renames Douglas, as payment for a debt, they decide to train him up and sell him. But when they stop for a visit at Aunty O's place, Kennedy rapidly falls in love with the new horse.

When she hears about a camp drafting show, where the prize money is \$150,000, she dreams about winning it so she can keep Douglas and help her Dad buy a home. Can her dream come true?

This is a wonderful story about family, and the unbreakable bond between a horse and rider. It is a story of hard work, determination, and the love and care between Kennedy, her Dad and Aunty O.

Full of wonderful characters and beautifully written, it's sure to be a favourite with your students who love a good horse story.

A perfect middle grade read.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## Hedgewitch

By Skye McKenna

Publisher: Welbeck

ISBN 9781801300087 SCIS: 5398469

\$22.99

### Blurb:

First in a magical five-book series for readers of *Nevermoor*, *The Worst Witch* and *The Dark Is Rising*.

It has been seven years since Cassie Morgan last saw her mother. Left at a dreary boarding school, she spends her days hiding from the school bully and reading forbidden story books about the world of Faerie.

Certain that her mother is still alive, Cassie is determined to find her, whatever the dangers, and runs away from school. Lost and alone, she is chased by a pack of goblins but, to her surprise, escapes with the help of a flying broom and a talking cat named Montague, who takes her to the cosy village of Hedgely.

Here she discovers that she comes from a family of witches, women who protect Britain from the denizens of Faerie, who are all too real and far more frightening than her story books suggest.



### Lamont Review:

This is the first book in a new five-part magical book series.

Cassie was left in a dreary boarding school by her mother seven years ago. At boarding school she is bullied and tries to be invisible, escaping into books.

Deciding she needs to try and find her mother, Cassie escapes boarding school and discovers that the key that her Mother gave her can open anything. Soon a magical cat whisks her away to the quaint town of Hedgely, where Aunt Miranda is the Hedgewitch - the witch in charge.

Cassie is soon in training to become a witch, but her constant attempts to find her mother keep getting her into trouble.

But with the help of her friends Rue and Tabitha, and her emerging powers, she always manages to escape serious trouble!

Filled with magic, goblins, faeries and all things witches, this series will be loved by readers aged 9 - 14 years.

Reviewed by Rob

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

## The Wearing of The Green

By Claire Saxby

Publisher: Walker Books

ISBN 9781760653583 SCIS: 5397392

\$18.99

### Blurb:

A powerful historical novel exploring themes of racism, classism and gender expectations present in a growing nation.

When Bidy arrives in Melbourne from Ireland in 1850, she knows exactly what she's going to do – find her rebellious big brother, Ewen. Her plans are derailed when he's not there to meet her and she's forced into a situation that is nothing like she expected. Faced with challenges and chased by luck, bad and good, Bidy must find a strength within herself to build a new life – and to find her missing brother.



### Lamont Review:

Bidy is sent from Ireland to Australia in 1850, after the death of her parents and siblings in Ireland at the hands of the potato famine. She is happy in that she is following her older brother, Ewan, who came to Melbourne five years earlier.

But the reunion she was expecting doesn't eventuate, and she is sent to a farm outside of Melbourne to work for a mean Englishman, and his equally nasty wife. She endures a lot of hardship and only continues because she wants to help their young daughter, Annie.

Bidy eventually manages to return to Melbourne. Can Bidy build a better life for herself in Australia? And will she ever find her brother?

*The Wearing of the Green* is set in a time of rapid change in Melbourne, due to the discovery of gold.

This is a wonderful novel, covering themes of migration, racism, gender stereotypes, change and hope that is ideal for upper primary and lower secondary readers, particularly those who love historical fiction.

Reviewed by Rob

## The Ghost Locket

By Allison Rushby

Publisher: Walker Books

ISBN 9781760654139 SCIS: 5398491

\$17.99

### Blurb:

A captivating supernatural mystery set in a house haunted by secrets from the past.

Eleven-year-old Lolli must return to London and break a promise she made to herself — to never again enter the house in Spitalfields, an historic building managed by her family.

There, Lolli must face up to what she saw in the house several years ago and make things right for two ghosts, one friendly and one decidedly not, and open her heart to people in both the living and twilight worlds.



### Lamont Review:

Set in London, this is a captivating and ghostly story, that readers will absolutely love!

Lolli is a young girl who lost her mother when she was a baby. She has been brought up in Singapore by her Mum's best friend, Freya. Although things have not always been easy between their respective families, Lolli and Freya have a wonderful relationship and have created a happy, quiet life for themselves.

Freya's family run the house, turned museum, in Spitalfields. The house is a relic of the past, and although it means so much to Freya's family, and especially to one of Lolli's favourite people - Freya's great-aunt Elsie, Lolli dreads going there. She knows there are spirits there - she has felt them and seen them, and they are not all good! In fact, she is terrified. But she must go back. She promised Elsie that she would. But can Lolli bring herself to actually do it?

When Lolli discovers more details about the history of the house, she knows that she must face her fears head on, in order to help others.

This is not only a wonderful ghost story, it is a story of courage, friendship, opening your mind and hearts to others, and learning to let others into your life.

Students in Year 4 and up will thoroughly be enthralled by this story.

Reviewed by Sam

## Mikki and Me and the Out-of-Tune Tree

By Marion Roberts

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760526795 SCIS: 5396789

\$16.99

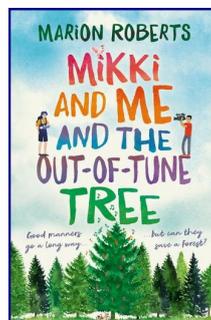
### Blurb:

After becoming attuned to the songs of the forest and setting up a successful social media nature channel, Alberta Bracken and Mikki Watanabe are determined to pull out all the stops to save their local grove of trees in this thoroughly enjoyable novel for young readers.

Eleven-year-old Alberta Bracken is having a terrible summer. After a bike-riding accident, caused by the local bully, her arm's in a cast so she can't do her most favourite holiday activity: boogie boarding at the local beach. And her little sister Clementine is EXTREMELY ANNOYING.

To make matters worse, her mum (bestselling author of Tammy Bracken's Guide to Modern Manners) has sent her dad packing - after discovering his behaviour has been far from... well-mannered.

So when budding filmmaker Mikki Watanabe suggests they start a YouTube channel about the secret life of trees - Alberta is ALL IN. And when they discover their trees are earmarked for removal by the local council it's suddenly a race against time to save them.



### Lamont Review:

Eleven-year-old Alberta's summer is not going how she expected. Normally she would be enjoying the surf with her friends. But after being ghosted by almost everyone, and then having her arm broken when she was pushed by a bully, she is happy to join Mikki to produce short films for YouTube about trees.

But there is a lot going on in Alberta's life. Her mother is a world-famous author of a modern manners book, and has thrown her father out after discovering he has been unfaithful. To make matters worse, her mother is constantly nagging Alberta about how to behave, despite the fact that her mother has problems of her own...

Tackling the themes of friendship, including navigating friendship difficulties caused by things your family have done, the positives and negatives of social media and, most importantly, environmental activism. *Mikki and Me and the Out-of-Tune Tree* is an easy to read, imaginative, at times funny, and ultimately uplifting story that concludes with a happy and hope-filled ending.

A wonderful read, best suited to middle and upper primary students.

*Reviewed by Rob*

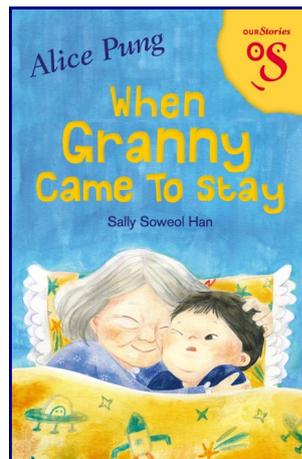
## When Granny Came to Stay

By Alice Pung & Illustrated by Sally Soweol Han  
Publisher: Pan Australia / Pan Macmillan Australia  
ISBN 9781760984991 SCIS: 5398502  
\$12.99

### Blurb:

*OUR STORIES* is a funny, relatable and engaging new early-chapter book series that celebrates Australia's multicultural society with authors and illustrators from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Everything changes when Granny comes to stay. She doesn't drive, she cooks strange foods and she thinks Destroyer Discs are just toys! But when Granny finally leaves, will things go back to the way they were? A new series of memorable, funny and diverse stories on First Nations lands.



### Lamont Review:

This is part of a new junior chapter book series called *Our Stories*, that will look at the lives of many diverse young Australians.

*When Granny Came to Stay* is the first book in the series. This story is from the wonderful Alice Pung, with lovely illustrations from newcomer Sally Soweol Han.

It follows the journey of Pangzi, who just wants the latest craze at school - a Destroyer Disc.

When his Granny arrives from China, everything changes. Pangzi has to share his room with her, and she has brought with her many different Chinese customs that Pangzi is not used to. How will Pangzi feel when the time comes for Granny to leave?

A wonderful new series celebrating diversity and Australia's multicultural society, this is a fabulous, easy to read chapter book that is suited to all emerging readers.

Reviewed by Rob

## A Sprinkle of Sadie

By Lana Spasevski & Illustrated by Joanie Stone

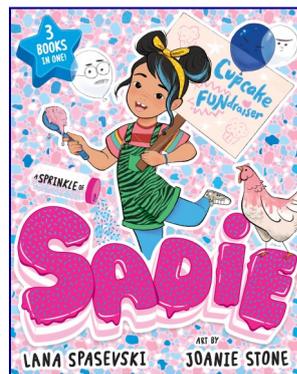
Publisher: Affirm Press

ISBN 9781922711045 SCIS: 5398479

\$14.99

### Blurb:

Say hello to Sadie... a superstar baker with a big heart! In this book, Sadie needs to throw a surprise birthday for her mum, help out at the Cookgrove fundraising day, and welcome someone new to her class. But Sadie's sweet intentions do not always go to plan! Her vanilla ice-cream cake for Mum is as flat as a pancake. Her cupcake stall has tough competition. And her welcome treat is not welcomed! Can Sadie find a way to save the day? In these three sprinkle-filled stories (complete with recipes!) the unstoppable Sadie shows that any problem can be solved with generosity, kindness and, of course, a delicious baked treat.



### Lamont Review:

Sadie's Dad is a baker and her Mum is a police officer, so it's not surprising that Sadie loves to bake and to help others!

Told as three books in one, we see Sadie, together with her family, and her two best friends, twins Amber and Arlo, helping others and coming up with solutions to in three individual stories.

Sadie is extremely kind and creative, not only with her baking, but in coming up with ideas to solve issues, both for her and for her community.

You will love Sadie's ability to make the best of the situation, and to not let obstacles stop her. It highlights that with the help, support and encouragement of family and friends, we can all achieve more than we thought we could, and make a difference in the lives of others.

*A Sprinkle of Sadie* is a wonderful book for emerging readers as it allows them to read these each of the three stories separately, or read them together as an entire book.

With the addition of Sadie's recipes at the end of each story, emerging readers (especially budding cooks) are sure to thoroughly enjoy this new series, and be eagerly awaiting future instalments.

*Reviewed by Sam*

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