

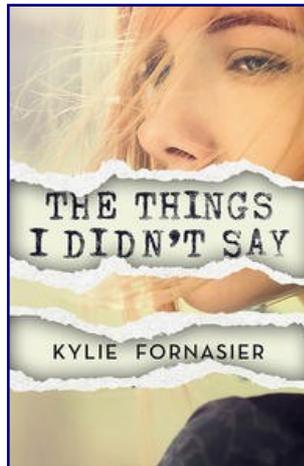
The Things I Didn't Say

By Kylie Fornasier
Publisher: Penguin
ISBN 9780143573630
\$19.99

**SECONDARY
BOOK OF THE
MONTH**

Blurb:

I hate the label Selective Mutism - as if I choose not to speak, like a kid who refuses to eat broccoli. I've used up every dandelion wish since I was ten wishing for the power to speak whenever I want to. I'm starting to wonder if there are enough dandelions. After losing her best friend that night, Piper Rhodes changes schools, determined that her final year will be different. She will be different. Then she meets West: school captain, star soccer player, the boy everyone talks about. Despite her fear of losing everything all over again, they fall in love without Piper ever speaking one word to West. But can a love mapped by silence last?



Lamont Review:

This is a great read, and I found this book really hard to put down.

Piper Rhodes has Selective Mutism. She can speak perfectly well to her family and to some people, once she trusts them. But she can't she speak to West.

Piper moved schools for her final year. She needed a fresh start after her relationship with her best friend was torn apart. But making a fresh start at a new school is not easy when you don't speak, but you know everyone is talking about you.

She is taken completely by surprise when one of the 'royals' at her new school, West, takes an interest in her. He is sporty, gorgeous and nice. What would he want with her?

Their relationships grows into more than friendship and Piper realises that everybody has their own struggles, including the seemingly perfect West. But why can't she speak to him? Will this ultimately be the end of them?

This is not only a love story that will be best suited to girls 15+, but it is a fascinating insight into the world of people living with anxiety disorders.

Reviewed by Sam

The Girl From Everywhere

By Heidi Heilig

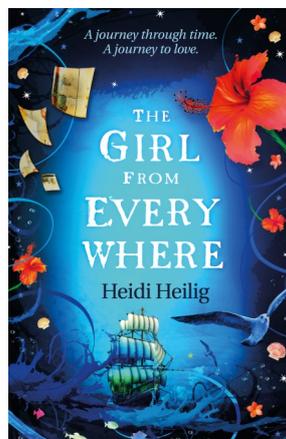
Publisher: Hot Key Books

ISBN 9781471405105

\$19.99

Blurb:

It was the kind of August day that hinted at monsoons, and the year was 1774, though not for very much longer. Sixteen-year-old Nix Song is a time-traveller. She, her father and their crew of time refugees travel the world aboard *The Temptation*, a glorious pirate ship stuffed with treasures both typical and mythical. Old maps allow Nix and her father to navigate not just to distant lands, but distant times - although a map will only take you somewhere once. And Nix's father is only interested in one time, and one place: Honolulu 1868. A time before Nix was born, and her mother was alive. Something that puts Nix's existence rather dangerously in question . . . Nix has grown used to her father's obsession, but only because she's convinced it can't work. But then a map falls into her father's lap that changes everything. And when Nix refuses to help, her father threatens to maroon Kashmir, her only friend (and perhaps, only love) in a time where Nix will never be able to find him. And if Nix has learned one thing, it's that losing the person you love is a torment that no one can withstand. Nix must work out what she wants, who she is, and where she really belongs before time runs out on her forever.



Lamont Review:

Nix and her dad, Slate, are time travellers. They use maps to take them anywhere in the world and at anytime they choose. But will her Dad's obsession with going back to find her mother prove a danger to Nix herself? Can you re-write history and still leave the present intact?

Travelling with Nix and her Dad are a loyal band of friends who help sail the ship. Arriving in Hawaii they are all placed in danger by one of Slate's mad schemes. Will Nix ever find peace and happiness? Is the love of her life closer than she thinks?

A wonderful time travelling adventure that I found very hard to put down. The characters are loveable and the romantic hints dropped throughout the book are beautifully written. Filled with myths and legends and based very loosely on facts, young readers who like historical fiction will absolutely love this book.

Best suited to girls Year 8 and above.

Reviewed by Michelle

The Turners

By Mick Elliott

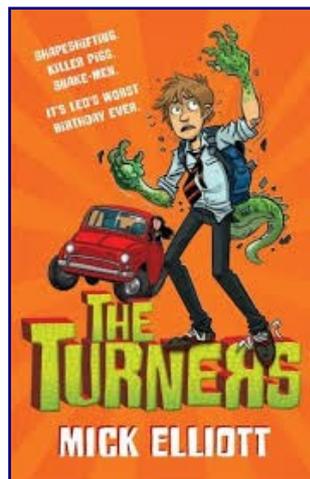
Publisher: Lothian/Hachette

ISBN 9780734416629

\$14.99

Blurb:

Leo Lennox has an epic problem: it's his thirteenth birthday and he has just grown a tail. You'd think that growing a tail in the middle of the school library would be the worst thing that could happen to you, but Leo is about to discover that things can always get worse - and a whole lot weirder. Now, as he discovers an unthinkable family secret, Leo must team up with his infuriating older sister to escape snake-skinned henchmen, ancient shape-shifters and a whispering villain determined to feed him to a pack of genetically engineered killer pigs - all while trying to control his new shape-shifting powers. The first instalment of a trilogy from the funniest new Australian kids' author in years.



Lamont Review:

Turning into a komodo dragon in the school library is not the ideal 13th birthday present, but that's what happened to Leo. On returning home he was told that his dad, Vernon, was going to warn him that he was strange (although I think he already knew that!).

Leo is from a whole family of turners, but his Dad has never heard of it happening during the day! Normally it starts the night you turn 13 and then every night you change into a different animal, fish or bird. After some practice you can hopefully control what you turn into and maybe even for how long. Although Leo is slowly learning to control his abilities, he can't seem to stop turning during the day. This is a BIG problem! How can Leo leave the house when at any minute he might suddenly turn into something else?

Things get even worse when Vernon suddenly leaves on an overnight trip to try to discover answers to Leo's problem and doesn't return. Leo and his older sister Abbie need to find him, solve the mystery, save the day and so on.

An epic and crazy adventure that 10—14 year old boys will love.

Reviewed by Rob

Knights of the Borrowed Dark

By Dave Rudden

Publisher: Puffin/Penguin

ISBN 9780141356600

\$17.99

Blurb:

Grey placed his finger in the middle of the shadow. 'What's this?' he asked. Denizen frowned. 'It's a shadow.' 'No, it isn't,' Grey said. 'It's a door.' Denizen Hardwick doesn't believe in magic - until he's ambushed by a monster created from shadows and sees it destroyed by a word made of sunlight. That kind of thing can really change your perspective.



Lamont Review:

Denizen Hardwick lives in an orphanage where his life is always the same, with no surprises. Until one day an Aunt he didn't know he had announces that he is going to visit her.

When he gets picked up by her friend Grey, Denizen's world is turned upside down as they encounter a monster made from shadows, which Grey promptly gets rid of with a word made of sunlight!

Denizen quickly realises that there is a whole new world beyond what he knows and he is now stuck in the middle of it all.

A fantastic new fantasy novel that is action packed, with great characters and plot twists, as well as a touch of humour. This was an extremely enjoyable book that will suit readers in Year 7 and up. I can't wait for the sequel, which I hope won't be far away.

Reviewed by Michelle

Ruined

By Amy Tintera

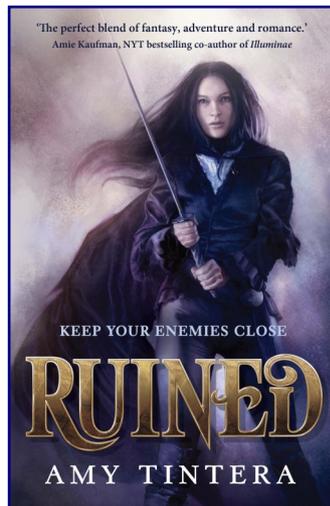
Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760290641

\$16.99

Blurb:

Emelina Flores has nothing. Her home in Ruina has been ravaged by war; her parents were killed and her sister was kidnapped. Even though Em is only a useless Ruined - completely lacking any magic - she is determined to get revenge... Her plan is simple: She will infiltrate the enemy's kingdom, posing as the crown prince's betrothed. She will lead an ambush. She will kill the king and everyone he holds dear, including his son... The closer Em gets to the prince, though, the more she questions her mission. Her rage-filled heart begins to soften. But with her life - and her family - on the line, love could be Em's deadliest mistake.



Lamont Review:

Ruined is a great new young adult fantasy novel that ticks all the boxes.

Our main character Em is a heroine in every sense of the word. *Ruined* follows one side of a three kingdom power struggle between the kingdoms of Ruina, Vellos and Lera. The Ruined are from the land of Ruina and show varying degrees of magical ability. The story revolves around Em's quest for revenge, but hers is a dangerous world - full of murder, kidnapping and torture. The story also has an element of magic and intrigue and quite a bit of romance, in particular a very forbidden love.

Em's big opportunity arises when she takes the place of the betrothed of the enemy prince of Lera - putting Em right in the middle of her enemy's kingdom without them realising. Em now has her chance to really exact her revenge. But now that she knows the prince, she isn't so sure. Will Em go through with it? Or is there another way?

Vellos is the least explained of the three warring kingdoms, but as this is part one of a trilogy I am sure that their story will take shape in the following books. This was a great read, and I can't wait for the follow up.

Reviewed by Rob

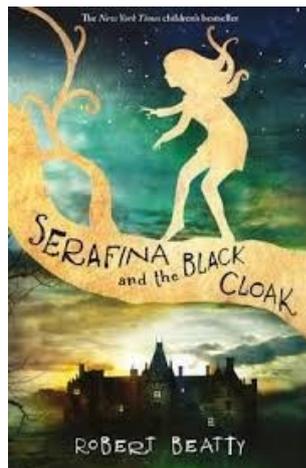
Serafina and the Black Cloak

By Robert Beatty
Publisher: Egmont
ISBN 9781405283786
\$16.99

Blurb:

"Never go into the forest, for there are many dangers there, and they will ensnare your soul."

Serafina and her pa have secretly lived in the basement of the grand old house on the Biltmore Estate, surrounded by dark forests, for as long as Serafina can remember. She takes the greatest of care never to be seen. But when children at Biltmore start disappearing, only Serafina knows who the culprit is: a terrifying man in a black cloak who stalks the corridors at night. To solve the mystery, Serafina teams up with Braden Vanderbilt, the nephew of the estate's owners. Their search for answers leads them into the very forest Serafina has always been taught to fear. There, they discover a forgotten legacy of magic . .



Lamont Review:

Serafina lives in a magnificent house in the country right next to the forest. But Serafina and her Dad live in the basement and no one else knows she exists. She also has the uncanny ability to move around without being heard and to see clearly in the dark.

Night time is her friend, but when children start mysteriously disappearing, Serafina knows she must help them and the forbidden forest holds the key.

This is a wonderful fantasy story about friendship, bravery and most importantly accepting who you are and embracing your unique abilities.

Beautifully written, with a host of characters to both love and hate, readers who enjoy fantasy with a little danger will love Serafina.

Suited to all those in Year 7 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

Time Catcher

By Cheree Peters
Publisher: Ford Street Publishing
ISBN 9781925272215
\$19.95

Blurb:

In a post-apocalyptic world of rigid rules, Althea's luxurious life is turned upside-down when she is kidnapped by the dreaded Variants. Betrayed by those she trusts most, Althea is forced to question everything she thought she knew - including who she is and what she's capable of. Are the Variants dangerous insurgents or a new breed of human, fighting for freedom? Althea must separate deception from truth to claim her own power.



Lamont Review:

This is a fantastic read. It is the first book in a science fiction trilogy by new Australian author, Cheree Peters.

Sixteen-year-old Althea has been the daughter of King Duncan for as long as she can remember, although that is only three years. She is destined to marry Finn and one day rule the kingdom, or so her father thinks.

Slowly things start to unravel as she discovers more about herself, her past and ultimately the awesome power over time that she is learning to control.

But that makes her a Variant, people who received genetic mutations after a toxic accident years ago and have differing degrees of special powers. And Variants are a threat that her father is determined to eliminate.

Will she find out the truth of her true identity and take control over her powers?

This is an easy read that will be most appreciated by younger secondary readers, who will then be waiting eagerly for books 2 & 3.

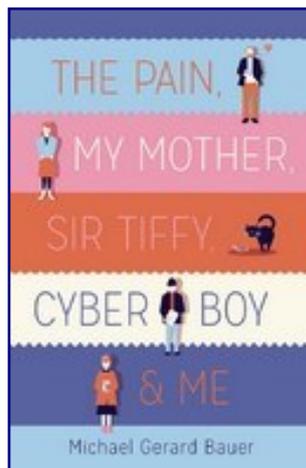
Reviewed by Rob

The Pain, My Mother, Sir Tiffy, Cyber Boy & Me

By Michael Gerard Bauer
Publisher: Omnibus/Scholastic
ISBN 9781742991504
\$16.99

Blurb:

It really all started with The Pain. He officially came into my life exactly nine weeks and one day before our Year Ten Graduation Dance. And despite my very best efforts to wipe the day from my mind, I can still remember it clearly. It was a Friday. The thirteenth day of the month. Notice anything there? Maggie Butt is facing not only a stranger taking over her mother's life but her own as well, and she is not going to let that happen. But then there's the one-eyed snaggle-toothed cat, senior subject choices, the dream date and Cyber Boy, the geek in the library to contend with as well. It's going to be an interesting year.



Lamont Review:

As if living with the name Maggie Butt is not enough, Maggie has set herself three goals to achieve this year:

1. Make at least one good friend at her new school
2. Find a partner for the Year Ten Graduation dance
3. Get an overall A for English

Unfortunately, these goals are turning out to be totally unachievable.

Maggie talks at a hundred miles an hour, strings metaphors together like daisy chains and has so many things going wrong, but you have to love her and hope her life can take a turn for the better soon.

But with her mother's new boyfriend, The Pain, and a one-eyed half-crazy cat to deal with this, it hardly seems likely.

This is a terrifically fun and pacy read with lots going on and characters that really grow on you. Girls 13-16 are the ideal target reader.

Reviewed by Rob

The War That Saved My Life

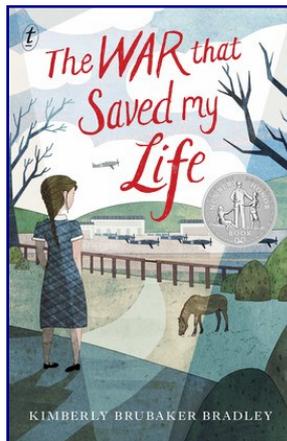
By Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
Publisher: Text Publishing
ISBN 9781925355642
\$16.99

Blurb:

An exceptionally moving story of triumph against all odds, set during World War II.

Nine-year-old Ada has never left her one-room flat. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada's twisted foot to let her outside. So when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn't waste a minute—she sneaks out to join him.

So begins a new adventure for Ada, and for Miss Susan Smith, the woman who is forced to take in the two children. As Ada teaches herself to ride a pony, learns to read, and watches for German spies, she begins to trust Susan—and Susan begins to love Ada and Jamie. But in the end, will their bond be enough to hold them together through wartime? Or will Ada and her brother fall back into the cruel hands of their mother?



Lamont Review:

This is a very powerful novel that shows us the very worst and the very best of people.

Ada and her brother Jamie live in a small flat with their abusive mother. It is Ada who most feels the burden of her brutality, having been born with a crippled foot that her mother refuses to accept. She is extremely cruel and you feel for Ada the minute you start reading this story.

When the children of London are to be evacuated to the countryside due to the war, Ada sees this as their chance to escape. She shows enormous courage in doing so, although she feels like she has no other option.

Ada and her brother find themselves living with Miss Susan Smith. At first she is reluctant to have them, but she soon realises that she needs them as much as they need her. Ada is determined not to get too close and to push her away. She doesn't want to get used to having a warm bed, food to eat and to not being abused, as she knows one day she will likely end up back with her mother. But Miss Smith is as persistent as Ada...

This is a wonderful and well written story of the internal and external struggles that we can all face. All students from junior secondary and up will find this one appealing.

Reviewed by Sam