

TEEN TITLES

OUR COVER BOOK

Blood Alchemy

by Benjamin J Myers is reviewed on page 14 by Laura Duncan from St Augustine's High and Lachlan Glen from Drummond Community High



TEEN TITLES 50

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Teen Titles aims to promote reading and literacy in a fun way that appeals to all young people. *Teen Titles* is committed to improving reading within Edinburgh and beyond.

Welcome to *Teen Titles* 50, our first issue of 2011. Inside, A G Taylor tells us why he loves writing about superheroes. Also in *Teen Titles* 50, find out what shakes Richard Harland's world, the story behind Nicola Morgan's *Wasted*, and what the audience thought when William Nicholson came to talk about *Rich and Mad*. We hope you enjoy it!

Cleo Jones
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Information and Learning Resources
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7 Gillespie Street
Edinburgh
EH3 9NH

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PAST TIMES



The Fool's Girl

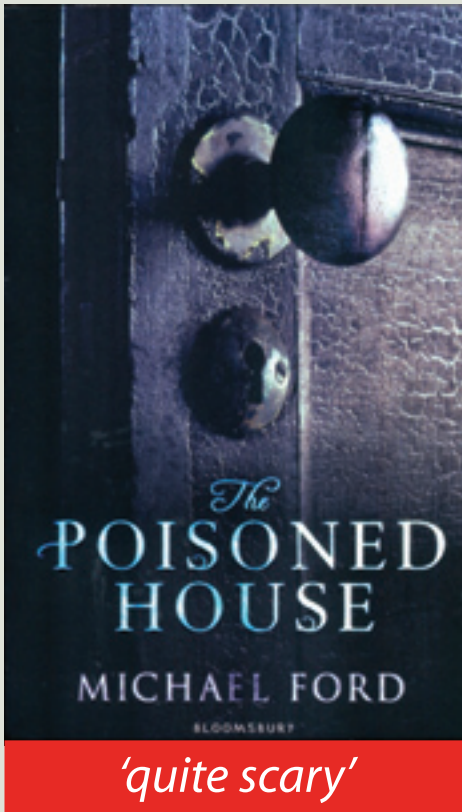
Celia Rees
Bloomsbury £10.99 ISBN 9780747597322

Based on *Twelfth Night*, this is the story of Feste and Violetta, who have travelled to England to track down relics stolen from their homeland of Illyria.

The foreign names and places made this book really confusing for me. I found them off-putting and it was hard to make sense of the story.

CARRIS MATTHEWS
St Thomas of Aquin's High

TEEN TITLES BOOK REVIEW MAGAZINE



The Poisoned House

Michael Ford
Bloomsbury £6.99 ISBN 9781408804506

Abi, a servant girl working at Greave Hall stately home, becomes convinced that her mother's death was murder. This is an atmospheric, suspense-filled ghost story, set in Victorian London.

I really liked this, although it's not the type of book I usually read – and I read a lot! It had a good twist in the family relationships and an element of horror too. It was quite 'dark' in the sense of Abi being poor and people treating her cruelly. The characters were interesting and very strong, especially Samuel and Mrs Cotton. I found it quite scary as a ghost story and really enjoyed the mystery of it all.

CATRIONA ROBERTSON REILLY
St Thomas of Aquin's

Saving Rafael

Leslie Wilson
Andersen Press £6.99 ISBN 9781842709184

In Nazi-ruled Berlin, 15-year-old Jenny and her family suffer hunger and poverty. Jenny's love for Raf is the only gleam of light in the horror of her life, but Raf is a Jew and it is against the law to love him. Can their love survive?

I didn't find this book very exciting although I did sympathise with the characters because of



what they were going through. It was quite a hard book to get into and although the storyline was quite interesting I found it a difficult read. I would recommend it to an older reader.

KERI BAIRD
Castlebrae Community High

Saving Rafael explores the struggle of growing up with poignant clarity, and this coming-of-age novel remains with you long after you turn the last page. I enjoyed reading this book a lot.

ELEANOR HARRIS
Davison CE High School, West Sussex

Black Death

Series: FYI – Fiction With Stacks of Facts
Martyn Beardsley
Barrington Stoke £5.99 ISBN 9781842997659

Will is a merchant sailor living in 1348 – the time of the bubonic plague. When he comes home from a voyage, Will is blamed for bringing the Black Death to his village. Can Will and his family escape from the angry villagers and from death itself?

This was a quick easy read, but for a short book there was a lot in it. The story part kept you wanting to read more and the book was full of historical facts and I learned loads from it. I really enjoyed it, and would recommend it for anyone who wants to learn about history easily.

LAURA FORD
Castlebrae
Community High



Bone by Bone by Bone

Tony Johnston
Frances Lincoln £6.99 ISBN 9781845071745

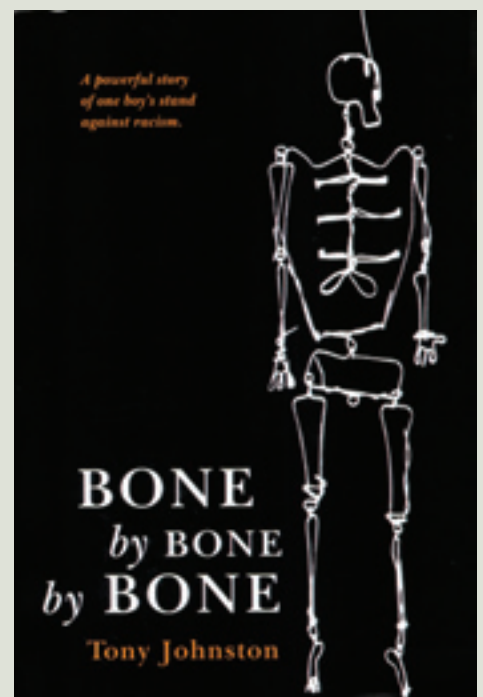
In 1940s Tennessee, the most important thing in David's life is his friendship with Malcolm, but David's father has banned him from seeing Malcolm and has even threatened to kill Malcolm, all because he is black. Will David's father carry out his threat, when Malcolm tries to hide from the Klan in David's house?

I thought this book looked interesting – it has a really dramatic start. I was surprised that the book is set in the 1940s as I didn't think people were so racist as recently as that. I felt David's father was a bad man for thinking the way he did and that David was really brave for keeping the friendship with Malcolm. I found some of the words in this book difficult and although it started really well I lost interest by half-way through. This is not normally a book I would read: it's too historical and factual. If you like this sort of thing, this might be the book for you, it's really believable and you feel that these are real things that happened.

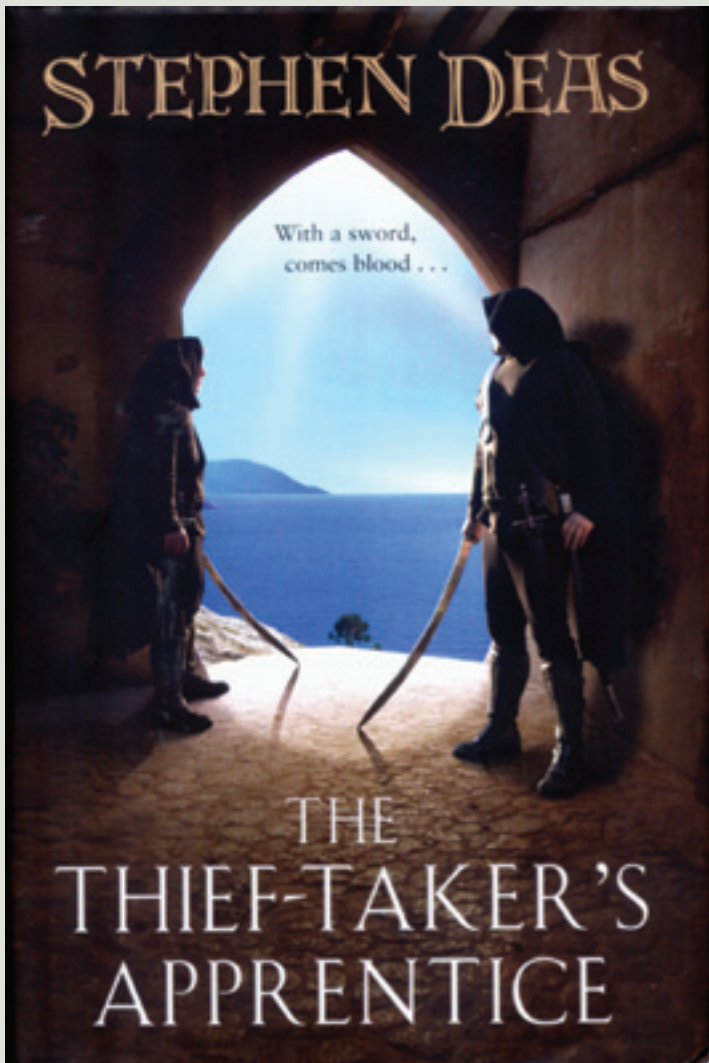
RACHEL CARPENTER
Forrester High

I enjoyed the excitement of *Bone by Bone by Bone*: it always kept me on the edge of the chair! I like the characters Malcolm and David, as they were realistic and interesting. I would recommend this book to people who enjoy reading about current affairs and issues such as racism and prejudice, and like adventure stories. The best part of the novel was when the main character, David was sticking up for his best friend Malcolm and he wouldn't back down.

MHAIRI ROBERTSON
Forrester High



REVIEWS



'an epic storyline'

The Thief-taker's Apprentice

Stephen Deas
Orion £9.99 ISBN 97805750944475

Berren, a young thief, is caught by Sy, the thief-taker, trying to steal his purse. He can't believe his luck when Sy offers to take him on as his apprentice rather than condemning him to a life in the slave mines. Sy has, however, both secrets and many enemies. Has Berren jumped out of one bad situation and into a far worse one?

The Thief-taker's Apprentice, in my opinion, is one of the best books I have ever read. It lures the reader in with an epic storyline. I would advise anyone to read it, especially teenage boys looking for adventure stories. The underlying theme of the book is changing personalities. In the book, the main protagonist changes because of circumstances which ultimately affect the final outcome of the story.

FILIP BRZESZCZYNSKI
Balerno Community High

The Alchemist in the Shadows

Pierre Pevel
Orion £12.99 ISBN
9780575084407

In 1633 France, Italian spy La Donna is wanted for her crimes. When she finds out about a plot to overthrow the French throne, she offers to tell Cardinal Richelieu, the most powerful man in France, in exchange for his protection. The plot is a deadly one involving a dangerous alchemist, magic and dragons.

I started reading this book but I found the plot was too fast and new characters were being added all the time – every other page! The setting was Paris 1633 but that didn't put me off as I like historical/fantastical settings.



I just couldn't get into it – it might be a good read but not for me.

STEPHANIE GRAHAM
Wester Hailes Education Centre

This book is a translation from French and that might be the reason that the language seems quite complex. The historical setting is intriguing but not well known. The storyline is a little hard to follow and the plot was too slow and didn't grab me. There is not enough action and it is too slow a start.

BRAD YOUNG
Wester Hailes Education Centre

Between Shades of Gray

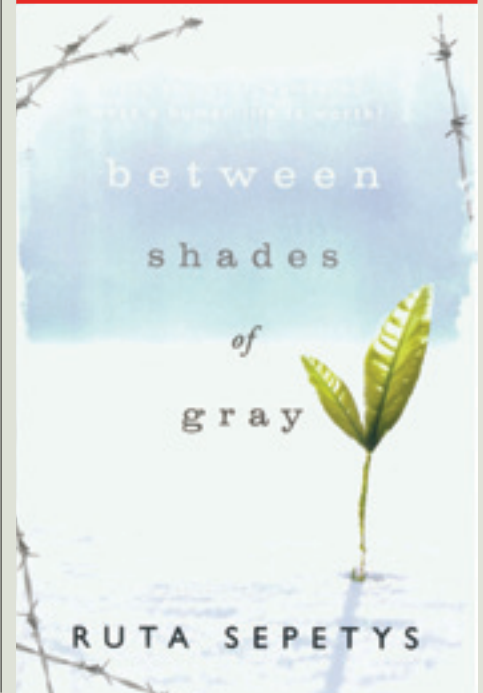
Ruta Sepetys
Penguin £6.99 ISBN 9780141335889

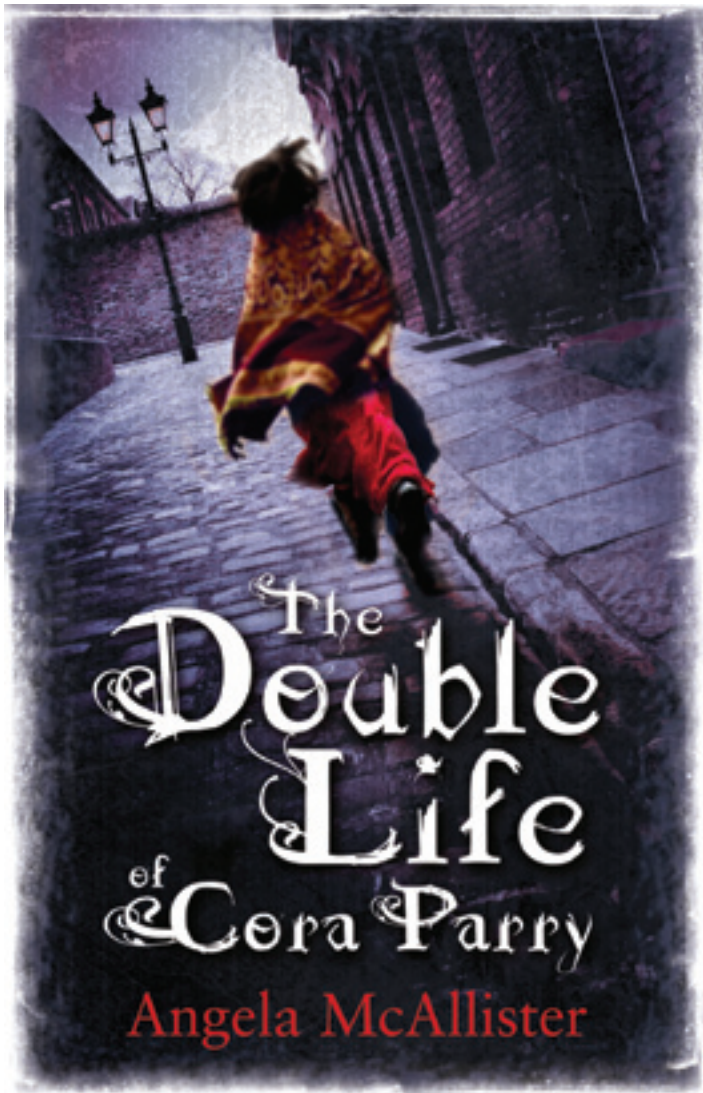
Lina, her mother and brother are taken from their home by Soviet guards, shoved into a cattle car and deported to a Siberian work camp. Lina hangs on to the hope that one day she will again see her first love and her father, who is in prison and has been sentenced to death.

I found this book almost unbearably moving. Based on a true story, it captured the horror of what life was like in 1940s Russia for many people. While at one level tragic, *Between Shades of Gray* at another level does end on a note of tender hope. This amazing book will stick in my memory for a long time!

RUTH CAMPBELL
Trinity Academy

'unbearably moving'





'dark and thrilling'

The Double Life of Cora Parry

Angela McAllister
Orion £8.99 ISBN 9781842556030

Cora was rescued from the workhouse by Elliot, but, when he and his wife die, she is sent back to where she came from. She begins a double life in which her alter ego, Carrie, becomes more and more reckless. Where does Cora end and Carrie begin, and can Cora survive on her own?

This book is very creative and original. It was incredibly gripping; I found it hard to put down from the very first page. This book is great for anyone who is looking for a mysterious, Victorian Age historical fantasy. The *Double Life of Cora Parry* is a dark and thrilling read, great for young teenagers. I give it thumbs up!

LILY RAPER
Firrhill High

Fight for Freedom

Series: Gladiator
Simon Scarrow
Puffin £12.99 ISBN
9780141333632

In ancient Rome, Marcus' life is changed forever when he is forced to be a slave and a gladiator, fighting and surviving for the public's entertainment. It is far from being an easy life: training is brutal, and so are the slave owners.

Probably since I am a girl I did not really enjoy this book. I found it dull and tricky to understand, not a relaxing read and I didn't manage to finish it. This probably would be a good book for boys a bit older than I am, but it just was not for me.

JO STAPLETON
Boroughmuir High



SCI-FI & FANTASY

Savannah Grey

Cliff McNish
Orion £8.99

ISBN 9781842551127

Savannah is 15 and unsettled. She has a new boyfriend, Reece, her body is growing, and she is aware of strange 'presences' around her. Gradually she is introduced to Horror, Nyktomorph and Ocrassa, monsters intent on corrupting nature and in using her to do so.



I found this book quite hard to get in to. The first few chapters were good, but after that I struggled to want to read it. I thought it was very atmospheric, and I was intrigued to know what would happen to Savannah, and curious about the monsters, but it was a bit predictable. It had an interesting cover, a good plot and characters, but it didn't grab me enough to finish it.

ORLA MCCORRY
St Thomas of Aquin's High

This book was OK, but a bit confusing too, because you thought Savannah was going mad and didn't really know what was wrong with her. You had to read quite far into it before it made any sense. I thought the cover was good!

LUCY ALLAN
St Thomas of Aquin's High

THE BIG TEEN TITLES INTERVIEW



A G Taylor: 'There's Always Another Villain Around the Corner'

The *Meteorite Strike* author was interviewed by Hannah Brownsell, Cameron Maceira, Hannah Scott, Kathryn Russell, Katie Thomson and Niamh White from Holy Rood High, Edinburgh.

Q If you could have a superpower from the book, what would it be and why?

A Sarah's ability to control people's minds would be a cool power to have, although it would be tempting to abuse it! It would certainly make getting out of doing the washing up easier.

Q We loved how at the start of the book Daniel was a bit of a shifty, shady character. How did you get everyone to love him by the end?

A Daniel starts off just looking out for himself and is a bit of a criminal, although he's trying to do the right thing by his kids. He goes through a lot to protect Sarah and Robert when other people might have given up, and I think that's the key to his character. Although he's done some bad things, he's a good guy at heart – even if he doesn't realize it at the beginning!

Q Did the outback inspire you to think of the plane crash, or did you write the story and then think it would be best set in the outback?

A The idea for the story came from my first experiences of the outback when I arrived in Australia. The emptiness and the sheer size of the country was an inspiration for *Meteorite Strike*. I thought it was the perfect place to set this kind of survival thriller, because, in the outback, rescue can be hundreds of kilometres away.

Q There are a lot of superhero films around at the moment. Which one is your favourite, and which superhero character would you most like to be from any other book/film?

A My favourites are the new Batman films, particularly *The Dark Knight*. I think they're really well written and have a fantastic modern style that brings the characters to life like never before. Batman has always been my favourite superhero, so I'd have to be him – if only because I'd love to drive the tank-like batmobile from the new movies!

Q Without giving too much away, where on earth did you get the idea for the scary water tank scene?

A I honestly can't remember! Lots of ideas come into your head when you're writing a book – and lots get thrown away because they just don't work. The water tank is there because the bad guys have to show they're serious about killing Sarah, but beyond that I can't recall the inspiration. People who've read the book seem to like that scene, so I'm glad I had the idea – wherever it came from ...

Q How many books are you going to write about Sarah, Robert and the rest of them?

A I've just finished the third book, *Enemy Invasion*, which comes out in June and is the final part of this trilogy. After that, who knows? The good thing about writing superhero stories is that there's always another villain around the corner ...

Q The last battle scene in the book is brilliant and would make a fabulous scene in a film! Were you thinking about it as a film as you wrote it?

A I watch lots of films, so I always imagine scenes playing out like a film in my head as I write. This is particularly important for action scenes where a lot is happening at once. After I've visualized it, it's just a matter of getting it down on paper (which is sometimes not that easy!).

Q If it were ever to be made into a film, who would play Daniel? (We think it should be Daniel Craig!)

A I think Daniel Craig is great too (*Casino Royale* is one of my favourite Bond films), so I'm not going to argue with that idea! He'd be good for the role because the character Daniel has plenty of heroic scenes, but he's also a bit of a rogue.

Q What first gave you the idea for teenagers with abnormal powers?

A Originally the story was going to be about the plane crash and Sarah and Robert trying

to survive in the desert. However, once I got halfway through writing the first draft I realised that I needed to make things a bit more exciting, and that's when the idea of giving them superpowers arose. After that, the rest of the story fell into place.

Q Do you find it easy to write? How long do you have to spend each day writing?

A I find it easy to write some days – and others it's a bit more difficult. Sometimes you just feel a bit more inspired, but it's important to write something every day, I think. I aim for a minimum of 1000 words, although when I'm 'in the zone' I can write a lot more. If you want to be a writer, it's important not to give up on the difficult days.

Q What is the best thing about being a writer?

A The best thing is seeing a story you've worked on for months (or years) become a book that you can give to someone else to read. I'll never forget the day I got the first copies of *Meteorite Strike* through the post. It was an amazing experience.

Q And what is the worst?

A You have to put a lot of time and effort into writing a book, and sometimes it's easy to doubt yourself or what you're writing. At those times you have to stubbornly believe in your story and plough on regardless! 'Never give up' is a good motto for writers, I think.

Q Did you always know you were going to write some day? And if you couldn't be a writer, what would you be?

A If you'd asked me what I wanted to be when I was six years old, I would have said that I wanted to be a writer. It has always been my ambition. If I wasn't a writer I'd want to work in anything that involved telling stories, such as filmmaking – even if it was just fetching coffee for the director! (If Christopher Nolan is listening, I hereby offer to fetch coffee for him on the next Batman movie.) Thanks for the interview and keep up the great work with *Teen Titles*!



Meteorite Strike

Series: Superhumans

A G Taylor

Usborne £5.99

ISBN 9781409508571

Sarah and Robert have just lost their mother and neither of them is too impressed with their 'accidental' Dad, not seen by either of them for years. Then they fall victim to the Fall virus, and, as they become immune to its legacy and develop strange, new superpowers, they realise just how important he is to them.

I thought that this was a very exciting and engaging book to read. I thoroughly enjoyed



how the book started because you found out a lot about the main characters, but it was done in a way that wasn't boring because you met them just before a plane crash. It's not exactly how you'd expect a superhero book to be because these heroes

have personalities and faults. I think that you don't have to be a huge fan of sci-fi to enjoy this book cos it's not all aliens and technology. I loved the idea of HIDRA; it was really creative.

HANNAH SCOTT
Holy Rood High

This book was exciting, fun and adventurous. If I could have any power in the book I would be invisible or telekinetic cos breaking steel would be great for when my mother grounds me! Can't wait to read the next one!

KATIE THOMSON
Holy Rood High

Alien Storm

Series: Superhumans

A G Taylor

Usborne £5.99

ISBN 9781409520184

Following on from *Meteorite Strike*, our six new superheroes are now in hiding from HIDRA and hoping to escape detection in a run-down housing estate in Melbourne. When an alien storm of meteorites threatens to destroy the planet, a new friend appears to be their saviour, but is this new friend all he appears to be?

This book is a brilliantly stunning sci-fi from beginning to end. It boasts brilliant characters, amazing plots with plenty of plot twists and exceptional settings, along with a fantastic cliff-hanger that leaves it well open for a sequel! It shows a return of all the (living) major characters from the first book and it thrills from page one. A definite must-read!

JOSH BLYTH
Holy Rood High

Alien Storm is a great book. It's packed full of deception, betrayal and mystery. This is a highly recommended must-read. The characters are very cleverly written. They're together but they also conflict; the element of trust hasn't settled amongst them yet. I think that other adventure/mystery readers would enjoy this.

SEAN MURPHY
Holy Rood High



REVIEWS



Meanwhile

Jason Shiga
Amulet Books £9.99 ISBN 9780810984233

A boy buys an ice-cream and finds himself in the home of Professor K, an inventor of time-travel and memory-transfer machines. This is an interactive book, told through a network of tubes, mazes and codes.

This book was quite good – I liked the pictures! You need to read it a few times to find the different endings and I found this a bit boring eventually; also, I thought there should have been more endings for the vanilla option. It was a cool idea to have the different pathways to follow the story and they were easy to use. The storyline and characters were OK too.

MELISSA SCOTT
St Thomas of Aquin's High

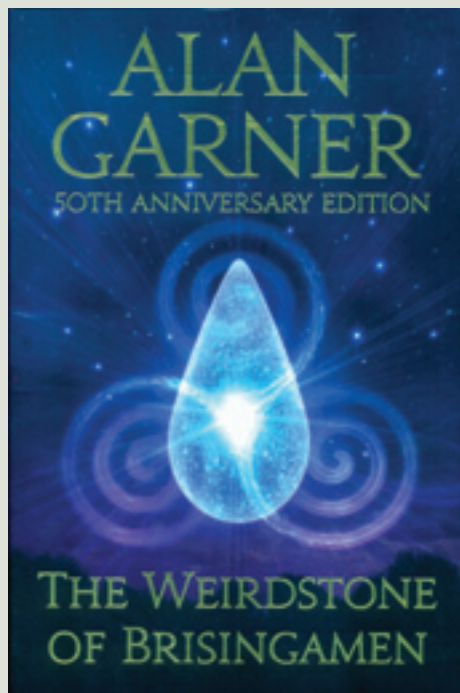
I didn't like this book. Although it was a clever idea, the story didn't make sense a lot of the time and it got repetitive and boring. It might be better for younger people.

RONAN RAFFERTY
St Thomas of Aquin's High

The Weirdstone of Brisingamen (50th anniversary edition)

Alan Garner
HarperCollins £5.99 ISBN 9780007355211

Colin and Susan are sent to stay on a farm by Alderley Edge, and are fascinated by stories about the wizard and the knights who sleep in an underground cavern. Very soon the world of magic becomes real to them, when



'you find yourself swept along'

Susan's bracelet with the crystal drop is stolen by the forces of evil.

A mixture of *Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings*, this is a good fantasy that has all the elements of a rainy day read. It's a very fast-paced book, so although you want to read to understand more, you find yourself swept along from one moment to another.

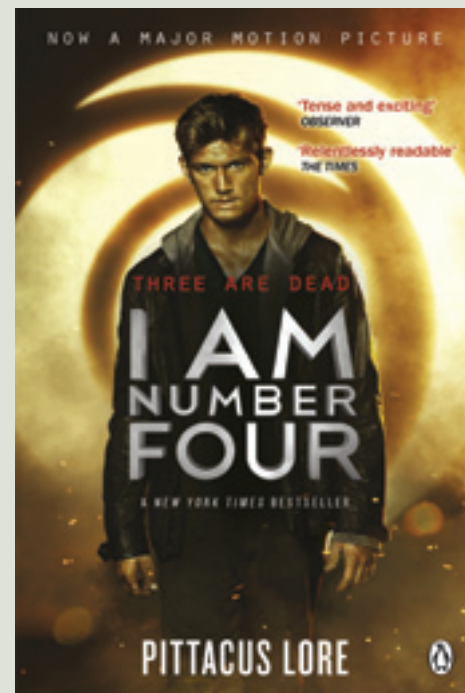
SHANNAN LEKWATI
Portobello High

I Am Number Four

Pittacus Lore
Penguin £12.99
ISBN 9780718156473

When the planet Lorien is overwhelmed by alien invaders, the Mogadorian, nine children are sent to Earth to keep the culture of Lorien alive. But the Mogadorian are hunting them, and now only six are left alive. Number Four is next. Will he be able to defeat the Mogadorian without any loss of life among his friends?

In *I Am Number Four*, love combines with an action-packed story which will make you feel real empathy for the characters. One of the earlier scenes in the book made me feel very sorry for what one character is going through and how he is scared to death. I normally read more realistic books, but for a fantasy/sci-fi book this had very realistic elements, eg it was set in a multitude of countries/states like California. The thing that stands out for me is the many deaths



and the ending. Although the ending does make things clearer, it does leave the story open for more to come. In conclusion, I believe Pittacus Lore has created an enthralling, well paced and fascinating book. I would recommend it to fantasy and science fiction fans alike.

ANDREW SCOTT-GEORGE
James Gillespie's High

The Moon of Gomrath

Alan Garner
HarperCollins £5.99 ISBN 9780007127870

In this sequel to *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, Colin and Susan worry that



they will never again see their wizard friend Cadellin. But little do they realise just how important they really are, and the role they are destined to play.

I found this book very confusing as there were too many characters to follow. Also the events seemed to jump about and too many things were happening at once. I didn't really understand the significance of Susan's bracelet, though all the characters kept going on about how important it was. Some of the language was very old-fashioned and difficult to understand. Overall I think this book is an ok read, but confusing in parts.

AUREA CROLLA
Boroughmuir High



Crystal

Rebecca Lisle
Andersen Press £5.99 ISBN 9781849390590

Questid and the rock people of Spindle House help Crystal and her 'mad' Mum to escape the restrictions of life under surveillance.

I thought this book was really good and easy to read. Even though the girl was nothing like me, I could understand how she felt and what it was like to be spied on. I liked finding out about where she came from too. I think the story would have made more sense if I'd read the first two books and I'm going to try them now!

SOPHIE LYNN
St Thomas of Aquin's

I thought this book was really good and the portal under the water, which leads to Crystal's home in the mountains, was pretty cool! It was a well worked-out mystery. My only problem

was that I hadn't read the other books in the series and wasn't familiar with all the characters, but otherwise I enjoyed it.

CASSIE DUNCAN
St Thomas of Aquin's

Out for Blood

Series: Drake Chronicles
Alyxandra Harvey
Bloomsbury £6.99
ISBN 9781408807064

This is the third book in the Drake Brothers series. This time the story is about Quinn Drake and Hunter Wild. Hunter is a vampire hunter and students at the school are becoming ill. While trying to solve the mystery and battle vampires, she meets up with Quinn. She has to make a decision whether to trust him or not.

My dad had to forcibly remove this book from my hand, so I could have my tea. I loved it. It has bad vampires, good vampires and vampire slayers. I liked the way the main characters



developed in the story and the fact that you got two points of view whilst you were reading the book. Quinn is a total hero!

HOLLY KESTERTON
Gracemount High

Eighth Grade Bites

Series: The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod
Heather Brewer
Penguin £6.99 ISBN 9780141334066

Vladimir Tod is the new vampire sensation. His parents have been killed under mysterious circumstances, and he's left to live with his mother's best pal, who luckily enough has access to pints of blood.

I found this book a little confusing at first because I didn't really understand where the story was coming from. It felt like the second book in a series rather than the first. Once I got more into it, the story felt like it was going really fast. The pace of the novel really suits the storyline. I would say that the vocabulary isn't as sophisticated as it is in other vampire books, but that's ok.

KATHRYN RUSSELL
Holy Rood High

REVIEWS

Crescendo

Becca Fitzpatrick

Simon & Schuster £9.99 ISBN 9781847387196

This sequel to *Hush, Hush* follows the fortunes of Patch and Nora as their love is threatened by far more than normal teenage pressures. Patch, as a fallen angel and now Nora's Guardian Angel too, finds it almost impossible to cope with Nora's depth of feeling for him. When bad boy Scott appears on the scene, things become really tense.

I thought that this book was annoying because the two of them weren't together for most of it and he never explained why, and she was just too proud to do anything about it. I am not desperate to get the third one because I am just fed up of them!

NIKOLA KOSICKA

Holy Rood High

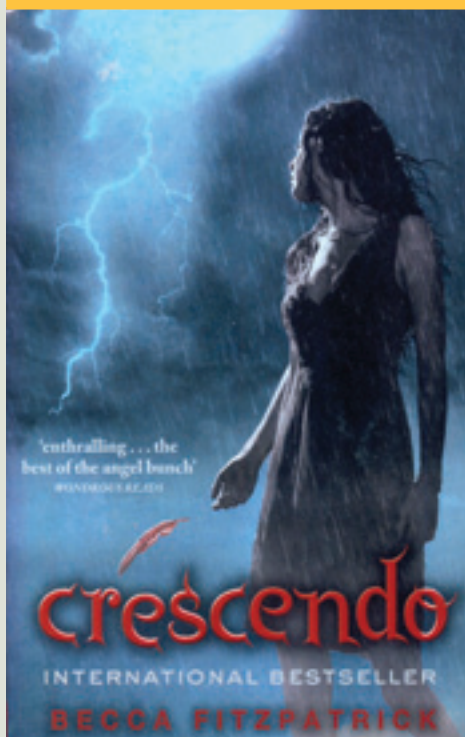
This was an amazing book and much better than the first one. Nora and Patch were a lot closer in this novel even though they were split up for a lot of the book. The end of the book was a fantastic cliff-hanger and I can't wait to read the third, but it did really surprise me what happened. Becca Fitzpatrick is an incredible author and I really want to read her other books. Someone who likes *Twilight* but has had enough vampire stuff will really enjoy this.

KATHRYN RUSSELL

Holy Rood High

I loved this book; Becca Fitzpatrick never fails to impress! *Crescendo* kept me guessing right to

'kept you hooked'



the very end. All girls want to have a dark and dangerously sexy Patch in their lives (well, I do!) and without him this book wouldn't have been half as good. *Twilight* move over! The angels are gonna wipe the floor with you!

KATIE THOMSON

Holy Rood High

I would recommend this to a friend because it is very interesting and thought provoking. I felt sorry for Nora in this novel because her whole world falls apart and the only person she can trust is her best friend Vee. This book is similar to *Twilight* but it has a very different plot and is very dramatic! The ending of the book left me wanting to know more.

KERRY HUNT

Forrester High

What I liked about *Crescendo* was that you got to know the characters in a whole new way and you got to learn more about them. There was a lot going on in the book and you could never get bored of it. It really kept you hooked from start to finish. It was a great second book and it never disappointed me, I can't wait for the next one!

ROBYN MCFARLAND

Forrester High

I really enjoyed *Crescendo*. I found the storyline interesting and I was instantly hooked on the book. Even though the book has fantasy elements, such as fallen angels and Nephilim, it was very believable as the author did not make the characters over the top. I really liked Nora as I can easily relate to her; she's a teenager looking for some trouble. I think the ending was good as it ended on a cliff-hanger, which instantly left you wanting to read the next book. I would definitely read more books by this author as her brilliant writing technique make the books special and extremely enjoyable.

EMMA FAWCETT

Forrester High

Entice

Series: Pixies

Carrie Jones

Bloomsbury £6.99 ISBN 9781408810446

The third tale in the saga of Pixies, Werewolves and the Fey, set in the freezing cold state of Maine. Zara has lost Nick, her boyfriend, to Valhalla in the land of the Norse Gods, but she will not give up until she can travel there herself and rescue him.

The best book I've ever read! If I hadn't had school the next day, I would have stayed up all night reading it. It's such a great read I'm finding it difficult to put it into words, but awesome and mind-blowing come to mind. It's one of those books that the story absolutely leaps off the page at you. I laughed at the funny bits and I cried at the sad bits. There are certain parts of



'I would have stayed up all night'

this book that are devastating. All those people who liked *Twilight* but want something more realistic will love this.

KATHRYN RUSSELL

Holy Rood High

This book was better than the other two because it has far more action in it and Astley is hot. I liked how the author wrote about how Zara really connects to Astley. My favourite character was Cassidy because she was so brave and you wouldn't really expect her to be an elf. Anyone who enjoyed the first two in the series will love it!

JOYLINE GWARUKA

Holy Rood High

The third instalment of Carrie Jones's *Need* series is better than the other two by far. The storyline is a lot easier than the first book and I really enjoyed it. I cannot wait for the next book; the anticipation is killing me. These books are better than *Twilight* because they are slightly more feasible and more realistic. The author does very well in bringing through teenage emotions.

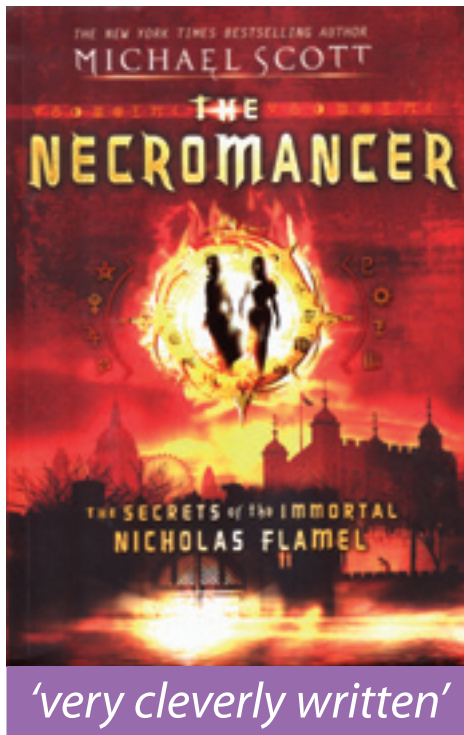
KATHLEEN MCBRIERTY

Holy Rood High

This book was really good but was very annoying and slow at the start. I was wondering how long it was going to take Zara to do anything ... and her boyfriend's stuck in Valhalla! Once the story finally got going, it was really good and very descriptive. Looking forward to the next one!

JOHANNE THOMSON

Holy Rood High



The Necromancer

Series: The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel
 Michael Scott
 Doubleday £10.99 ISBN 9780385619035

The Newman twins think that at last they might be safe once they reach the haven of San Francisco, but neither they, nor Nicholas Flamel himself, are sure how long Alcatraz can hold the monsters that they have trapped there. And Dee may have been beaten briefly, but he is not bowed totally, and his next plan involves the twins in a diabolical fashion.

This is a really good book to read if you're looking for a fantasy adventure story. This is not like other stories because there are historical and mythical figures in it and this makes you more interested in finding out about these real-life people. If you fancy reading this book I would recommend reading the other books in the series first because there are so many characters in it, it might get confusing. I liked the fact that as the reader you know who the goodies and the baddies are, but the people in the book don't. It's all about trust. By the way, I am not related to the author!

HANNAH SCOTT
 Holy Rood High

I wasn't altogether sure about this book when I started it, but as I got more into it, it became easier and more enjoyable to read. I hadn't liked the previous books in the series that much but I thought I would give this one a try and I'm actually quite glad I did! I think I approached this book in a more open-minded way, and as a result I liked the main characters because I felt what

they were feeling rather than judging them. It is a very cleverly written book and though I think it might have been aimed more at boys I still enjoyed it so I think girls should give it a go.

KIMBERLY LYNCH
 Holy Rood High

The Black Lung Captain

Series: A Tale of the Ketty Jay
 Chris Wooding
 Orion £12.99 ISBN 9780575085183

This is the second adventure of The Ketty Jay with its maverick captain, Darian Frey. Things are really going wrong for the Captain and his crew and even stealing from an orphanage leads to a death-defying chase. Then the chance for really big money comes along, but at what cost? Let the swashbuckling commence!

This book was funny with some twists and quite a lot of different plot points, with some mild adult humour and some comic genius. Even though I hadn't read the first one, the character development was very impressive for a book that is a sequel. This was an intelligent, fast-paced, action-packed, sky-piratey adventure. It was genius!

JAMIE WHITE
 Holy Rood High

This was a brilliant book. I liked it cos you didn't have to read the first book to understand what was going on. It has an unusual plot and storyline as it is based in a world where airships are the main form of transport. Chris Wooding has an extraordinary way of writing stories as each character is a real individual: they're each believable in their own way and lifelike.

LEWIS RAFFERTY
 Holy Rood High



Ice Maiden

Sally Prue
 OUP £5.99 ISBN 9780192729651

Franz has moved to England from Germany at the start of WW2. He feels like an outsider. Edrin is an outsider too because she is different from the rest of the elfin Tribe. Franz and Edrin are both afraid and are drawn together in an unlikely bond. Can they stop the violence in their different worlds?

This was quite a fascinating book and unlike any I'd read before. It was a different storyline and I had to concentrate to understand what was happening. Initially, the cover caught my eye and when I started reading I found I got caught up in the story too. I would definitely recommend this book to my friends and especially people who like a bit of an unusual adventure.

ZAHRAH CHOCHAN
 Craigmount High



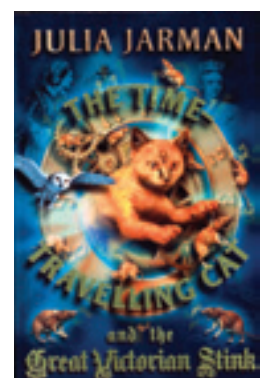
The Time-travelling Cat and the Great Victorian Stink

Julia Jarman
 Andersen Press £4.99 ISBN 9781849390194

This is the sixth book in the series. Ka, Topher's time-travelling cat, is off on her adventures again. Topher follows her back in time to Victorian London to find the Thames blocked with sewage! Can he save the city from disease and destruction?

This was a really exciting story and I loved the idea that it was a cat which was travelling through time. I hadn't read any of the other books in the series, but that didn't stop me enjoying this story. I was hooked from the start and liked the fact it wasn't too girly (I don't like girly books!). The cover is excellent too.

ZENAB MOHAMMED
 Craigmount High

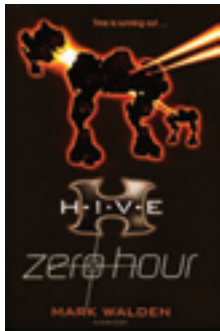


REVIEWS

Zero Hour

Series: Hive
Mark Walden
Bloomsbury £6.99
ISBN 9781408800164

Is this the final battle? A I Overlord now has the ability to move from body to body, but he wants Otto's body so he can survive and complete his plan for global domination. Can Nero stop him?



I was immediately attracted to the cover of this book and the story inside did not disappoint. I hadn't read any of the other *Hive* series before, and, despite some strange vocabulary at the beginning which I just skipped, I got into the exciting story straight away. It is probably more a book for boys and I definitely liked it.

DANIEL CRISFIELD
Craigmount High

My So-called Haunting

Tamsyn Murray
Piccadilly Press £6.99 ISBN 9781848120921

Fourteen-year-old Skye was born into a family of psychics, and she can see ghosts. She moves from Edinburgh to London to stay with her aunt when her mum goes off to study the Great Barrier Reef. She meets gorgeous Nico, but she's busy trying to help teenage ghost Dontay, and life gets very complicated!



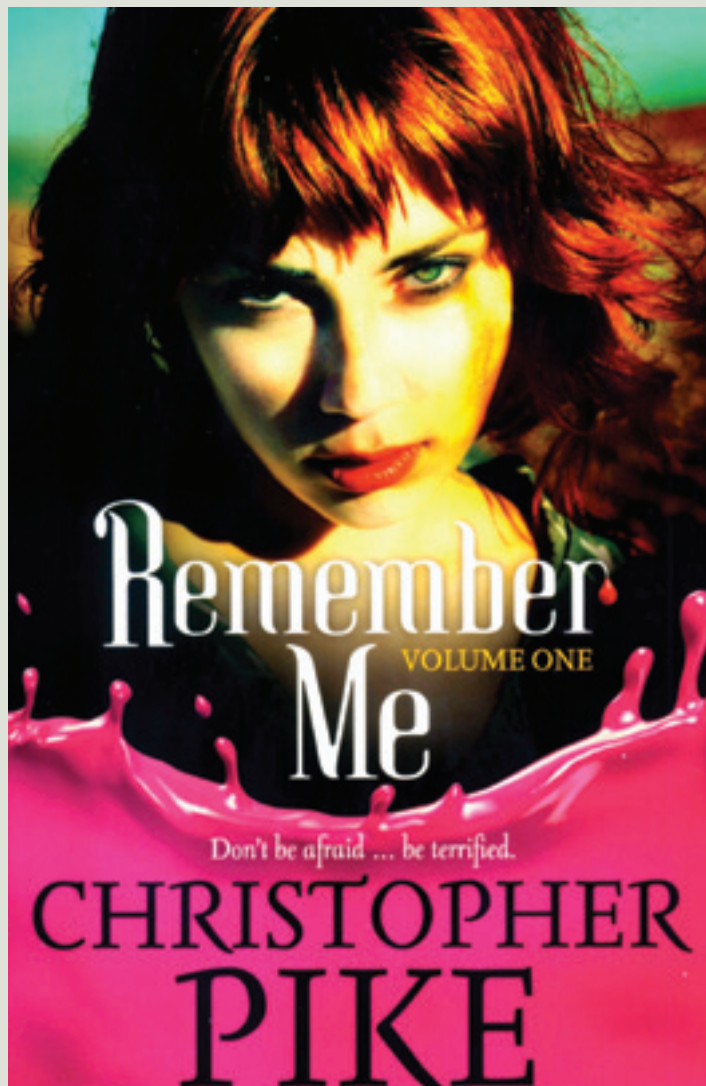
This was a light, quick and easy read. It didn't have too complex a story and so I think younger teenagers would enjoy it, whereas I might prefer a more serious book. Although it can be a bit girly, I think boys would like it too. I sympathised with the main character and thought she was portrayed as a realistic teenage girl who was coping with a conflict in her life. The author described things well, and the way Skye was tugged between her normal school life and her psychic life was well balanced.

APARNA POTLURU
Craigmount High

Remember Me (Volume 1)

Christopher Pike
Hodder £6.99 ISBN 9781444901269

Shari dies when she falls from a balcony, and everyone thinks it was suicide. However, there is a murderer loose, and Shari tries to warn her friends from beyond the grave via a Ouija board ... but she is not the only voice trying to make itself heard.



Despite the fact I hadn't read any of the other books in this series I thought it was absolutely fantastic! It was so full of mysterious things going on I was really gripped. However, it wasn't gory, but nevertheless I was quite spooked by this book and found myself listening for strange noises in my room while I was reading it. Not only was this book an excellent thriller, it had romance in there too, so maybe not one for the boys. I hope to read several more books by this author in the future.

HOLLY MCLAREN
Craigmount High



The Lost Hero

Series: Heroes of Olympus
Rick Riordan
Puffin £12.99 ISBN
9780141384924

Three new heroes – Jason, Piper and Leo – arrive at Camp Half-Blood to discover they have all been chosen to take on a frightening quest ... a dawdle for children of Greek Gods. Monsters in the nearby woods and demigods practising archery with flaming arrows and explosives are the least of the trio's problems!

This book was excellent. I loved the new characters (I've read all the *Percy* books!) and I think there is scope to have even more stories. Despite the fact it appears to be a big fat book, I wasn't put off and enjoyed reading the longer story. I particularly like stories about Greek myths and this didn't disappoint. It is maybe a book more for boys and it is certainly packed with plenty of fights and action.

ANDREW DICKSON
Craigmount High



Forest Born

Series: Books of Bayern
Shannon Hale
Bloomsbury £6.99 ISBN 9781408808610

Rin has six brothers, but feels more at home in the company of the trees and seeks peace in the forest. She feels that something is wrong and travels to the city to try and find the answer. Eventually she must join the fire sisters, Isi, Enna and Dashen, to face the threat to her world.

I really enjoyed this book! I liked the storyline, the setting and especially the map – this made it easy to follow Rin’s journey. It is an exciting story and although some parts were a bit confusing, you just don’t know what will happen next. I definitely want to read other books by Shannon Hale!

OLIVIA EJJAOUANI
Craigmount High

Angel

L A Weatherly
Usborne £7.99 ISBN 9781409521969

This is the first book in a supernatural romance trilogy. Alex is an angel hunter who hunts humans to survive. Willow is a special girl with extraordinary powers, and Alex has her in his sights in more ways than one! He is assigned to kill Willow, but he falls in love with her instead and this is where the story really begins.

This book was detailed and descriptive and gave me a whole new perspective on angels. I had always thought of angels as kind and caring creatures, but in this story they are depicted as deadly and manipulative. This book just made



‘detailed and descriptive’

me want to keep reading and reading, despite its length. I would definitely recommend it to both genders, although older readers might find it easier because of its varied language.

FAITH ADOGAME
Craigmount High

Raised by Wolves

Jennifer Lynn Barnes
Quercus £6.99 ISBN 9780857380296

Adopted by the Alpha of a werewolf pack after a rogue wolf brutally killed her parents, 15-year-old Bryn knows only pack life. This is a paranormal read which fits well into the Twilight sub-genre.

I wasn’t sure of this book at first as I thought it would be too similar to *Twilight* etc, but within the first couple of chapters I realised this was very much a book in its own right. The final chapter especially was powerfully written. I hope there is a sequel as there are quite a few elements that could be developed. This is one of the best books I’ve read recently!

KATIE DARLING
Royal High

I found the start a bit confusing but stayed with the book and it did start to make more sense. It was a surprising plot which started with Bryn being brought up by a pack of wolves. This may sound strange, but by the end of the book she ends up as their leader. The writing was compelling and some parts were exciting, especially the fights. If there is a follow up then

I’ll read it too (although it’s not the type of book I normally read).

CALUM ROSKO
Royal High

This was a great story which started strongly and continued to hold my attention all the way through. I thought that the author built the sense of being part of a pack, and what it would be like to be raised by wolves but be human with the power to break pack bonds. The romance was well developed (every book should have a bit of love interest). I thought it compared favourably to *Twilight* – in fact it’s probably the best werewolf story that I have read.

Small details impressed me like the fact that the bad guy’s name wasn’t revealed till the end. I’d recommend this to teenagers even if you’re not into gothic stuff – there are enough other things to keep you reading. I hope there’s a sequel on its way!

GRANT HUGHES
Royal High

This reminded me of *Twilight* which was written from the vampires’ point of view. This book really got under the skin of the wolves and made me empathise with the pack. The wolves were terrifying initially due to the author’s vivid descriptions and this made me want to read on to find out what would happen next. Bryn and Callum’s relationship was weird as she was human and he was an animal, but he really helped her to become a strong enough character to defeat the manipulative nasty Chase. The interesting thing is that Bryn and Callum became rivals at the end – I need to read no 2 to find out how that pans out!

CARA ANDERSON
Royal High





Misty Gordon and the Mystery of the Ghost Pirates

Kim Kennedy
Amulet Books £9.99 ISBN 9780810993570

Misty's father is always finding strange objects for his DEAD (Deceased Estate and Antique Dealer) shop. Things get even stranger when Misty finds herself at the centre of ghost story with a mythological background.

This was a slow starter but got more interesting as the story developed, though I don't think I would have carried on with it had I not been reviewing it. I really like fantasy and this had a good ghostly mystery sprinkled in with it. If you read it I think that you'll find yourself sucked into the story just as I was. I think it would be enjoyed by young teens.

KATIE DARLING
Royal High

By Midnight

Mia James
Orion £8.99 ISBN 9780575095526

April Dunne has left her whole life behind, has started at a new school and is stuck in a creepy old dump of a house. She finds a friend in the conspiracy theorist Caro Jackson, and perhaps something more than friendship in the gorgeous, mysterious Gabriel Swift who saves her from ... something ... in Highgate Cemetery.

This was brilliant as I really enjoy books about vampires and gothic romance. April and

Gabriel's relationship constantly shifted and changed. At the beginning she didn't rate him at all, and he didn't know that she was attending a vampire academy and would be expected to work for vampires in the future. Even so a relationship develops which was interesting to find out about.

SHAMIMA BEGUM
Royal High



'brilliant'

Blood Alchemy

Series: The Bad Tuesdays
Benjamin J Myers
Orion £6.99 ISBN 9781842556412

In Book 3 of *The Bad Tuesdays* series, where parallel worlds exist and science and technology are hugely advanced, Chess is separated from her brothers and on her own. Box and Splinter are prisoners in another world – and while Box is desperate to find Chess, Splinter has other stuff on his mind.

I didn't really like this book. The plot wasn't very believable.

LAUREN DUNCAN
St Augustine's High

'the most frightening book I have ever read'



The Bad Tuesdays is the most frightening book I have ever read. The scariest character is the General. He is so unpredictable, you never know what's going to happen. I think anyone who loves horror or a good fright will be terrified by this book.

LACHLAN GLEN
Drummond Community High

Other books by Benjamin J Myers
The Nonsuch King, forthcoming sequel to *Blood Alchemy*

Dark Heart Forever

Lee Monroe
Hodder £6.99 ISBN 9781444901894

When Jane begins to be haunted by dreams of a beautiful boy with a secret who claims to be her soul mate, the lines between dreams and reality start to blur. And when Evan, an irresistible stranger new in town, makes it clear he'd like to be her boyfriend, Jane finally lets herself believe that maybe she can be a typical teenager.

I thought this was really good for a dark romance book, because usually I don't like these much. It wasn't too much like *Twilight* – I don't like stuff that's too similar to that. I liked most of the characters although I thought Jane was a wee bit wimpy. There was a whole thing about her being bullied at school. I thought she should have done something about it rather than being home schooled: it sends out a bad message to readers that it's ok to drop out if someone is picking on you at school. The whole storyline idea is a really good one though – I loved the twist at the end. My favourite character was Luca's sister because she seemed a bit of a handful, but as you get to know her you



understand how important she is – she really helped with the twist. Overall I would definitely recommend this book!

ELLA DUFFY
Broughton High

This is better than *Twilight*! Why? Because it is much more full of suspense, you never know what's really happening until the end – there are hints but that's all. My favourite character was Luca. He was dark and mysterious but much more convincing than Edward from *Twilight*. This is no sappy love story!

CHARLEY SPEIRS
Broughton High

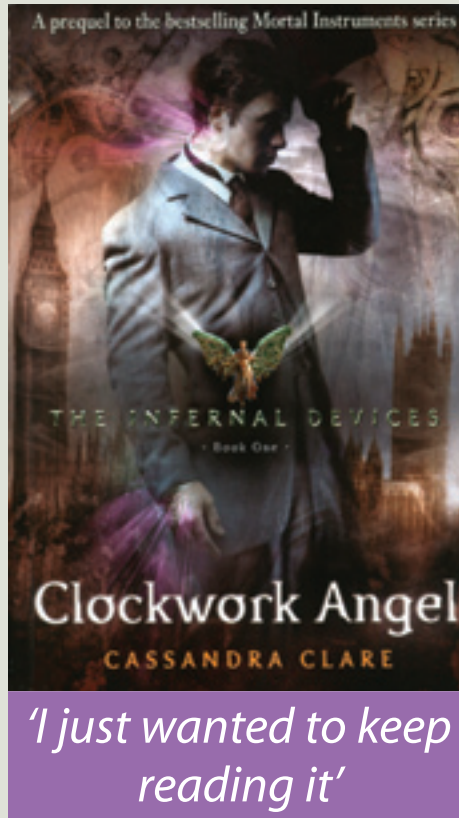
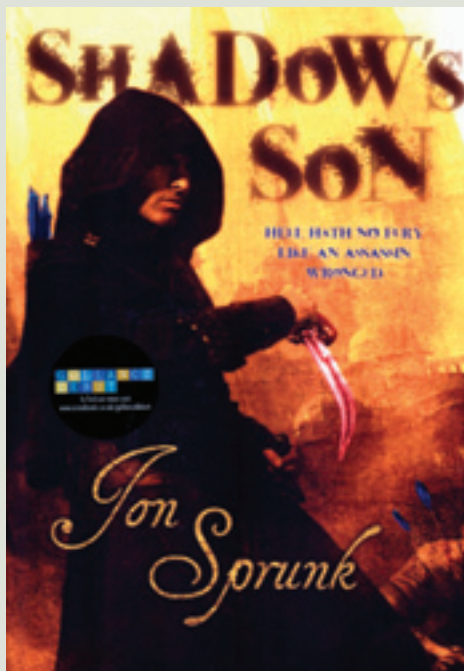
Shadow's Son

Jon Sprunk
Orion £12.99
ISBN 9780575096011

Caim is an assassin, a contract killer with supernatural powers who will do any job if the price is right. Josey is 17, lives in the better part of town, and her greatest wish is to find a nice husband. Their worlds collide when Caim is paid to kill Josey's father and they find themselves involved in a sinister plot.

This is a great book to read if you like assassins and horror. I found this book brilliant, I loved it and will definitely read it again! The main character is called Caim and it starts off with him hiding in the darkness waiting for his next assassination job. His assassinations are not easy and he needs a lot of luck to get through it alive. This is a great book!

CAMERON MITCHELL
Drummond Community High



Clockwork Angel

Series: The Infernal Devices
Cassandra Clare
Walker Books £9.99 ISBN 9781406321326

Stepping off the boat from New York to London, Tessa is kidnapped by the Dark Sisters and forced to be part of their supernatural plot. So begins her initiation into Victorian London's Downworld, populated by vampires, warlocks, and Shadowhunters, a group dedicated to destroying demons. Can the Shadowhunters get to the bottom of Tessa's ordeal?

It was really good, really exciting. Will was my favourite character because he reminds me of someone I know. What's also good about this book is that if you haven't read the *Mortal Instruments* series it still makes sense. The scene where Will and Tessa are about to get together, but then Will gets angry and leaves is really powerful because it defines their relationship. I would love to read more books in this series. I would say everyone should read this!

MEGAN BLACK
Broughton High

I thought this was really good. I just wanted to keep reading it. It kind of had weird twists in it so I didn't know what to expect! I didn't like the ending though because it was too much of a cliff-hanger. I am really looking forward to the next one coming out!

ISABELLA WEBSTER
Broughton High

The Ring of Solomon

Series: Bartimaeus
Jonathan Stroud
Doubleday £14.99 ISBN 9780385619158

Bartimaeus is stuck as a spirit slave serving at the court of King Solomon in Jerusalem in 950 BC. When he gets involved in helping a girl assassin to steal Solomon's ring, which gives its master absolute power, his magic powers are tested to the limits.

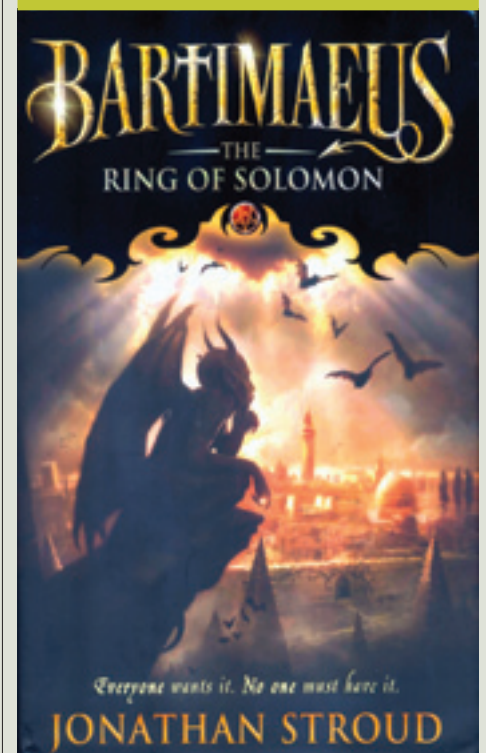
I loved this book! It's brilliant how the author made the character into a cheeky smartass who constantly finds trouble, or, as Bartimaeus says, 'trouble finds him'. The magic used is new and original, making you unable to put the book down as you just want to see what he'll come up with next. Well done, Jonathan Stroud!

SEVIL ILVES
Queensferry High

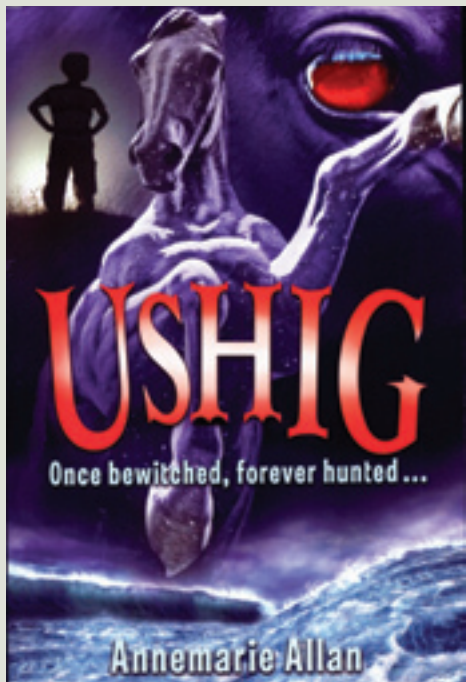
I liked this book because of the witty banter, the characters and the fact it kind of told you about the past. I found it confusing at first because of the way it talked in the first person and then went on to say that someone else did something. My favourite part of the book is when Asmira and Bartimaeus are watching Khaba destroy Jerusalem, and Bartimaeus says 'I wish I had some popcorn!'

JULIET BOURKE
Queensferry High

'The magic used is new and original'



REVIEWS



Ushig

Annemarie Allan
Floris Books £5.99 ISBN 9780863157431

When Ellen uses an ancient rhyme to summon a spirit from the past, a kelpie with evil intentions appears, and Ellen and her brother are dragged into a dark and dangerous parallel world. Will Ellen be able to save them from the Queen of the Night?

This was a really good book with a lot of detail and it explains the characters really well. It has an interesting storyline that makes you think something is going to happen and it turns around so something else happens instead. It is a bit of fantasy, but realistic enough to make you want to read on.

NAOMI WHITNEY
Castlebrae Community High

The Dark

Series: The Dead
David Gatward
Hodder £5.99 ISBN 9780340999707

Lazarus Stone has returned to the land of the Dead. He is wearing the clothes of a corpse. His best friend Craig is missing, and someone has tricked his dad into resurrecting his mum. Things are complicated, but they are about to get far, far worse.

The Dark is proof that you should never judge a book by its cover. The cover made this book look really exciting. It was difficult to get into and I quickly became bored with it. I gave up long before the end.

JOE QUAYLE
Trinity Academy

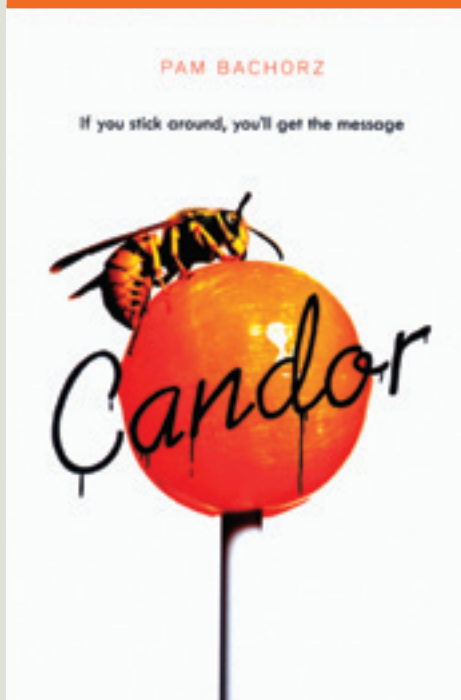


Candor

Pam Bachorz
Egmont £6.99 ISBN 9781405250276

Oscar Banks is a 'perfect' teenager, living in the 'perfect' town of Candor. However, his world is manufactured and controlled by brainwashing. Oscar has found a way to control the brainwashing messages and not be affected by them, but will he be able to save Nia, the new girl in town, from becoming a Candor robot?

'very heart-warming'



'They made me do it!' It's a popular phrase in my house, but I'd never read a book that meant it literally! *Candor* was chilling to the bone and gave me a good kick start to the year. How do people come up with ideas like this? I thought the ending was a little bit unfortunate, but overall it was one of the best thrillers of 2011.

SAMANTHA TULLOCH
Queensferry High

It was a very interesting book, but there'd better be a sequel to get a happy ending, depending on your point of view. I loved how I saw the relationship develop between Oscar and Nia. It was very heart-warming, and you can see how they tried to still be hopeful for the future, to just be themselves and not be controlled by the messages.

SEVIL ILVES
Queensferry High

Lies

Series: Gone
Michael Grant
Egmont £6.99

ISBN 9781405254304

Lies is the third book in the Gone series by Michael Grant, where everyone over 15 suddenly disappears and kids start developing mutant powers. In this book most of Perdido Beach is engulfed in a deliberate fire, and hero Sam's arch-enemy is back.

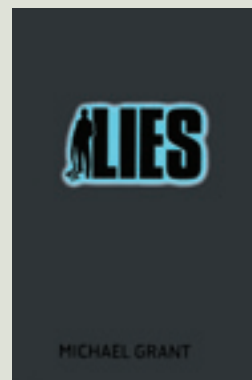
People who have read the first two books will fall in love with the sequel to *Gone* and *Hunger*. There is a lot more action in it than in both those books. The premise of *Lies* is also really intriguing. Michael Grant is going to have to do some pretty good writing to beat this with the next book in the series.

JOE QUAYLE
Trinity Academy

Torment

Series: Fallen
Lauren Kate
Doubleday £9.99 ISBN 9780385618090

Luce is convinced that she and fallen angel Daniel are destined to be together, but starts to suspect that he has been keeping secrets from her. She begins to fall for Miles, a Nephilim boy at her new school. Is she really meant to be with someone else?





At over 450 pages, this sequel to *Fallen* is a very long book. The storyline is, however, pretty gripping and has enough twists and turns to keep you reading. I'm really looking forward now to reading the third book in the series when it is published in the summer

JULIE DICKSON
Trinity Academy

Day of Deliverance

Series: Jack Christie Adventures
Johnny O'Brien
Templar Publishing £9.99 ISBN 9781848772779

Jack Christie works for VIGIL, ensuring that the dangerous Revisionists are not able to change the course of history and the world as we know it today. When he finds out about a Revisionist plot to kill Elizabeth I, he travels back to the Tudor era to save her.



I thought before I started reading this book that it would be great to go back in time and change everything that had gone wrong with the world. The author makes you realise though that this would in fact only make things worse. *Day of Deliverance* is part of a series. I hope that the author writes other books as exciting and imaginative as this one.

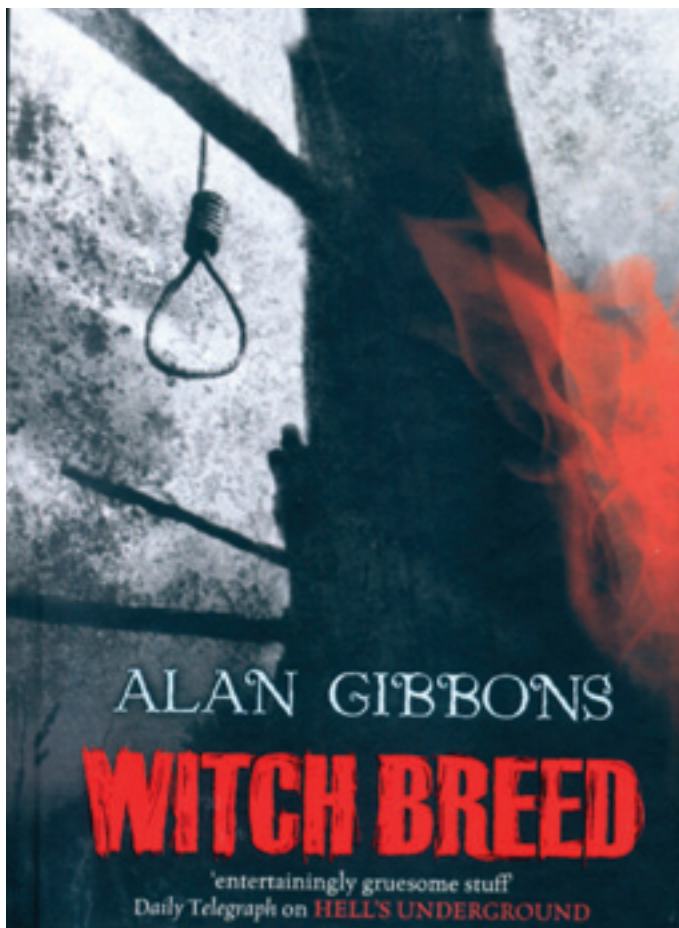
JAMES WEATHERSTON
Trinity Academy

Witch Breed

Series: Hell's Underground
Alan Gibbons
Orion £7.99
ISBN 9781842557808

Paul Rector is committed to a desperate struggle to secure the three gates which imprison the evil King Lud. He finds himself back in the 17th century, battling to save a young woman from being burnt as a witch. Can Paul save her and secure the gate, or might help come to him from a very unexpected source?

When I first picked up *Witch Breed* I thought it would be like every other book that has been written involving demons and witches, but the blurb doesn't truly represent the book. The clever twists and turns make you want to read on. The development of the characters and



the seamless switch between the present day and the past has to be admired. Overall, I would recommend this book to others who are interested in a different kind of book which has the ability to create the past before your eyes.

MICHELLE LEWIS
Firrhill High

The Truth Is Dead

Marcus Sedgwick (editor)
Walker Books £6.99 ISBN 9781406320039

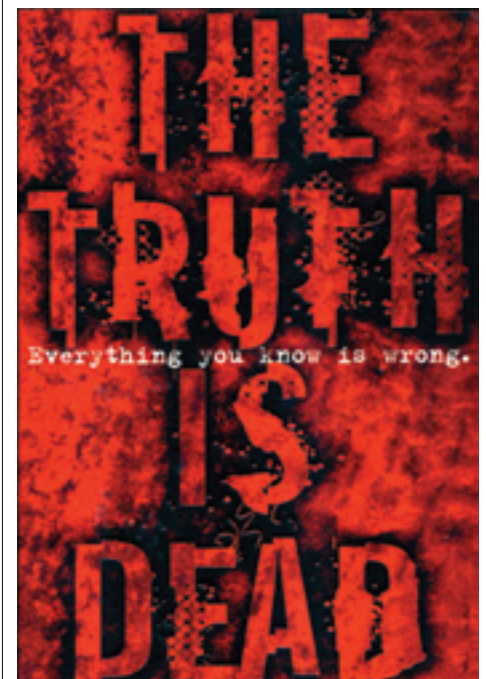
Eight brilliant contemporary writers rewrite key parts of history and challenge given ideas as events are juggled and changed. What if Hitler had been killed in the First World War? Or the Millennium Bug had been successful? Controversial new truths are aired in this collection of short stories.

This is a varied range of stories from historical to futuristic about famous people and what might have happened to them rather than what actually did take place. I found some of the stories unsettling, eg the way Jesus Christ is portrayed in a depressing and bloody manner. It was a good introduction to writers I'd never have thought of picking up, and I enjoyed most of the short stories I finished.

SOPHIE TEMPLETON
Royal High

This was almost realistic in feel. It felt like reading a fact book telling you what had happened. It was psychological rather than 'too scary' and I loved the idea of the stories being versions of what might have happened. It is definitely a book to make you think and look at different kinds of stories.

CONNOR JOBSON
Royal High



WorldShaker Rolls into Town with Richard Harland

WorldShaker author Richard Harland was interviewed by Andrew Thorburn, Jennifer Venters, Kayleigh McLeod, Sophie Chapman, Shannon MacHardie and John Paul Mason from Liberton High, Edinburgh.

Q When you start writing a book, do you know how it will end?

A I usually know how it will end overall. I like to write stories that end in a really big climax. I normally have an idea of how it will end, but not the detail of how it will end.

Q What inspired you to write books?

A I've wanted to write books since I was 11. My cousin and I used to build things out of junk and then make up stories about them. One time we copied those stories out and took them to the school playground where we swapped them for stuff, and I found out what a thrill it was to let someone else live through that story as well.

Q Who is your favourite author?

A Oh, there's too many to pick one. I love Mervyn Peake, J R R Tolkien, Philip Pullman, Garth Nix, Philip Reeve, there's too many. That'll do for starters.

Q Do you spend a lot of time writing your books?

A I do, I'm a slow writer. The fastest I've ever written a book is the sequel to *WorldShaker*, and I wrote the draft for that in eight months. I spend a long time planning a book before I write it. *WorldShaker* took me ten years of planning before I even started writing it. Often I take a long time writing it, and then I have to do revisions afterwards, so I'm slow at writing.

Q Which of your characters is your favourite?

A I like Col in *WorldShaker* because he's a bit like me. He's innocent and protected, and I was a bit like that until I was 12 years old. I was a good boy, I did everything I was told and I never really thought for myself. I like Mr Gibber the teacher because he is so crazy, and I like Ebnolia Porpentine, who is the wife of Sir Mormus Porpentine and Col's grandmother: she is nasty, a bad character. Those are probably my three favourites – all from *WorldShaker*.

Q What is the hardest thing about writing?

A The hardest thing about writing is when it's



not going well and you get stuck, and I got stuck writing for 25 years. Apart from that, often getting started is the hardest bit, or maybe about ten thousand words in, after the first couple of chapters.

Q When you were at school, was your favourite subject English?

A My two favourite subjects were English and Geography; History would be my third favourite.

Q Will you ever get tired of writing books?

A Never. I've been writing books for a long, long time, and I used to write books and never get them finished. It was 15 years ago when I finished my first book; I was 45 years old. All the time before I had been thinking up ideas for books, and now I've got enough ideas for books to keep me going until I'm about a hundred years old. So, no, I don't get fed up, and I think I'm so lucky to write books and get them published, and for them to be internationally successful.

Q If you weren't a writer, what would you be?

A I suppose a university lecturer, because

that's what I used to be until I got the chance to be a writer.

Q How did you think up the names for the characters in *WorldShaker*?

A It's really important for me to get the right name for the right character; it has to fit the character. Take Mr Bartram Gibber. Gibber is like a monkey, and the character behaves very like a monkey, he's like a crazy monkey. Sir Mormus Porpentine sounds big and grand and he has a big booming voice, and the name sort of captures how he is. I spend days and days just saying out the names in my head until I get the right one, and it often takes a long, long time.

Q How do you get the ideas for your books?

A I get them from dreams. I have to get my ideas from outside of normal reality. The juggernaut in *WorldShaker* comes from the time when I was a kid and I went to a Royal Navy day down in Devon. I went on this big aircraft carrier, and I went down through deck after deck after deck, until I suddenly got all claustrophobic and the big metal walls seemed to press in on me and I panicked. That feeling, that experience, went into making *WorldShaker*, but the ideas come from dreams.

Q Did your family support you when you started writing?

A Well, for a long time I wrote without actually telling anyone, and a lot of it was in secret. Since I finally got to be a writer my wife and family have been very supportive.

Q Do you have a favourite football team?

A I still really support Ipswich Town, because when I lived in England I lived in a town near to there.

Q Do you feel proud of your work?

A Very, very. I'm very, very, very, very proud, yes. It's what I've always wanted to do, it's something I feel I do well, it's just very satisfying and I feel great about it.

Q What made you move to Australia?

A I moved to Australia because I couldn't finish any novels, and I wanted to do a postgraduate degree at university, a PhD, and I had the opportunity to do it in Newcastle, Australia. When I went I had no intention of staying, but after being there for about six weeks I decided that that was where I wanted to spend the rest of my life.

Q Why do you write steampunk?

A I think it's just the way my imagination works. There are steampunk bits in my other novels, industrial-type parts. This is the most natural 'me' type of writing, and I think it's just the way my imaginations works.

Q What is a good definition of steampunk?

A It's a nineteenth-century feel, but a fantasy version of the nineteenth century, particularly focusing on industrial machinery, fantastical machinery and alternative technology. You'll love steampunk if you just



love amazing machinery, and I just do love intricate fabulous machinery.

Q Do you have a favourite place to write?

A I actually write lying on the bed, and then every few paragraphs I go to the study and I type it up on the computer.

Q Are all your books the same genre?

A They're all fantasy, but some are fantasy/science fiction, some are fantasy/horror and *WorldShaker* is fantasy/steampunk. You could say they are all in the fantasy genre, but with different sub-genres. I'd say fantasy is my favourite genre, with steampunk as my favourite sub-genre.

Q In *WorldShaker*, where did you get the idea to squash the villages down below?

A The first thing I thought of was the juggernaut, and then I thought of the people in the juggernaut, and I thought that the people on the juggernaut wouldn't care who they killed. But it's a long time before Col gets to see what the juggernaut does, because when he goes to look out he can't actually see what the juggernaut does, and it's the girl Filthy that shows him the flattened crushed villages that the juggernaut leaves.

Q Will there be a follow-up to *WorldShaker*?

A I thought I was going to write a trilogy, and *WorldShaker* was the first book of the trilogy. My publisher said that there was a bit too much of a gap between the books to market them as a trilogy, and they thought that the books would be better if books two and three were combined into one book. Initially I wasn't sure about doing it, but when I started working on it, it actually worked out beautifully. So *Liberator* will be my next book, and it is books two and three combined, which will make *WorldShaker* and *Liberator* a duology. I'm going to still keep writing after *Liberator*, to continue the world and write another duology next. I've got a lot of the ideas for it, but they still have to crystallize.

Q Who designed your front cover for *WorldShaker*?

A Ian Miller. He is a very famous illustrator, and he's actually one of my favourite illustrators. Templar the publisher decided to get him

to do the front cover, and I was so delighted. He's very famous, and I didn't think he'd do a cover for *WorldShaker*, but he did and I love his artwork.

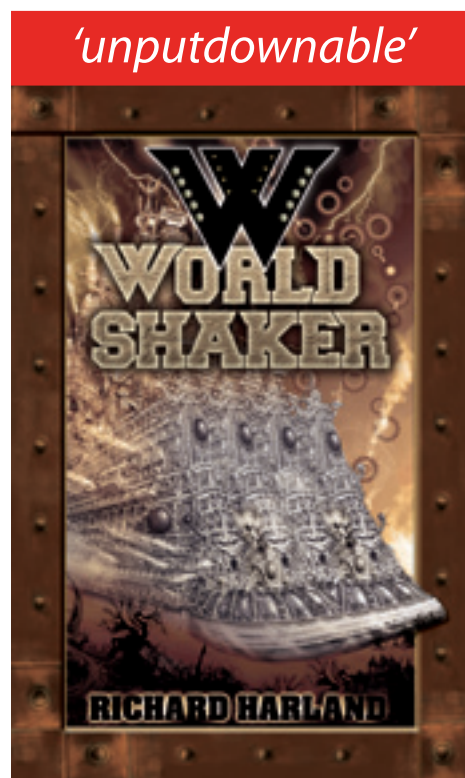
WorldShaker

Richard Harland
Templar Publishing £6.99 ISBN 9781848775275

WorldShaker is an enormous mobile city, where the wealthy live on the top decks in luxury and the Filthies toil in the depths of the juggernaut powering the engines. What will happen when their two worlds collide?

I thought the book was 'unputdownable' and was full of thrills and twists. My favourite part of the book was when Col fought the boys in the classroom. My least favourite part of the book was when Col first started school. I recommend you read this and I would give it five stars.

CRAIG SMITH
Liberton High



JUST FOR LAUGHS

Bridesmaid Blitz

Series: Ask Amy Green
Sarah Webb
Walker Books £5.99 ISBN 9781406316933

Agony Aunts Amy and Clover are helping to plan Sylvie's wedding, and find out that Paris is on a mission to find the perfect bridesmaids' dresses.

This book was way too girly for me! It would have more credence with 'pink lit' readers. There was lots about dresses, boyfriends and make-up and I struggled to page 100, but it didn't get any better for me. Sorry, even the cover was dull.

CARA ANDERSON
Royal High



REVIEWS



Grk Down Under

Joshua Doder
Andersen Press £4.99 ISBN 9781842709313

Grk, the brave and adventurous dog, follows the scent of sausages and ends up in Australia and in the middle of a plot to blow up Sydney Opera House. Can Tim rescue his dog and outwit the villainous Red Jelly Gang?

I thought this book was funny and adventurous. It made me feel like I wanted to be a character in the story. I think this book could be read by any gender.

STEVEN FAICHNEY
Forrester High

This book was really good. It took you straight into the storyline and kept you going all the way through. My favourite character was Grk the dog who was really well described. The storyline was good; it was an easy read and quite funny. I would quite like to read the others in the series.

NAOMI WHITNEY
Castlebrae Community High

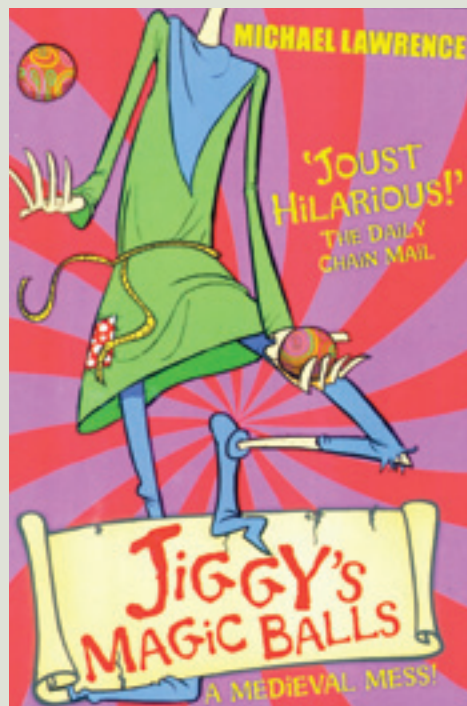
Jiggy's Magic Balls

Series: Jiggy's Genes
Michael Lawrence
Orchard Books £5.99
ISBN 9781408308035

Jiggy is a peasant in medieval times and life is not great. It seems to be trouble after trouble, and he works for the dumbest knight in the land. But now that he has discovered a pair of magic balls, is his luck about to change?

Even though it is for children, I liked this book very much. I actually cried myself laughing. I was impressed with how the author could spew sarcasm naturally and not overdo it. The downside is that this book comes in a series, and all are small stories.

SEVIL ILVES
Queensferry High



This book was quite strange. I haven't read anything like it before as I, personally, am not into medieval things. Anybody who does like medieval things would probably enjoy it though. Some parts were hard to follow but the plot was OK. One of the best parts was when Jiggy outwitted Merlin.

HILARY DALGLEISH
Queensferry High

Screw Loose

Chris Wheat
Allen & Unwin £6.99 ISBN 9781741754957

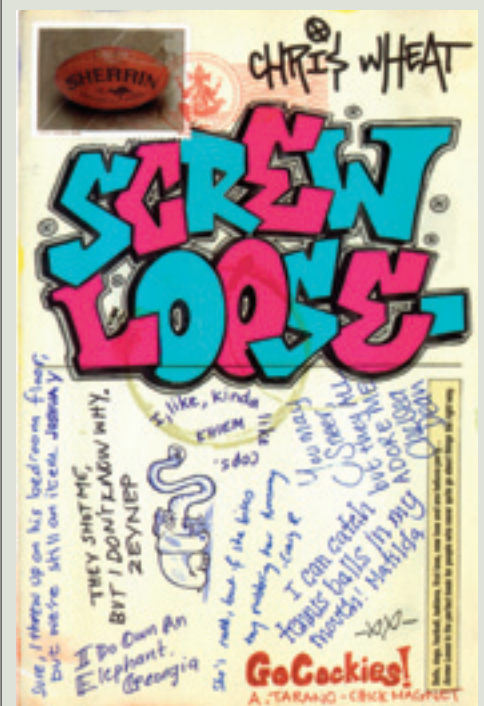
Another year at Vistaview Secondary College, first visited in Looselips. Angelo has been picked to play for the Hobart Cockatoos, but they don't think Zeynep is a suitable girlfriend. They would prefer Matilda Grey, who was brought up by dingoes, but she is going out with Craig.

This is an immensely funny, chill-out book. It is a book full of laughs and a weird madness. I'd strongly recommend this. To find out why I've enjoyed the book so much I'd highly suggest you go and get this book. It's well worth it :)

SOP FEMI OLEKAMNA
Liberton High

I enjoyed reading this book because it had lots of good characters with their own individual stories and they all have their own identity. I liked the fact that the author had made the book up to date with all the current news. I thought it was good that each character's chapter connected with the next, and how it all came together in the end. I would recommend this book as it is a funny, strange but wonderful book.

IERA TURNBULL
Liberton High



FOCUS ON FAMILY

However, once I got into the real story about Grace I liked it. It was a perfect storyline for people my age because I could relate to Grace and I felt sorry for her when she felt trapped and wasn't allowed to mix freely with her friends. I think it was cruel as I especially like being able to be with my friends. Although this book has a girl as the main character I still think it will appeal to both boys and girls.

ANEEAH SHER
Craigmount High

Glitter

Kate Maryon
HarperCollins £6.99 ISBN 9780007326280

Liberty Parfitt loves music, but her father is focused on getting good exam results and earning lots of money and thinks her passion is a waste of time. When he loses his job and becomes depressed it turns out that Liberty's talent may be the one thing that can save him.



This was a really good book that was easy to get into. I could relate to the characters and their lives and I really liked the main character. I would recommend this book to girls who like a good read.

KERI BAIRD
Castlebrae Community High

Big City Butter-Finger

Bob Cattell and John Agard
Frances Lincoln £5.99 ISBN 9781845079543

Riccardo is performing in the Caribbean Festival in London, far from his home in Trinidad. He wants to find out about his father who left home for London years before. Will Riccardo find his father, and will he like what he finds out about him?

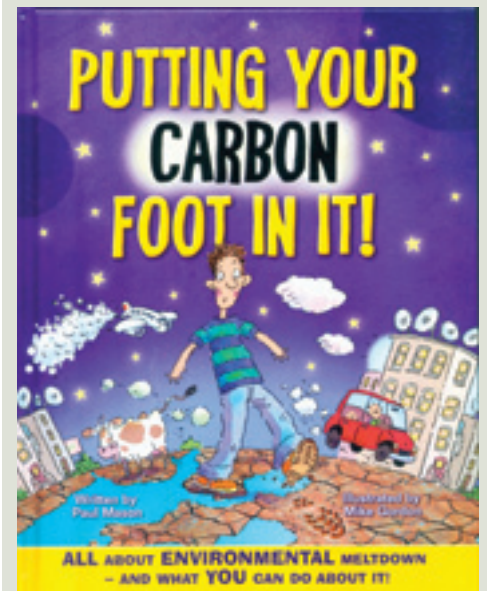
My favourite part of the book was about how Riccardo met all the cricket legends at Lord's, the biggest cricket stadium in the world!

The type of reader that I think this would appeal to would be someone who is sporty, likes singing and a little bit of drama.

NIZAM ZAIHAN
Forrester High



FACT-PACKED



'made in a fun way'

Putting Your Carbon Foot in It!

Paul Mason
Wayland £13.99 ISBN 9780750260992

Facts about climate change, carbon footprints and how to save the Earth.

Putting Your Carbon Foot in It! is not the type of book I would usually read, but it is quite interesting. There are lots of facts and they are made in a fun way. The pictures grab your attention and help put a picture in your head. Overall I kind of enjoyed reading it, but it's not my favourite book.

AMY SCOTT
Forrester High



'an unusual story'

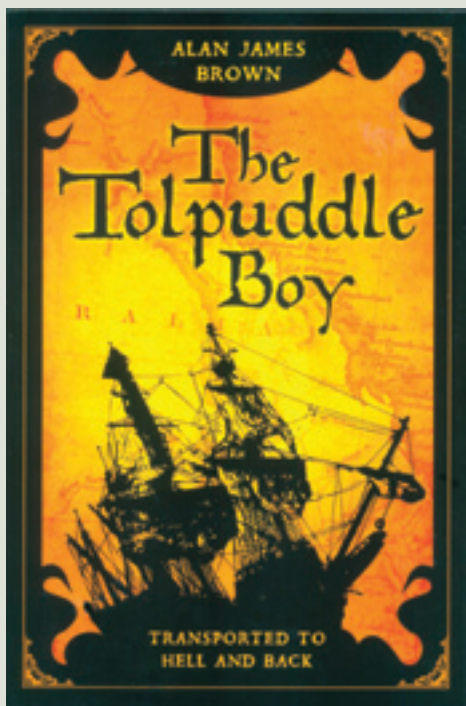
Grace

Morris Gleitzman
Puffin £6.99 ISBN 9790141336039

Grace and her family are happily members of a very strict religious church, but things start to go wrong when disapproving Elders find Grace's project about her family, based on the Bible. Grace's naïve honesty starts to get her into trouble and she is branded a sinner.

This was an unusual story and at first seemed a bit religious and not my kind of story at all.

REVIEWS



The Tolpuddle Boy

Alan James Brown
Five Leaves £5.99 ISBN 9781905512775

This book tells the true story of six farm labourers from Tolpuddle in Dorset who were transported to Australia for forming a union.

I enjoyed this book as it was very graphic in some parts. For example the first paragraph was really revolting when it described how the main character, James Byrne, was treated in the slave trade. I enjoyed best the main character James as he is very dogged and refuses to give up, believing that he will survive. I felt very sorry for James as he was treated so badly and the plot was very believable for the time it was set in. I would possibly recommend this to one or two of my friends if they liked quite a gory book. The ending was unusual in describing the way James died. In three words I would describe this book as clever, gory and fantastic.

MCKINLEY BREAU-TAYLOR
James Gillespie's High

Animal Records

Mark Carwardine
The Natural History Museum £12.99
ISBN 9780565092481

This book is divided up into sections covering mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes and invertebrates. It contains lots of facts such as the longest hibernation, highest jump and strongest bite.

This is one of the best books about animals I've ever seen! I especially like the short introduction to each animal followed by amazing facts such



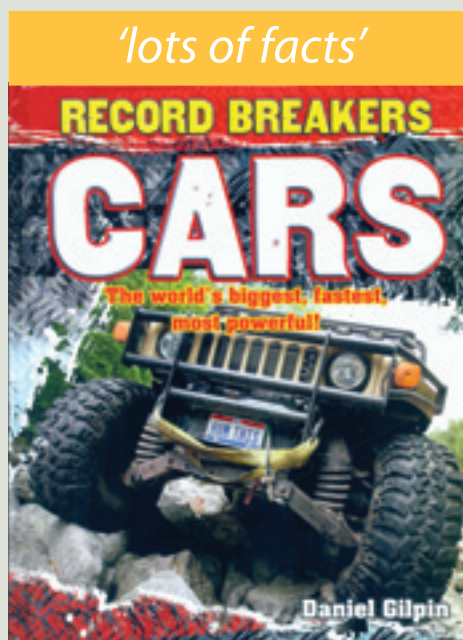
as the largest, longest horns, most varied diet etc. There are great photographs and it is well structured into sections on mammals, reptiles, birds and so on. It is a brilliant book just to dip into or sit and read at length. Anyone who is interested in animals will love this!

LEWIS BROCKIE
Craigmount High

Cars

Series: Record Breakers
Daniel Gilpin
Wayland £12.99 ISBN 9780750262750

This book is full of record breaking facts about cars such as fastest acceleration, most expensive and biggest car. It is Jeremy Clarkson's dream book!



I thought this book was good and really interesting because it is full of lots of facts, some of which are quite unusual. There are loads of different types of cars featured and some even from the future. The attractive cover (I like cars!) caught my eye and I definitely recommend it to my car-crazy pals.

CONOR HUGHES
Craigmount High

The Boys from Glee Inside Out

Mel Williams
Piccadilly Press £5.99 ISBN 9781848121379

Want to know more about the real boys behind your favourite characters from Glee like Finn, Puck, Will and Kurt? Then this is the book for you – crammed full of gossip and pictures, and revealing stuff like their favourite things and what they did before Glee!

Very good – I liked how it told you lots of things about the people in it. Finn is my favourite character. Surprising fact – Finn is going out with Taylor Swift.

MADDY BURGOYNE
Boroughmuir High

The Boys From Glee is great for any lovers of *Glee*, like me, giving you facts and showing you a real insight into all the boy characters. Overall a great book and great for all gleeks.

LAUREN FORDE
Boroughmuir High

This book would probably appeal to much younger readers, and then ones who had actually seen *Glee*. Though this held no interest to me, I'm sure it would to others.

ELEANOR WILLIAMS
Boroughmuir High



Why *Wasted* is Nicola Morgan's Favourite Book

Nicola Morgan visited St Thomas of Aquin's High, Edinburgh, to talk about her latest novel, *Wasted*. She was interviewed about the book by Antoine Asmar, Sophie Watson, Rodrigo McCafferty, Unes Kirmani, Bartek Lysien, Sadie Woods and Angus McAnespie.

Q What inspired you to write this book?

A During a trip to London about 15 years ago, I took a different route on the Underground and met a friend from home on the escalator. I was really fired up after a talk that day, and started thinking about looking down on things from above, and seeing the things that don't happen as well as the things that do. So – a chance meeting on a day when my brain was working in a strange way!

Q The characters in the book are quite strong. Are they based on anyone real?

A No, except for Spike the cat, who is based on the four cats I have owned in my life! Just as I started writing the book, I did see a boy on holiday in Tunisia with weird/trendy hair that looked exactly as I imagined Jack to be. I had to explain to his family why I was looking at him!

Q How long did it take to work on the characters?

A They grow gradually, bit by bit. I don't work them out in advance, so sometimes I have to go back and change things in the book. I don't have a method. I suppose it's a bit like getting to know real people – you notice a few things at a time and get to know them more and more clearly.

Q What writer would you compare yourself to?

A I don't know. I can't imagine any author would try to be like another. You just want to write a good story. I read and admire other authors, like Keith Gray, even though his writing is very different from mine, but I think you have to be yourself, and not borrow others' techniques.

Q You've had a lot of praise for *Wasted*. Do you feel it's the best book you've written?



A It is my favourite. I was very, very worried about it because it is so weird and different. It was a risk, but there's been a really good reaction and it's the book I'm most proud of. It's also the most 'me' of my books – it's what I think, it has my favourite characters (Jack and Jess), and my heart is in it. I've never felt so strongly about any of my other books.

Q You've written lots of books. How easy is it to gather ideas for them, and do you usually start with one idea, or merge lots of different ones together?

A Ideas come into your head all the time and you have to be open to them, and then the hard bit is working out how to fit them into a story. I do a lot of thinking during walks, train journeys etc, and then I'm ready to start writing. But for *The Highwayman's Footsteps*, I had a conversation with my editor then started writing straight away, with no planning or thinking. It's different each time. I think I'd say each book starts with one idea, though.

Q Why have you used short chapters in the book – eg Chapter 42 which is just one page long?

A When *Sleepwalking* came out, a girl commented on the long chapters, and I realised that some people like to finish a chapter before they put a book down. The short chapters are now a deliberate technique to get people involved and make them read on. It is a way of trying to control the reader! I'm a control freak, you see!

Q There is a band – Schrödinger's Cat – in the book. Did you put them in as a device to appeal to teenagers?

A It wasn't deliberately for teenage appeal, it just felt right and music was always going to be crucial to those characters. Some adults have said that they'd like to buy the band's album!

Q There are pages from Jack's wall in the book, with quotes from Nehru, Einstein, etc. Did you have to do much research into philosophy when you were writing it?

A I studied philosophy at university and read a lot about science, so I just needed to check quotes. They are personal interests of mine anyway; I suppose I'm now even more obsessed about these ideas than before.

Q Why is the book called *Wasted*? Does it refer to wasted time or opportunities, or the episode in the book when Jess gets drunk?

A That's a good question! I chose the title early on, because originally the book had more of a theme of alcohol, but it does also refer to chance and opportunity. Some people wanted to call it *Jack's Game* but my editor and I both loved the title *Wasted*.

Q On the *Wasted* blog, and in your talk, you said that you did not like working on the *Thomas the Tank Engine* books. Why?

A Probably because I don't like following rules! You had to be consistent and write in a certain way. There was no personality or use of imagination. Also, to be honest, I find trains boring topics for stories!

Q Have any of your books been translated?

A So far some of my books are in Turkish, Romanian, Hungarian, Polish, Japanese, French and Serbian. Some of the covers are amazing!

Q Do YOU believe in luck and superstition?

A Absolutely not in superstition: I challenge it by walking under ladders, and I don't have mascots! I do believe that by taking opportunities and risks we can make ourselves more lucky, though. Even applying for a job can lead you to useful contacts, and the more good decisions you make, the better your life will be. You never know what something will lead to.

Wasted

Nicola Morgan

Walker Books £6.99 ISBN 9871406321951

Jack lives his life by the flip of the coin, and no chance is too great to gamble on. Luck brings him Jess, but soon his life spirals out of control. Eventually, life or death will be determined by the toss of a coin.

I think the concept in *Wasted* of luck, chance and tossing a coin to decide things was really good, and having a band in the story would appeal to teenagers. The author told the story in a way that was easy to understand, and I felt like I was looking down on it all from above or outside. I enjoyed the short chapters, and the drink-spiking incident in the bar was both memorable and frightening, in terms of how easily it could be done. I think meeting the author gave me an even better understanding of the book.

ANTOINE ASMAR

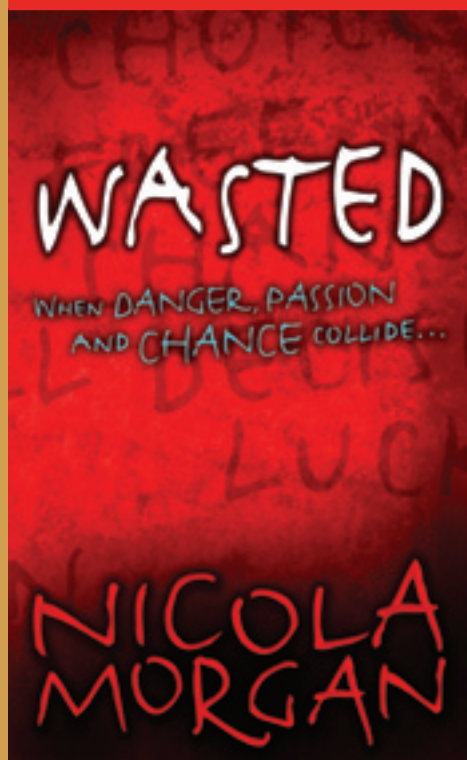
St Thomas of Aquin's High

I thought there was real passion in the relationship between Jack and Jess, because the romance was mixed in with all the incidents of chance. The book had a really good concept. The story felt even more realistic after we met Nicola Morgan, because I could understand the psychology of it more.

SOPHIE WATSON

St Thomas of Aquin's High

'real passion in the relationship'



The Sky is Everywhere

Jandy Nelson

Walker Books £7.99 ISBN 9781406326307

When her older sister dies suddenly, Lennie finds it impossible to believe that life can carry on without her, and cannot speak to anyone about her feelings.

A slow-moving book that was rather hard to get into. The main character and narrator is quite irritating, which can bring down the novel quite a bit. Yet the concept and even the way it is

written is quite good, with the letters and poems being a particularly good touch.

SHANNAN LEKWATI

Portobello High

The Worst of Me

Kate Le Vann

Piccadilly Press £6.99 ISBN 9781848120457

Still confused by her feelings for ex-boyfriend, Ian, and finding life at home difficult, Cass is surprised to find herself falling for new boy Jonah. It seems the perfect romance, but, when rumours start, it seems she might not know him as well as she thought.

This book was really good and kept me interested all the way through. I could relate to Cass and the storyline was realistic. Sometimes unexpected things happened – like Jonah attacking Ian – and this kept me really intrigued to see what would happen next. I think other teenage girls would enjoy this book and it has definitely made me want to read others by this author!

KATIE WARD

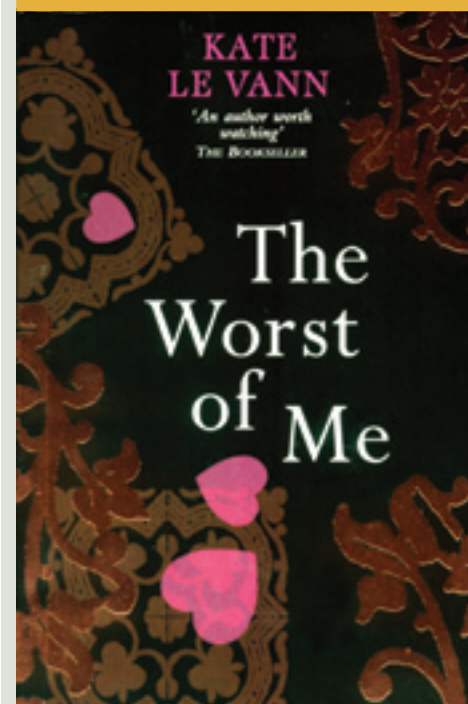
St Thomas of Aquin's High

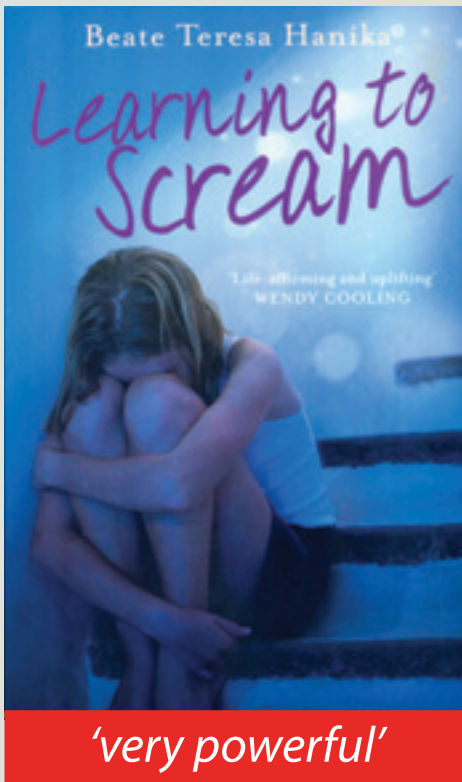
A really good book with a storyline that dealt with emotions and was quite different to other books. They were realistic characters, although there wasn't much description to help you picture them. I felt involved with the characters and would definitely recommend this book to my friends.

MHAIRI MCIVOR

St Thomas of Aquin's High

'quite different'





Learning to Scream

Beate Teresa Hanika
Andersen Press £6.99
ISBN 9781849390606

Originally written and published in Germany, *Learning to Scream* tells the appalling tale of one girl's fight against an abusive grandfather. Aided and abetted by her grandmother, Malvina's grandfather has been abusing her since she was eight, but she finds help in the most unexpected of places and her story becomes one of survival rather than despair.

Oh my god, this book was just horrible even though it was well written. The way poor Malvina was so scared she couldn't move was just terrible. I couldn't believe that her grandmother did nothing to help and to put a stop to it. I would read more books by this author. This book gives you graphic mental images which may disturb you.

JOYLINE GWARUKA
Holy Rood High

At the end of this book I felt really relieved for Malvina because at last her grandfather couldn't get to her and I felt very annoyed with the grandmother because she never said anything even though she knew it was happening. I think that Malvina's parents should have listened to her more. This is quite a disturbing read and is only for mature readers. It was worthwhile reading.

CHLOE CAMPANILE
Holy Rood High



This book shows that you can't really trust anyone and it made me as the reader want to scream at her parents for not listening to her. You have to be kind of tough to read this book and also you have to be over 15, I think. If you're looking for a light-hearted kind of read then this is not the book for you, but I really liked the fact that you could see Malvina get stronger throughout the book. The worst thing was that no-one believed her. This was quite a short story in length but very powerful.

NISHA GURUSAMY
Holy Rood High

The Double Life of Cassiel Roadnight

Jenny Valentine
HarperCollins £5.99 ISBN 9780007283613

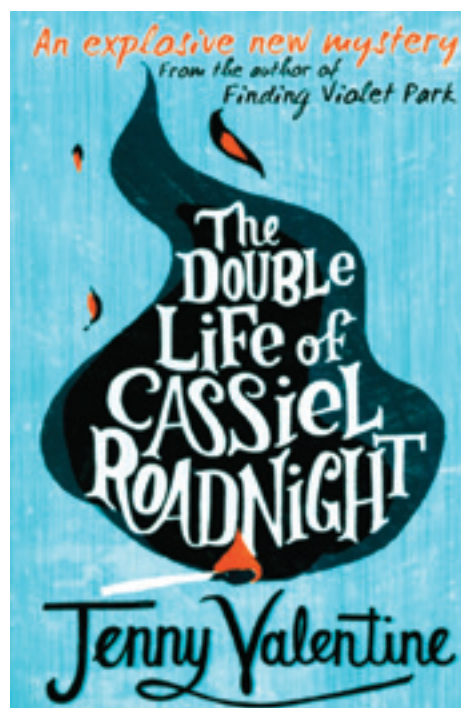
A teenager on the run is gifted the identity of another missing boy, Cassiel Roadnight, who is his double. Cassiel's family accept him without any questions. However, there are secrets that come to light and a huge mystery to be solved.

I didn't enjoy this book. At first, I couldn't put my finger on it, but I think it was because it was too depressing. My friend loved it though, so we must just have different tastes.

KIRSTY FARMER
Gracemount High

This shaped up to be a good mystery, but was a little confusing at times. I loved the twist about Cass's grandfather. I did not expect that. The character I liked the most was the evil big brother, who had managed to fool most people.

ELLIE ROWAN
Gracemount High



Pink

Lili Wilkinson
Allen & Unwin £5.99 ISBN 9781741758344

Ava is reinventing herself. She is trying to find her true identity. Is she a super-cool gay or a pink and fluffy heterosexual?

This book has so many characters; there is at least one that you can empathise with. The book is really funny and

I really like Ava. I like that you get to see her try to find her own identity in amongst the three different social groups in school. I love the big mix up in the middle in the book and I love happy endings!

SARAH GARRITY
Gracemount High

This is quite a deep book, but is done in quite a humorous way. It looks at sexuality, but not making it a big deal, and making the issue easy to understand. I really liked the way it broke down stereotypes.

HOLLIE ANDERSON
Gracemount High

To the Extreme

David Gatward
Barrington Stoke £5.99 ISBN 9781842998953

Jack is very scared of heights, but when he watches a TV programme where a 70-year-old man conquers his fear of heights by skydiving, he decides to give it a go!

I enjoyed this because it was a good life lesson. Jack had to face up to his fear and I liked how he managed to overcome his bad experience when he was younger. It was realistic and quite exciting, so this kept me reading right to the perfect ending.

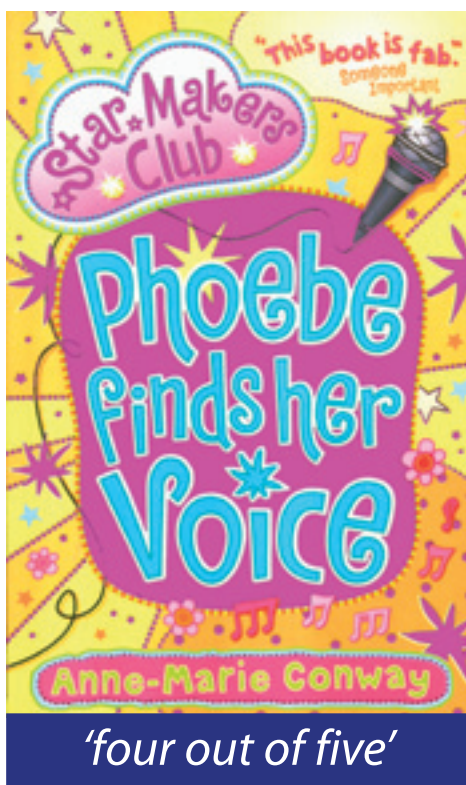
CHRISTOPHER BELL
Craigmount High

Although I'm not scared of heights myself, I could sympathise with Jack's fear. The story kept my interest and it was a fast read. This is a book which could easily be enjoyed by girls and boys and I would certainly recommend it to my friends.

CAITLIN HALL
Craigmount High



REVIEWS



'four out of five'

Phoebe Finds Her Voice

Anne-Marie Conway
Usborne £5.99 ISBN 9781409516514

Phoebe is having a hard time at home, with her parents having split up. Her confidence is shattered. Will she be able to bravely overcome all her fears and sing on stage?

This tells the story of how Phoebe is very shy at high school after being extrovert at primary school. Phoebe joins a club called Star-Makers run by one of the teachers, where she auditions and gets a solo part in a musical, but struggles to remember her lines. This is a story for young teenage girls and I would give it four out of five.

JENNIFER FERN
Currie Community High

The Midnight Zoo

Sonya Hartnett
Penguin £8.99 ISBN 9781406331493

When two young boys stumble across a zoo during the Second World War, their lives are changed by the impact of the animals living there.

The book does not have the best of starts as the perspective the writer



has given changes in the wrong place and is quite hard to follow. The ending to the book isn't great either, as it confuses you and leaves you hanging. This book is fiction and I would recommend it to the type of person that likes animals and small amounts of action and adventure.

MIKE ALLAN
Currie Community High

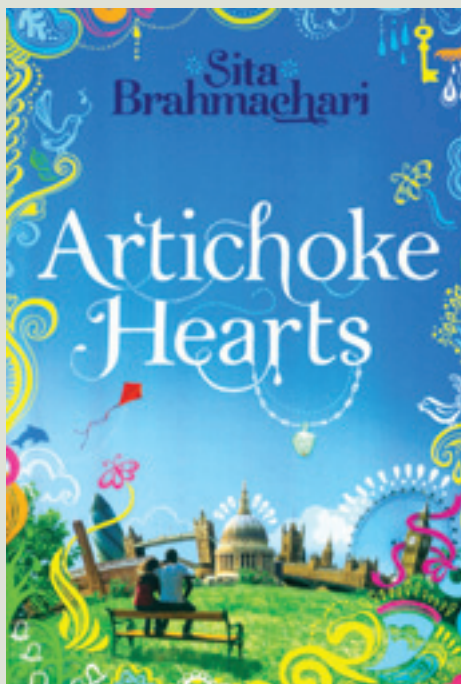
Artichoke Hearts

Sita Brahmachari
Macmillan £5.99 ISBN 9780330517911

Mira Levinson's family life is chaotic and she feels nothing is private. Her grandmother is unwell and her best friend is drifting away from her – just the right time to start a relationship with a boy. But this boy is a bit mysterious and seems to have layers of secrets that Mira can't resist finding out about.

I like this book because the main character describes her surroundings (people, setting, objects etc) very well. Mira Levenson is my favourite character because she is easy to understand; also Nana Josie is a good character because there is a lot of description about her personality and appearance. It's Nana Josie who explains that hearts become like artichokes, and the leaves that surround the artichoke heart are there to protect you from being hurt, I especially liked that idea and am pleased it explained the title of the book. To me, the beginning of the book was slightly confusing, but I get that with most books – keep with it, it's well worth it! I would have liked to have had more romance in the book: there was too much about Nana Josie and not enough of Jidé Jackson.

LISA MURRAY
Forrester High



Beautiful Malice

Rebecca James
Faber and Faber £7.99 ISBN 9780571255238

Katherine's family has been torn apart by tragedy. When she becomes friends with Alice it looks like this will help her get over her past, but Alice isn't all she seems.

I really enjoyed this book because the ending was good.

Some of the story made me sad. I'd recommend this book to anyone who likes to read about teenagers with life problems.

CHLOE PUNTON
Forrester High



Before We Say Goodbye

Gabriella Ambrosio
Walker Books £5.99 ISBN 9781406325041

This tells the parallel stories of two girls, one Palestinian, Dima, and one Israeli, Myriam. Both have been affected by the continuing conflict. As the day wears on, fate brings the two girls to the supermarket at the same time.

'sensitively handles a loaded topic'



The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been in the news several times in recent years. Although it is easy to ignore the images of horror that appear in the media – to change the channel or turn the page – this book is far less easy to ignore. It doesn't judge or take sides. It doesn't condemn anyone, and it sensitively handles a loaded topic. It is one of the most thoughtful and thought-provoking books I have ever read, and I can't recommend it highly enough to anyone who's ever dismissed a news report of war in far-away places, or looked at a death toll and seen a statistic.

KATIE MCCOMBES
Portobello High

The Glass Collector

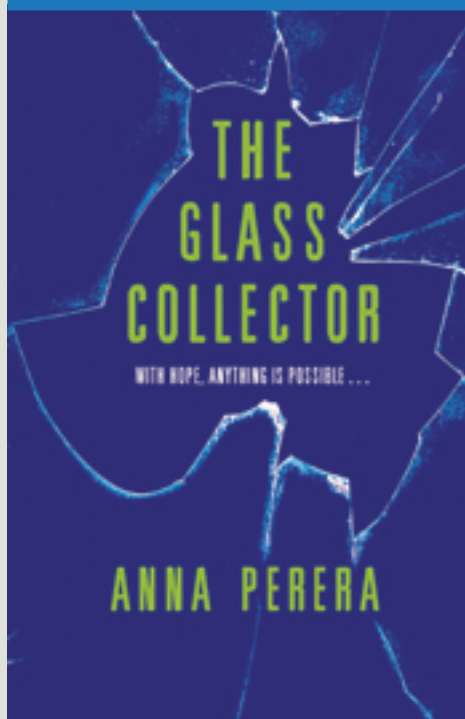
Anna Perera
Puffin £7.99 ISBN 9780141331157

A hard-hitting story of Aaron's survival in a brutal Cairo slum where money is scarce, feuds are rife and community spirit can triumph.

This book was amazing! It was quite slow until the middle, when the pace really picked up and became very entertaining. I liked how the author described the settings – they were very realistic – and felt sorry that the slum children didn't have the things that we do. I like reading about other parts of the world and thought the author did an excellent job, making the book true to life, descriptive and witty.

PERRI HUTCHINGS
St Thomas of Aquin's

'descriptive and witty'



THRILLERS & CHILLERS



Blackout

Sam Mills
Faber and Faber £6.99 ISBN 9780571239412

Stefan lives in a Britain of the not-too-distant future where the brainwashing of citizens and public executions are common. After betraying his father, he is sent to

'the Institution' and finds his thoughts and actions becoming ever more radical.

This was brilliant, one of my favourite books! It was exciting, realistic and the storyline kept me hooked. It mentioned George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* a few times and even inspired me to read it afterwards to find out more Utopian states. It was a great book, which I think other readers would enjoy, and I'd be keen to try other books by the same author.

ANDREI VITALIEV
St Thomas of Aquin's High

A fast-paced book with a weird storyline, which turned out to be much better than I'd expected! I could totally understand the way Stefan acted, and I thought the tension in the book built up really well. I got into the book quickly and would recommend it to others. Now I want to read *The Boys Who Saved the World!!*

DANIEL KINGHORN
St Thomas of Aquin's High

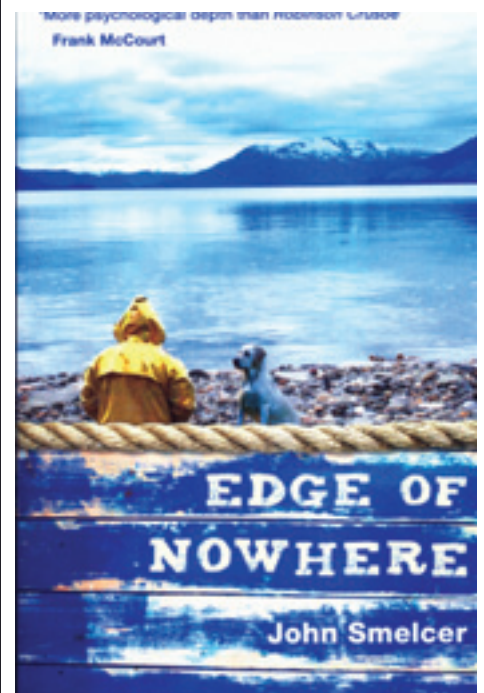
Edge of Nowhere

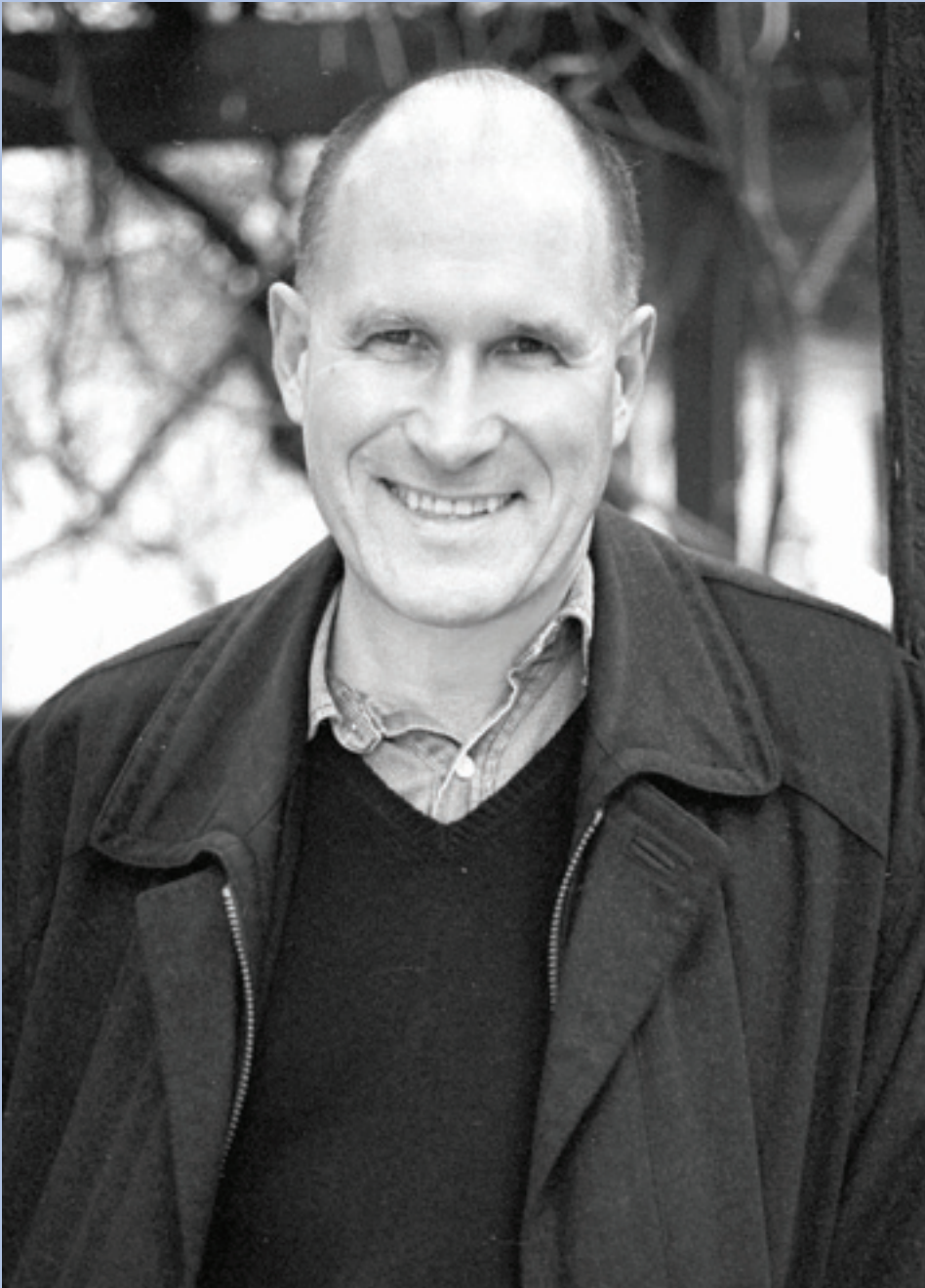
John Smelcer
Andersen Press £5.99 ISBN 19781849391962

Seth and his dog Tucker are swept overboard in Alaska, and miraculously make it to land. However, they have been given up as lost. Will they manage to make their way back home?

I was attracted by the cover and by the blurb on the back of this book, but once I started reading I did not find the story was written in an appealing way. Perhaps it was not really my sort of book, and one that might be more for boys.

AIMEE MCCALDIN
Portobello High





William Nicholson – From Big Screen to Teen Fiction

Multi-award winning screenplay writer (*Gladiator*, *Shadowlands*) and novelist William Nicholson came to the Royal High, Edinburgh, courtesy of the Scottish Book Trust, to launch his brilliant debut teen novel *Rich and Mad*. What did teenagers in the school think about the 'battle' between the sexes? Are boys

really so brutal and insensitive when discussing relationships with their friends? Do girls find it much easier to open up and discuss their feelings? He spoke frankly and eloquently about his move from children's fantasy into the grittier teen marketplace, and gave all participants a lot to ponder on.

Here are some of the comments from his audience:

- 'He made it easy for us to open up about feelings' – William
- 'Good to be able to realise what's happening in a girl's head' – Niall
- 'Eccentric – some might find him a bit embarrassing' – Charlotte and Heather
- 'He was approachable and laid back – easy to relate to' – Lucy
- 'I couldn't believe he wasn't uncomfortable talking about sex and stuff with 14 and 15-year-olds' – Euan and Niall
- 'Awful to think about how easy it is to get an unnatural view of sex with the click of a button online' – Susie

William was interviewed about his work by Joe Treanor, Abby Wood and Niall Brady (who were themselves interviewed afterwards by *The Big Issue!*).

- Q** How do you feel when you see your writing on the big screen?
- A** It's not always a good experience, as the film/TV people change so much of the story to make it fit what they want to show. I don't enjoy losing control. I prefer writing novels, because the books are not messed about so much and remain my own work.
- Q** Which books are you into?
- A** I love *War and Peace* because of the fact that it centres on five families and the emotions and experience that are laid bare. Although it was set back in the Napoleonic Wars, it's still very relevant today. I also still quite enjoy *The Beano!*
- Q** Did you base Rich on anyone that you know?
- A** He and Maddy were different parts of my personality. I was quite shy as a teenager and sure that no girl would ever be interested in a relationship with me. Maddy was my inquisitive side. Really, it's me speaking through these two characters.
- Q** When you were our age, what would you have given to read the mind of girls?
- A** I would have loved it in one way, but would have been terrified of what I'd find out.
- Q** Will there be a *Rich and Mad 2*?
- A** I don't think so, as I feel the ending rounded off and completed the story. There is nothing else to continue. I would like to write more teen novels using different characters and scenarios ... watch this space!
- Q** Glamorous Hollywood or solitary life as a novelist?
- A** I was interested to see what happens at the Oscars and be wined and dined by Hollywood, but I do prefer writing books,

because I can retain control and decide what happens next. Writing for movies means losing that ability to decide. When the script is handed over they don't listen, and control is lost.

Rich and Mad

William Nicholson
Egmont £6.99

ISBN 978140524739

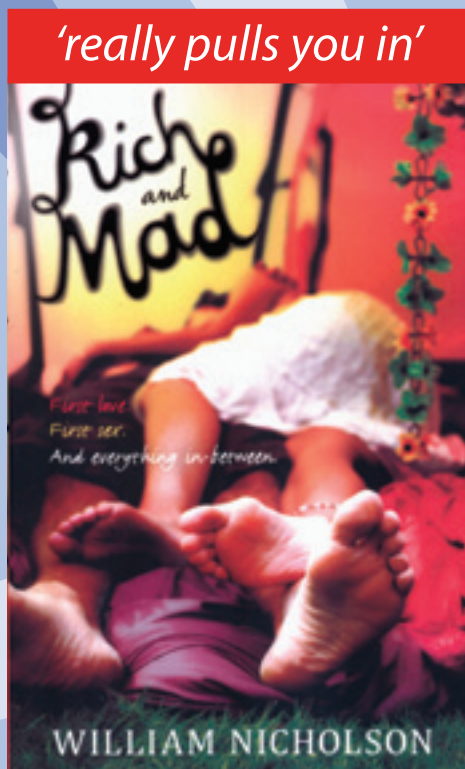
A book about the ups and downs of falling in love and teenage sexuality.

This is a truthful, open book which was written in a way that made you want to get to the end, to find out what happens next.

Richard was my favourite character because he had personality and stood out from the crowd. However, I thought the book was a bit too 'perfect', and that William should have shown more tricky parts in a start-up relationship. It is reassuring to realise that girls don't know what the rules are or how to react in emotional situations. I would definitely recommend this to other people my age and older, as the story really pulls you in, and you start to care about both main characters and learn about relationships between boys and girls.

JOE TREANOR
Royal High

This was a truthful, funny, straightforward book about being a teenager and trying to find out as much as you can about members of the opposite sex. It was also pretty funny in parts,



'really pulls you in'

and the characters felt real and almost jumped out of the page, like Maddy whose quest for love rang true with me. It was sad in parts and funny in others.

ABBY WOOD
Royal High

I thought that the book was a great read and that both Rich and Maddy were positive role models, and easy to relate to, as I read through the book. My only quibble is that so much happened in the course of the book that it's hard to believe that all this could happen in an ordinary teenager's life. The book was a quick and thought-provoking read, and I thought that the author wrote about both male and female thoughts really well. I'd recommend this book to anyone my age and older.

SUSIE FAULL
Royal High

I enjoyed this book, though it didn't hold back in parts and it was pretty graphic – like when Maddy and her friend looked up the internet about pornography. However, such scenes shouldn't be taken out of context, as the book looks at the way relationships are built up and developed. William Nicholson was a bit graphic too, but certainly gave our class a lot to discuss and go away to think about. I hope that he can use the feedback we gave him too.

SARAH WILKIE
Royal High

Rich and Mad was a very enjoyable book which I would definitely recommend to most teenage readers. The story is based on the inner workings of the minds of teenagers, who are often scared to admit what their lives are really like, and avoid talking about feelings with others, outside their group of friends, like the plague. I found this book eventful and really easy to get through quickly.

BETHAN GLACKIN
Royal High

Rich and Mad was a great book. It was really varied as it had some funny bits, some serious bits and some really emotional bits. Overall, I loved it and I couldn't believe it when I got to the end of the book as I really wanted it to continue. I would recommend it to some of my more mature friends as it has some very graphic content.

DANIELLE HARRIS
Firrhill High

Rich and Mad is a good book to read, although you need a bit of maturity. William Nicholson has put all the complications, for teenagers, into a book that contains the complications and how Richard and Maddy handle them. He also has the skill of making the reader feel included in the book. All in all, I will probably go on to read other books by William Nicholson

LESLEY BLACK
Firrhill High



Accomplice

Eireann Corrigan

Chicken House £6.99 ISBN 9781906427566

This is a kidnapping with a difference ... which goes incredibly wrong and badly affects Chloe and Finn's friendship.

This was an interesting original story which made me think about the lengths people will go to be noticed. I loved the way the author let us know what had happened, but not why. However, as the story develops you find out. I didn't really engage with the story in the first few chapters, but I'm very glad I completed it. The book develops in a dark way as the two participants realise their true parts in the kidnapping. I'd recommend this to girls who like friendship books that are a bit different.

SOPHIE TEMPLETON
Royal High

This book had a very gripping plot and I found it hard to put down – I just about read it in one sitting! The main character Chloe wasn't likeable as she changed the story so that she could stay in the limelight. Finn her best friend was better – she at least felt guilty about what they were doing. The cliff-hanger ending was excellent and I feel a sequel would be a good thing.

CARA ANDERSON
Royal High

I thought this was a well written book but I'm just not sure that I liked it. I found it a bit predictable and lacking in tension, as I kind of knew what would happen in the end. The idea was sound and the girls' characters were well developed, but ultimately I prefer more twists and turns and found myself willing the book to move along more quickly. I'm sure that others would enjoy the book – it's just not for me.

KATIE DARLING
Royal High

REVIEWS



Jake Ransom and the Skull King's Shadow

James Rollins
Orion £6.99 ISBN 9781444000610

Jake and Kady's parents are archaeologists who have been missing in the Yucatan peninsula for over three years. A gold coin discovered by their parents transports Jake and Kady back in time. Will they survive in this hostile environment and find out what happened to their parents?

I really enjoyed this book. My favourite thing was the way the writer kept me guessing. Even at the very end. I loved the character Jake Ransom because I could really relate to him – the slightly geeky, unpopular kid who gets bullied by all the popular kids at his school – but I really liked all the characters, even the evil ones. The reason for this was that I could feel everything that the characters felt – the excitement, the sadness and the sorrow. The way the characters were created, all their changes of heart, the twists and turns of the plot made me really believe even the most fantastical bits. This made the plot really gripping and exciting. It was unlike any other book I have read. The author made the book interesting too by leaving cliff-hangers; at every possible corner I went round I found another loose end.

I would recommend this book to a friend as a brilliant funny book about a boy who goes into a lost world, filled with gripping plot turns designed to leave you with a feeling of angst to read to the next one, which is exactly what I felt at the end. After I had finished I was left with a feeling that I could not wait to read the next one. The book was amazingly creative and all round brilliant. I did not think anything in this

book failed to work; it was amazing and I would definitely read more titles by this author.

COREN CHILDS
James Gillespie's High

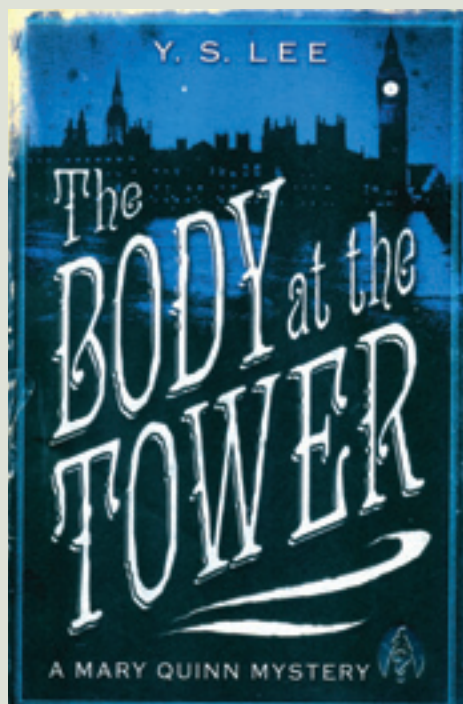
The Body at the Tower

Series: Mary Quinn Mysteries
Y S Lee
Walker Books £6.99 ISBN 9781406315981

Mary Quinn is recruited by a Ladies' Detective Agency in Victorian London to investigate a death at the building site for the new Houses of Parliament. Mary has to disguise herself as a boy and work on the site. Will she be discovered?

This book is just for me. At first it seems like a typical spy story, but it builds into a thrilling novel of mystery and murder with a bit of romance. Mary is a strong character and I admire the way she takes everything that is thrown at her in her stride. The story fits together like a jigsaw and I think the author is really talented. I love books set in the past, and this isn't an exception. The parts about Victorian life were really well written and I enjoyed it. I would definitely recommend this to anyone!

KATHARINE MARRIOTT
Portobello High



Deep Secret

Berlie Doherty
Andersen Press £6.99 ISBN 9781849392358

A close-knit and long-established community is devastated by two events – the death of a young girl and the flooding of their village for a reservoir.



I really liked this book. It was confusing at the start when so many characters were introduced at the one time, and difficult to follow who belonged to which family, but, once this was clear, I found the story easy to read. I got used to the sisters' identities and found the plot quite believable. I'd like to try other books by this author now.

KATHERINE BRABY
St Thomas of Aquin's

This book was really good. I thought it showed the human character well, and there was a lesson to be learned about 'letting people go' when they die. I found the story easy to follow and would be keen to try other books by this author.

CHLOE ELLIS
St Thomas of Aquin's

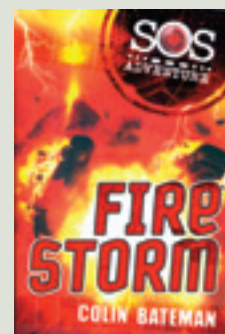
Fire Storm

Series: SOS Adventure
Colin Bateman
Hodder £5.99 ISBN 9780340998878

Joe is fleeing the people who have murdered his father and who want to take over his village. Michael and Katya are part of the SOS environmental strike force attempting to rescue a scientist. The only trouble is, a volcano is about to erupt!

I really enjoyed this book, as I love adventure stories. If you like Robert Muchamore books, you will enjoy this.

JOSH ALLAN
Gracemount High



The Dying Photo

Alan Gibbons
Barrington Stoke £5.99 ISBN 9781842998533

Jimmy's parents completely disappear when a weird scarred photographer takes their photo. Nobody believes him, and he has to go home with foster parents he has never met. Is he going mad? Then he meets Lucy and discovers she has lost her parents too. Together they have to solve the puzzle and rescue their families.

I thought this book was very good because it led you through the story stage by stage. It was easy to understand and exciting at the same time. I especially liked the ending! This is definitely a book I would recommend to my friends as a fast-paced read.

EMILY HO
Craigmount High

This book was both mysterious and quite scary in parts. It had a good storyline which drew me in and I wanted to keep reading to find out what happened. If you enjoy a story with a different twist, then this is a book for you!

ANDREW MCQUATER
Craigmount High

The atmosphere of this story is very tense, because you never know what is going to happen next and who will be the next victim of the crime. The tension is spooky and it is an exciting thriller – I felt like I wanted to climb into the story and tell Jimmy and Amy what to do. It held my interest as I didn't know what was going

'mysterious and quite scary'



to happen next. I expected (and hoped at the same time!) the ending was going to be a happy one. I have read other thrillers but this was the best. I would definitely pass this book on to other people, because it is not only exciting but is on the scary side as well. With this story though, I just hope it doesn't happen to me!

RICHARD ATHERTON
Arnold School, Blackpool



Buried Thunder

Tim Bowler
OUP £12.99 ISBN 9780192728388

Maya moves with her family to the country to run a village hotel to live their dream. However, Maya finds dead bodies in the woods and hears weird scratching sounds in the hotel at night. What sort of creature is threatening them and why?

I was grabbed by this book from the first sentence, and once I'd read the first chapter I was intrigued by this story. It is really good and I thought the main characters were realistic despite the genre. I'd definitely recommend this book to people who like horror with a twist.

MATTHEW BUIST
Craigmount High

The Ivy Crown

Gill Vickery
Five Leaves £5.99 ISBN 9781905512850

Megan and Brand move to a big old house with their dad after their mum dies. The family is still trying to cope with the loss, but they soon find that the house holds

secrets that they must uncover to put things right.

It took me until the end of chapter two to get to grips with what was happening in the story, but after that I was gripped by it. It isn't the longest of books but it had an interesting storyline and a good ending. I think both boys and girls would enjoy reading this book.

DAVID CAMPBELL
Craigmount High



Cross My Heart and Hope to Spy

Ally Carter
Orchard Books £5.99 ISBN 9781408309520

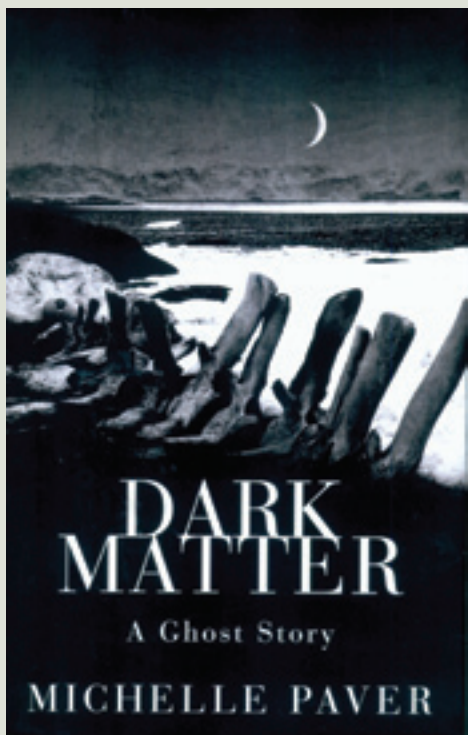
Cammie goes to Gallacher Academy for Exceptional Young Women, which is a secret school for spies. She tries to be just an ordinary student, but that proves to be impossible when danger seems to shadow her every move!

This is the second book in this hilarious series. I thought this book was awesome! It is funny and intense and right from the start I literally couldn't put the book down. I know there is a third book in the series and I can't wait to read that one. I can highly recommend this book to all the girls out there who dream about being a spy!

TEHNIYAT QAZI
Craigmount High



REVIEWS



Dark Matter

Michelle Paver
Orion £12.99 ISBN 9781409123781

This is a dark and mysterious tale set in the far north. One by one Jack's colleagues leave him alone on a bleak island. Strange events occur, causing Jack to believe he isn't alone after all.

Warning – do not read this book after dark! It is a thrilling book that sends chills through your bones and makes your imagination run wild. The most beautiful place is the most dangerous territory. This is a book that gives no happy endings. Recommended for all horror lovers!

YIYI WHITCHELO
Liberton High

I didn't like this book very much. The style of it being written in diary format was a bit confusing. The storyline didn't seem to make sense to me because it jumped back and forth between three separate threads of the story. I liked the main character because of his bravery and the fact that he didn't quit on his team, and I liked the mystery of the book, but overall it was not a very enjoyable read.

JAMIE CLUNIE
Castlebrae Community High

Shadow of the Ninja

Andrew Matthews
Usborne £5.99 ISBN 9781409506201

After a year in a monastery, the young Samurai Jimmy returns to his master only to find out his master's daughter has been



kidnapped. With the help of ninjas, Jimmy sets out on a mission to save her.

I loved this story and its adventurous characters and gripping battles. I must admit this is one of the best books I have ever read, because it is so funny, serious and unpredictable at the same time. Not only were the characters believable, the author also made the scenery sound very Chinese and realistic, transporting the reader back into the setting of 1575 China. The only criticism I would give this story is that it was a little slow and hard to follow at the beginning, and it changed scene with no warning which was confusing.

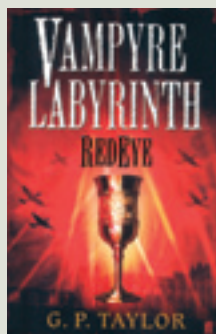
CALLUM WALLACE
Currie Community High

Redeye

Series: Vampyre Labyrinth
G P Taylor
Faber and Faber £6.99 ISBN 9780571226948

It is 1940 and Britain is at war. At 15, Jago is a bit old to be evacuated, but his mum is determined that he leave London and go to Whitby. However, when Jago gets there, he quickly realises that people are going missing and the town is preoccupied with terrifying rumours about Vampyres.

It was ok – I really liked the beginning, it was quite descriptive and it captured my interest at first. However, I didn't really like the way it



went after that – I just didn't like the storyline. I didn't really like the mixing together of war and bombing and vampires – I don't think it worked.

CHE MONSIEUR
Broughton High

I just couldn't get into this. I think the storyline was a bit slow. I didn't really find the characters entertaining. I normally like vampire books, but I didn't like this one because of the way it had a dramatic start, describing the war, but then it slowed down too quickly. I've not really read books about the war – I might do in the future but it would depend on the storyline.

ERIN BAILLIE
Broughton High

Shadow Wave

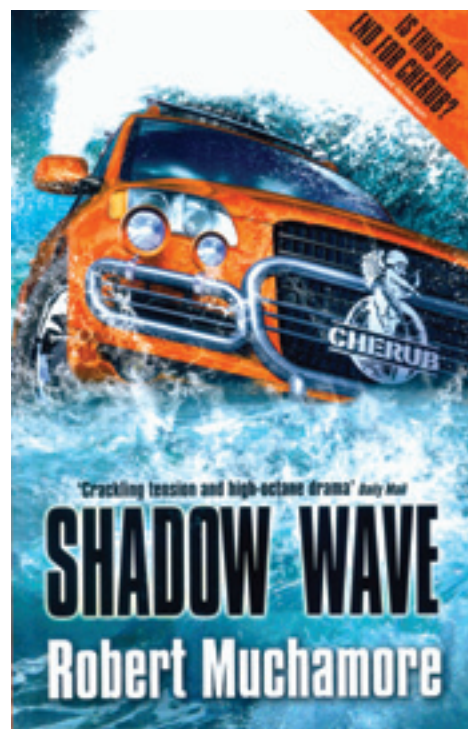
Series: CHERUB
Robert Muchamore
Hodder £12.99 ISBN 9780340956472

For his last mission for CHERUB, James has to guard the family of the corrupt governor of an island that has been devastated by a tsunami. But retired agent Kyle wants revenge on the governor, and James is forced to choose between loyalty to CHERUB and to his oldest friend.

I found this a fantastic read; once you pick up the book you never want to put it down. Every time you finish it you just want it to go on and on and not stop. If you haven't read CHERUB, you are missing out on one of the best teenage series ever.

GLEN DONALDSON
Balerno Community High

Shadow Wave is a book for adventurous people who love a bit of a thrill in their reading. I would



recommend this book to people who have a very good vocabulary. I hope people think the same way as me and read more of Robert Muchamore.

PRAJEET KARANJKAR
Balerno Community High

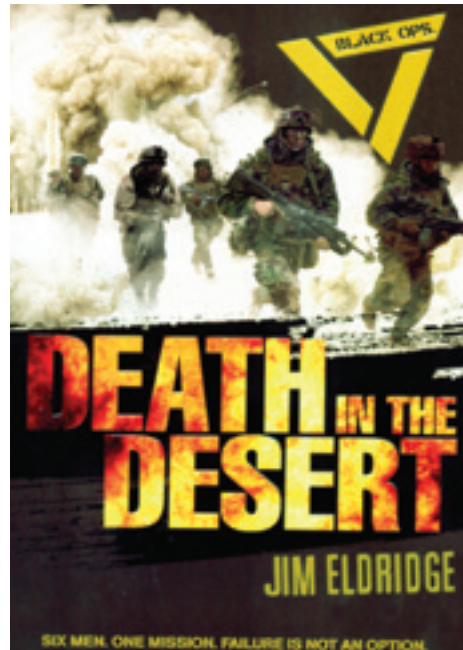
August/September/ October

Series: Conspiracy 365
Gabrielle Lord
Hodder £5.99 each
ISBN 9780340996515 (August)
ISBN 9780340996522 (September)
ISBN 9780340996539 (October)

Callum Ormond's father has been killed and now he is hunted by assassins. He has to stay alive while trying to solve a family mystery, and he only has 365 days to do it.

I thought these books were exciting and mysterious. I would recommend them for people who like reading diaries and exciting books. I would enjoy reading a second series of these books.

GRAHAM HOGG
Queensferry High



Death in the Desert

Series: Black Ops
Jim Eldridge
Egmont £5.99 ISBN 9781405251945

Delta Unit need to get a negotiator to the secret hideout of a Taliban warlord in Helmand Province. Can they succeed in their mission and avoid being caught as British traitors?

I usually don't like reading but I really liked this book. It is a really good, real-life adventure book. I can't wait to read another *Black Ops* book and I'm now waiting for my turn to read *Jungle Kill*.

RYAN
Leith Academy

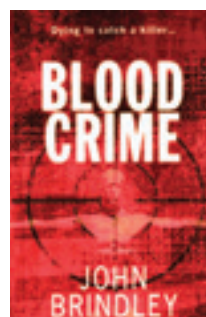
Blood Crime

John Brindley
Orion £6.99 ISBN 9781842557198

Joe's dad is dead, and Joe himself is in a coma while his family wait anxiously round his hospital bed. He knows someone killed his dad ... and the murderer is on his way to the hospital to make sure he doesn't tell anyone.

Although this book was quite slow to start it did keep me reading, and I thought it was interesting and clever in parts. In particular, the author described the visions that Joe saw in his head so vividly that I felt I could see them too. There were a few good twists in the story and I certainly enjoyed reading it.

**MATTHIEU
LONGBOTTOM**
Craigmount High



Almost True

Keren David
Frances Lincoln £6.99 ISBN 9781847801012

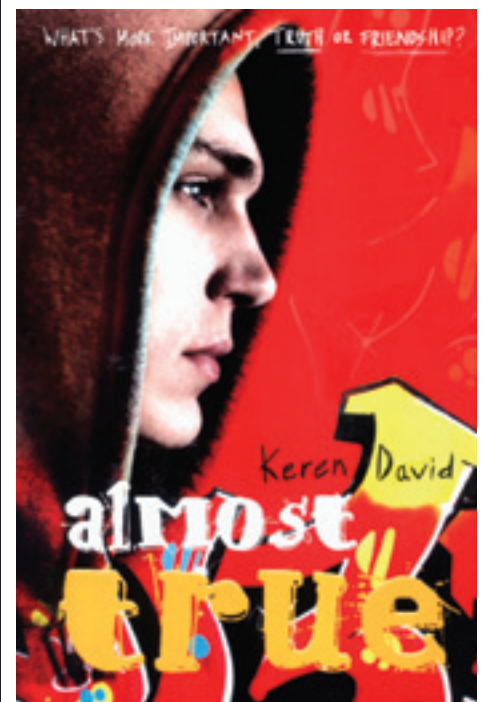
Ty is still not safe, in this sequel to *When I Was Joe*. Sent to live in hiding with complete strangers, things get weirder when they seem to know a lot about him. Added to this, he is plagued with guilt about what he did to his friend Arron. And what will happen to his girlfriend Claire?

This is interesting and really exciting. It is very good for teenagers because it shows how life is. The main character is just a normal teenage kid – he's not some kind of Superman or Spiderman. There are too many fantasy books – the very good ones are good, but the average ones just don't match up and it's hard to picture the characters. *Almost True* is refreshing – you see the character learning about his family. In the first book you don't know anything about him, so it was good that that was sorted. I hope that there are going to be more in this series. I think if there is going to be another one, it'll have to be set five or six years later.

LUKE BOJARSKI
Broughton high

When I Was Joe was really good because at the start you weren't sure what was happening, but as you read it, you really got into the story. *Almost True* was great because it was the story behind Ty, but I preferred the first one because there was more action. *Almost True* is like real life – it is reality! It was believable, you can see how hard life is for Ty as he has to change his identity and move away.

BISO MADJID
Broughton High



REVIEWS

Frankenstein

Mary Shelley, adapted by Lloyd S Wagner
Campfire Publishing £6.99 ISBN 9789380028040

Dr Frankenstein becomes obsessed with the idea of creating a new life out of body parts. The monster he creates is so hideous that he rejects it, and the creature sets out to get its revenge.

I don't really like graphic novels, I find the way they are laid out a bit confusing, but the storyline of this book was interesting enough to make me want to read it. Once I got into the book I liked the characters especially the monster. I wasn't really happy about the ending; I wanted the story to go on a bit more. I thought the illustrations really fitted with the storyline.



CONNOR BOWIE
Castlebrae Community High

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Robert Louis Stevenson, adapted by C E L Welsh
Campfire Publishing £6.99 ISBN 9789380028064

This is a classic story of the famous doctor who has two sides – good and evil. Read this graphic novel to find out which side becomes dominant.

The best bit for me was when at the end he finds a cure for the poison that he had drunk, and people treated him the same as they did when he was human. The bit I did not like is when Poole is assigned to shoot Mr Hyde.

MATTHEW MCDIARMID
Tynecastle High



Sally Prue

Sally Prue

Sally Prue isn't sure where she was born, but from the time she was adopted she grew up in Hertfordshire. Before she was an author, Sally worked in a paper mill with the rest of her family. She lives there still, close to the woods that form the setting for *Ice Maiden*, reviewed on page 11.

John Agard

John Agard was born in Guyana, then known as British Guiana. In 1977 he moved to the UK, travelling to schools to promote a better understanding of Caribbean culture. He now performs poetry to about 75 000 teenagers every year! Turn to page 21 for a review of *Big City Butter-Finger* which John wrote with Bob Cattell.

Tim Bowler

Tim Bowler, author of *Buried Thunder*, reviewed on page 31, has written 20 books and won 15 awards. After studying Swedish at university, he worked in forestry, teaching and translating. He is now a full-time writer, and does his work in an old stone outhouse known as 'Tim's Bolthole'.

Jonathan Stroud

Before he summoned Bartimaeus from the Other Place, Jonathan worked as an editor in a publishing

house. He soon found his desire to write full time was too strong, and he gave himself one year in which to write a fantastic book and sell hundreds of copies. Luckily, it worked. *The Ring of Solomon* is reviewed on page 15.

Tony Johnston

Tony Johnston's father was born and raised in the south of America, where *Bone by Bone by Bone* (reviewed on page 3) takes place. Tony grew up in an atmosphere of racial intolerance and her book is based on that experience.

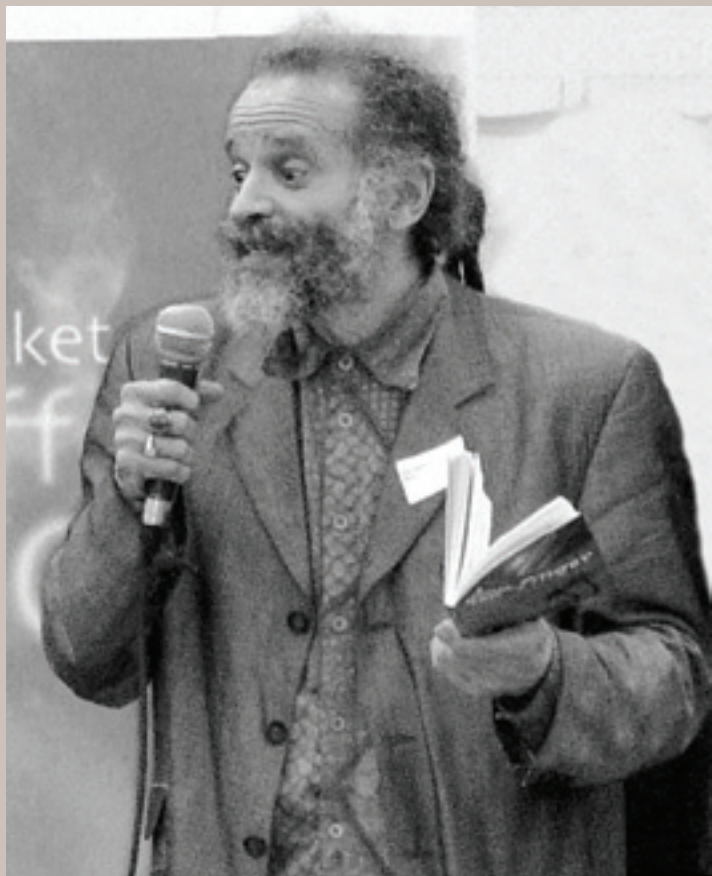
Rebecca James

Born in Sydney, Australia, Rebecca has worked as a waitress, a kitchen designer, an English teacher in Indonesia and Japan, a barmaid, and (most memorably) a mini-cab telephone operator in London! Her latest book *Beautiful Malice* is reviewed on page 26.

Michelle Paver

Michelle, whose book *Dark Matter* is reviewed on page 32, was born in Nyasaland (now Malawi). Her father ran the *Nyasaland Times* and her Belgian mother wrote a gossip column. After studying biochemistry, she spent 13 years as a lawyer, before giving up her high-pressure career to write full time.

AUTHOR FACTFILE



John Agard



Michele Paver

Photo © Robin Matthews



Jonathan Stroud



Rebecca James



Tim Bowler

READERS WRITE

We haven't had space to print all the reviews we've received, but we're delighted to publish reviews from **Loudoun Academy, Carrick Academy, Gordonstoun School, Davison CE High School, West Sussex and Arnold School, Blackpool.** Reviews of *Saving Rafael* by **Eleanor Harris from Davison CE High School** and *Dying Photo* by **Richard Atherton from Arnold School** have been printed in the the main review section alongside Edinburgh reviews of these books. Keep your reviews coming in!



Amy Laughlin, Loudoun Academy, rates ...

Season of Secrets

Sally Nicholls

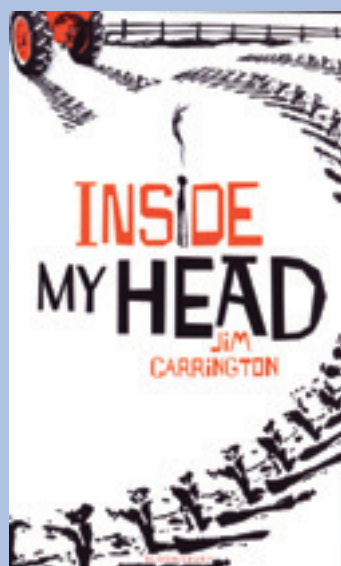
This is a brilliant book! It is so good I couldn't put it down for a minute. I loved it and hope that lots of other people will too!

Amber Thornborrow, Loudoun Academy, rates ...

Kaspar

Michael Morpurgo

A believable, emotional book mainly suited to older readers. Have a box of tissues ready, because I cried! The characters are portrayed perfectly, and the way the book is written, you feel that you are inside the mind of the characters. By far my favourite book, as it is easy to follow but not patronising or childish. I love it!



Megan Wells, Carrick Academy, rates ...

Inside My Head

Jim Carrington

This book is a classic story about bullying and the effect it can have on people. It contains strong language in keeping with the subject, and I would therefore recommend it to older teenagers. Jim Carrington has done an excellent job!

Stephen Wilson, Carrick Academy, rates ...

The Fall

Garth Nix

I enjoyed this book immensely. It was extremely well written, it has a great storyline and it was a very exciting book overall. It is quite short for an avid reader, but if you or your local library have the other five books then you will be entertained for hours.



Kirsten Marsh, Gordonstoun School, rates ...

The Graveyard Book

Neil Gaiman

Neil Gaiman successfully achieves a difficult task by drawing the reader in and capturing their imagination. I enjoyed this book – even the first lines suggest something complex and sinister to the storyline. I feel that the characters and their points of view were portrayed very well (which is quite difficult considering most are ancient ghosts). I especially love how, whenever Bod is describing an area of the graveyard or one of the ghosts, he recites what is written on their headstone, which is different yet entertaining.

Clara Lamont, Gordonstoun School, rates ...

Running Wild

Michael Morpurgo

The book is very emotional – it will make you laugh at times and cry at others. I found this book intensely exciting at times, heart-wrenchingly sad or endearingly uplifting at others, but it was extremely enjoyable all the way through. I would recommend this book to any teenager, or anyone who is interested in current affairs, because it includes so many issues such as threatened habitats that we have in our modern world, and yet still portrays them in an interesting, fast-paced way – I certainly found it very addictive. This is a *Jungle Book* for our times that should be a must-read for all!

Calum Macfie, Gordonstoun School, also rates ...

Running Wild

Michael Morpurgo

This story is deeply moving, and, even though it is full of sad and depressing goings-on, the book is also strangely uplifting. The fact that the boy goes through so much, and still manages to pull through, is extremely touching, and it gets you thinking, 'Would I be able to cope?' The story is gripping from the first page and is a must-read for all.

Benjamin Millard, Gordonstoun School, rates ...

The Enemy

Charlie Higson

This book is very detailed and contains a lot of action scenes. I think young teenagers will enjoy this book if they like zombie thrillers. It pulls you in very quickly as it goes straight into action. This book is also a thriller in a way, because they are trying to survive in a world where, if you are human, you are dinner!

Paige Yallop, Davison CE High School, rates ...

Breaking Dawn

Stephenie Meyer

In my opinion, the characters are what make the book so intriguing. Each person has their own personality and emotions, and, in the vampires' case, superpowers. Just as you think you have figured out the plot, an exciting twist occurs ...





Kevin Yeung, Arnold School, rates ...

Z.Rex

Steve Cole

I personally think that this book is one of the best I have read this year; it has adventures, mystery and fighting. It is a great book for teenagers! There is also a sequel called *Z.Raptor*; I am looking forward to reading that!

Harry Wilde, Arnold School, rates ...

Flood and Fire

Emily Diamand

The book is filled with moments of triumph, despair and excitement. Just by reading the first few pages I could tell this would be a great read, and there is an essence of mystery on the first page which meant I wanted to read more. I

would definitely recommend this to people of my age and even my older brother! At times I forgot I was reading a book, seeing as the pictures it put in my head were so real.

Phoebe Michaelides, Davison CE High School, rates ...

Warrior Cats (series)

Erin Hunter

Having read all six books of the first series of *Warrior Cats*, I feel the urge to let people who haven't heard of the books know how inspiring and spectacular the series is. They were actually vastly enjoyable. They are for the people who love nature, enjoy adventure and take pleasure in books that have something exciting happening, every sentence! It is a really exciting series of books that I definitely recommend.

Verity Harrison, Gordonstoun School, rates ...

Grass

Cathy MacPhail

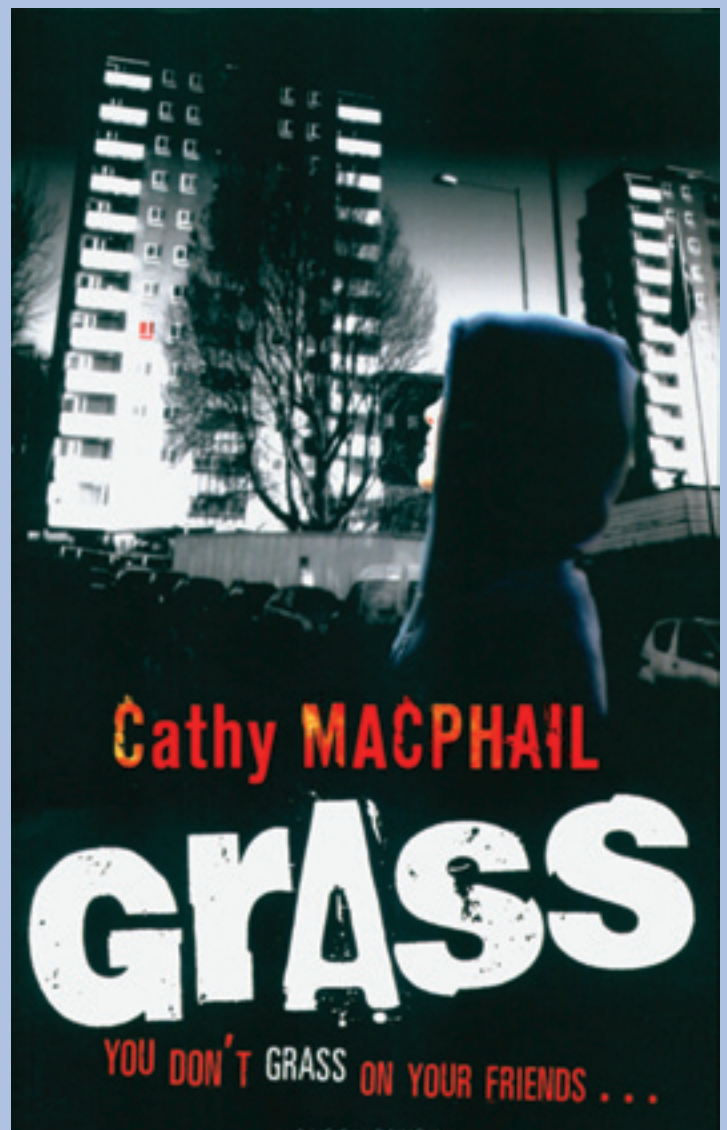
Cathy Macphail makes the story believable and thrilling at the same time. It really shows that the author has known the town and how dangerous it can be. Cathy Macphail is helped with Leo's experience in the book by the experience that her own sister went through; this means that the author makes sure you can really feel for the character in the story. This book offers a great insight into gang culture and the way gangs draw people into them. I can relate to this book a lot because of my knowledge of the Greenock area. I would also recommend the book to teenagers who feel sympathy to those living in poorer urban areas.

Sheenam Verma, Arnold School, rates ...

At the Sign of the Sugared Plum

Mary Hooper

This book is an emotional story of how two girls lived through the plague. The whole experience is just so real that it can put tears in your eyes. Once you start reading, you don't want to put the novel down, as you start to feel part of the whole thing. Some parts of the book made me emotional, and it was also frightening. I would recommend this book to people mature enough to understand how awful this tragedy was.



READERS WRITE

Chloe Simon, Arnold School, also rates ...

At the Sign of the Sugared Plum

Mary Hooper

I loved reading this book and it did bring tears to my eyes. It drew me in with every word which was written on the page. I felt extremely close to the book and its characters. I felt like I had known them for a long time, and as if they were part of my family. The ending left me with mixed emotions. I think the kind of people this book would really talk to are those who are quite emotional, and don't mind repulsive settings and descriptions which really set a picture in your mind. This book has taught me a lot about the plague, and I now feel that I at least understand a little bit of what it was like to live in the time of it.



Lars Ridehalgh, Arnold School, rates ...

Cool!

Michael Morpurgo

The atmosphere in the book is quite sad because the author makes you care about the character, and he is a really nice person, a very friendly boy. I think the book is a nine out of ten for me and it is one of the best I have ever read. The reason I gave it a nine is because the ending was what I expected to happen.



Mark Bricklebank, Arnold School, rates ...

Escape Velocity (HIVE series)

Mark Walden

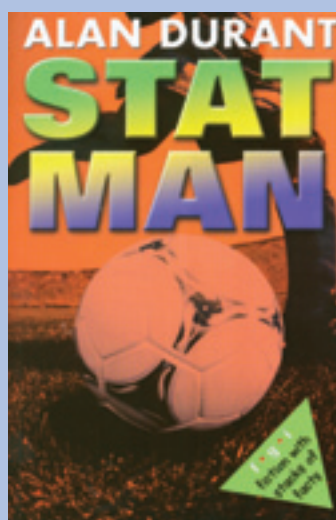
I loved reading the book because it keeps you reading with all the action and adventure, and it is full of lots of description and excitement.

Curtis Farrar, Arnold School, rates ...

Invisible City (Joshua Files series)

M G Harris

I felt the book was exciting, adventurous, creative, interesting and enjoyable. It made me sad when he found out his dad was dead. It made me think, 'Don't take your parents for granted, because some day they might be gone.'



Maxwell Walker, Arnold School, rates ...

Stat Man

Alan Durant

I think the book is a really good read, and it also gives you facts about real life which are very interesting. It made me smile

because sometimes it was funny. I think people who like football and stats will love this book. I would definitely read a book by this author again.

Emily Eccleston, Arnold School, rates ...

The Crowfield Curse

Pat Walsh

I have enjoyed this book because it is exciting and has a lot of detail. I feel the book was exciting and spooky as there are mysteries to be unveiled. The book made me worried for the creature and the terror it had faced. It also made me smile when they became friends. This book stands out to me, as I like characters with a problem which leaves them in a situation where they don't know what to do. They tend to be quite sad and move me emotionally.

Luke Hind, Arnold School, rates ...

Homecoming Queen

John Hall

It is a great book. The moral behind the story is that you can be ambitious but still be friends with people. It shows us that you do not need to be cruel to succeed in life. I liked reading this book because I really enjoy horror books, and I would recommend this book to boys and girls.

George Culpan, Arnold School, rates ...

Takeshita Demons

Cristy Burne

It was a very enjoyable read. It looks like there will be a sequel to the book, as the plot is open ended in terms of the finish, and there is room for development of character. It was sad when it looked like the demons would win, but I felt happy when they defeated the demons, and the whole book got my attention.

Cameron Armour, Arnold School, rates ...

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

Rick Riordan

The author was very good throughout at describing the story, because I could almost exactly imagine the scene in my head. The whole book was interesting, and I couldn't stop reading when I got to the end. The end was not what I expected at all. It is really intriguing, and I imagine lots of other good readers would find this a challenging and engrossing book, just as I have. The book is very entertaining and I was engrossed when I got to the really exciting bits. This book is unlike anything I have read before. I have been really enchanted by this book because I have never read one so spine-tingling.

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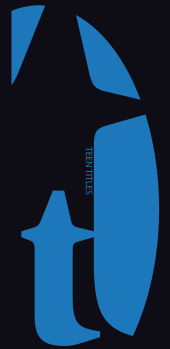
WHEC

Stephanie Graham
Brad Young

GET IN TOUCH

Teen Titles would love to hear from you. Send us your book news, reviews and views. We welcome all contributions, although because of space constraints we cannot guarantee to print everything we receive.

Write to: *Teen Titles*, Publications Unit, Darroch Centre, 7 Gillespie Street, Edinburgh EH3 9NH



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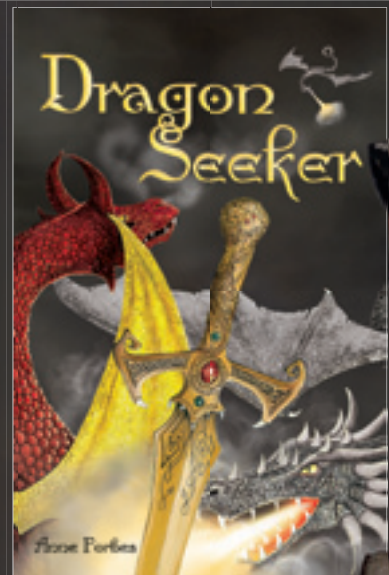
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The Dragonfire Series



Neil and Clara face danger, magic and mayhem in six thrilling adventures.



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