



TEEN TITLES



OUR COVER BOOK

The Witch's Warning

by Joseph Delaney is reviewed on page 14 by Joanna Boulis from St Thomas of Aquin's High School

TEEN TITLES 77

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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* 77, our first issue of 2020/21. In this issue Clare Rees answers questions about her novel *Jelly* and we catch up with Cat Clarke, author of *Letting Go*. We found out why the idea for Armarna Forbes' debut novel *Dead Remnants* started twelve years ago.

Cover: from *The Witch's Warning* by Joseph Delaney, reproduced by kind permission of Penguin.

Escape, Connect, Relate



Reading is something you can do for empathy and to support your own mental health and wellbeing. It is a way to explore issues that might be affecting you or someone you know, issues like depression, anxiety, body image, bullying or bereavement. So, we have decided to flag up some of the books we have reviewed that we think do just that. If you look on the inside back page you'll see a list of them.

FOCUS ON FAMILY

Furious Thing

Jenny Downham
David Fickling £12.99 ISBN 9781788450980

Lexi has anger issues according to her soon-to-be stepdad. She used to enjoy such good times with her mum and also have a wonderful relationship with her stepbrother.



Things are changing. What is happening? Why can't she control her anger? In this emotional rollercoaster find out why.

'thought-provoking book'

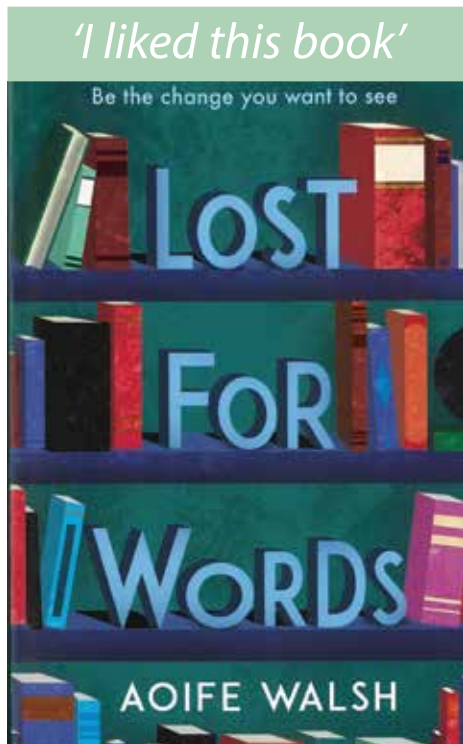


A thought-provoking book, with great characters and storyline. It is disturbing in places, but isn't as dark as it sounds as it is also funny in places.

MHARI LAIDLAW
Liberton High

A very different book. The main character isn't perfect and is very relatable. The book makes you think; not everything is as it seems, and that people aren't bad and there are reasons for their behaviour. It's a book that I engaged with the moment that I started reading it.

EN-YI LEE
Liberton High



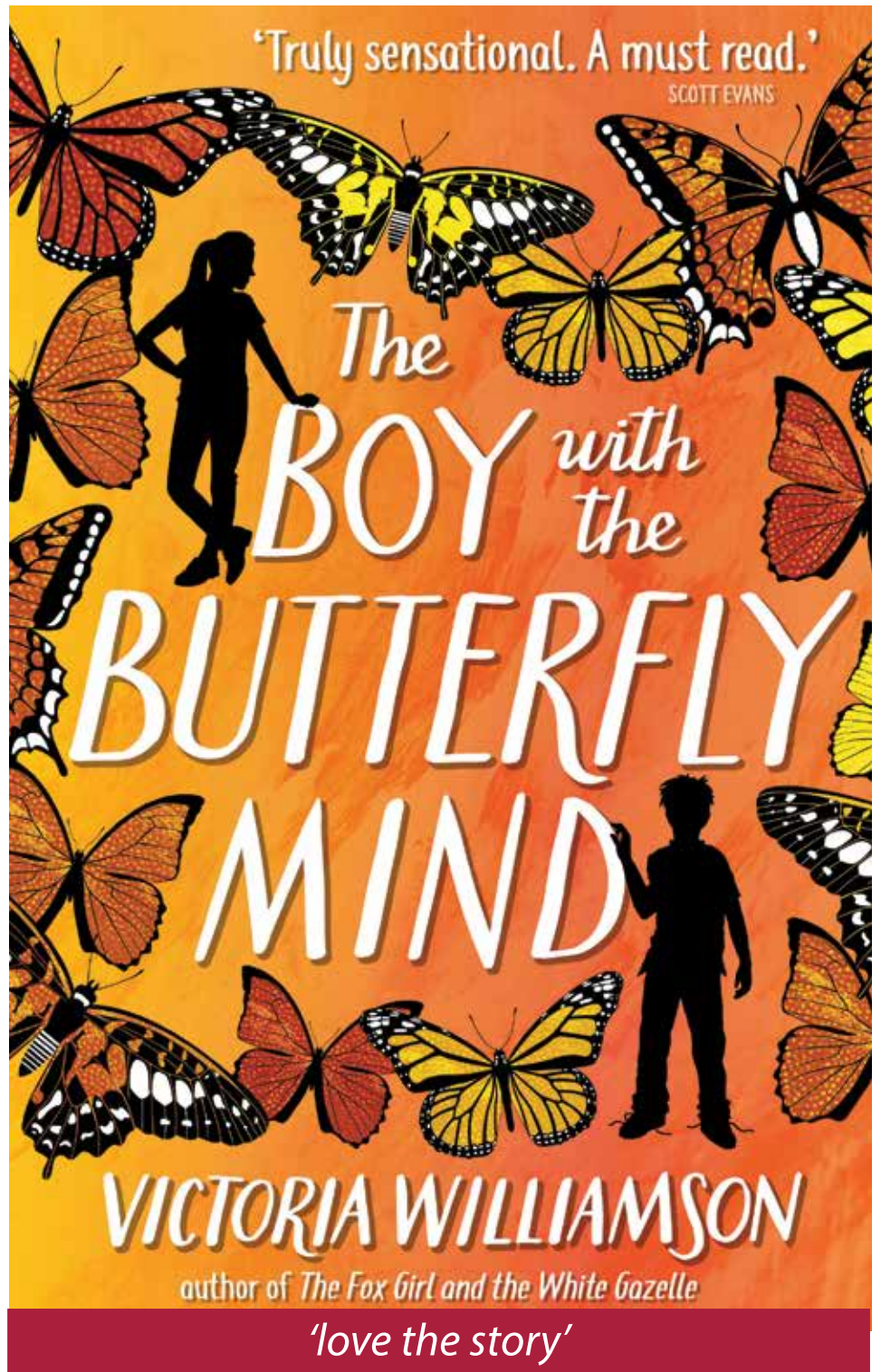
Lost for Words

Aoife Walsh
Andersen Press £6.99 ISBN 9781783448340

Dallas is grieving the loss of her mother when she discovers her local library is due to close. The library is a place close to her heart, so Dallas starts a protest campaign together with her friends Ruby and Aiza. Her American aunt Jessi arrives and lends a hand. But is this all that Aunt Jessi is offering Dallas?

Usually I don't enjoy reading but I thought the blurb sounded intriguing. I found it upsetting reading about the hard life Dallas Kelly had and some of the difficult experiences she had gone through, but also thought that she was very strong by motivating herself to try and save her local library for everyone. So, yes, I liked this book and would maybe read it again.

REIGAN HANNIGAN
Liberton High



The Boy with the Butterfly Mind

Victoria Williamson
Kelpies £9.99 ISBN 9781782506003

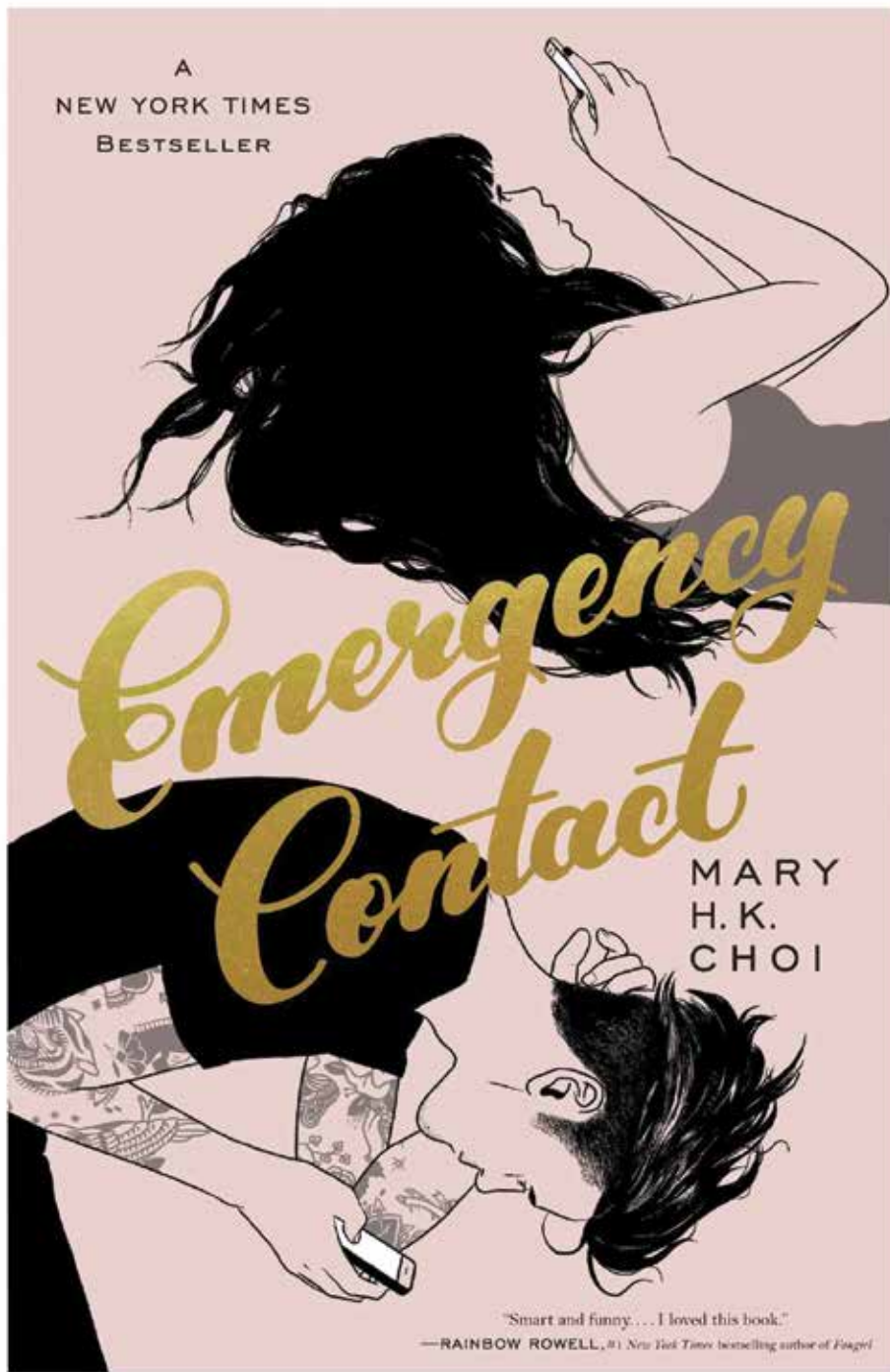
Jamie has ADHD and is counting down the days until he moves to America, where he hopes an American doctor will fix his brain. But his US plans get cancelled and instead he moves to Scotland to live with his dad,

stepmum and stepsister. His stepsister is none too thrilled about this either, as she misses her own dad and thinks that if she was perfect he would come back.

I like this book as it relates to people a lot and it seems like the writer has actually spent the time to go to people with ADHD and get their stories and not just look stuff up about it on the Internet. I love the story that this book tells and the way the author has told it.

ABIGAIL STRACHAN
Broughton High

FOCUS ON FAMILY



'amazing'

Emergency Contact

Mary H K Choi
Atom £7.99

ISBN 9780349003467

A loner at school, Penny escapes her needy mum to start college. Navigating new friendships and living independently, she begins to discover her own identity. Enter Sam, a quiet coffee shop



manager with a life that is falling apart. An awkward incident leads them to begin a friendship via text, sharing their dreams and darkest secrets in the complete safety that they never have to actually meet.

This book was amazing. I was so gripped by the story that I couldn't put it down. The drama and romance are very realistic. It's like you're in the book with the characters.

BROGAN DRYSDALE
Forrester High

The Cure for a Crime

Series: Double Detectives Medical Mystery
Roopa Farooki
OUP £6.99

ISBN 9780192773593

Ali and Tulip are worried about their mum, who has changed since she got a new boyfriend. With the help of their gran, they determine to find out the truth about him and his ambition to become one of the most important medics.



'good adventure story'

I really liked this book; it was a good adventure story and the medical part wasn't too technical – in fact the information would be very helpful if something happened. Granny was my favourite character. The plot was quite original, although maybe aimed at younger readers, and I'd want to read more of the books if there was a series.

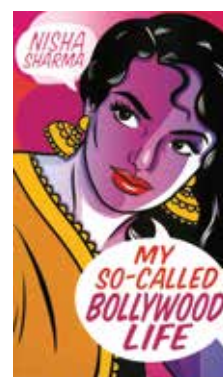
BETHANY MCLUSKY
St Thomas of Aquin's High

My So-Called Bollywood Life

Nisha Sharma
Stripes £7.99

ISBN 9781788951463

Winnie is obsessed by two things: Bollywood films and a prediction that she will meet the love of her life before her eighteenth birthday. Devastated when her prediction-perfect boyfriend gets a new girlfriend and starts to sabotage her chances of getting into NYU to study film, she risks alienating her best friend and not giving herself a chance to fall in love again.



I'm not a very strong reader but I enjoyed reading this book a lot. Whilst I was reading the book, I felt like I was watching it unwind right in front of me as the author used all sorts of descriptive language throughout the book. I definitely think that I will be picking up another one of Nisha Sharma's books as soon as I can.

ROWAN CALDER
Royal High

FACT-PACKED

No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference

Greta Thunberg
Penguin £2.99 ISBN 9780141991740

A collection of the speeches that Greta Thunberg, founder of the Climate Strike movement, has written and delivered to climate rallies across Europe and to political powers such as the UN, the World Economic Forum and the UK parliament.

Such an important book. The speeches are so accessible. When you read them, Greta's passion for the climate change cause just flows through. The book shows that you can get involved in activism, no matter what age you are. Very inspirational!

MICHELLE BAHAT
Gracemount High

Having heard so much about Greta, it was great to be able to read some of her speeches. The issue of climate change is so critical. It is amazing how one teenager can rally so many.

CATRIONA MITCHELL
Gracemount High

I thought that this book was enlightening; I hadn't realised just how affected our planet is by climate change. There was one analogy that

GRETA THUNBERG

NO ONE IS TOO SMALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



'very inspirational'

I really liked the alarm clock one where Greta says that every little thing that's happening to damage the planet is an alarm bell and we are sleeping through these alarms. I thought that this was a very clear metaphor. I could feel my expression changing as I read the book as I grasped how bad things were. Everyone should read this book, but especially kids now because they're the ones who are really going to be affected by this.

LILIAN MORRISON
Holy Rood High

I really liked this book and found it inspiring. It's quick and easy to read, I finished it in about ten minutes. I would recommend this book to everyone, but especially young readers so that they can be inspired to make a difference. The most fascinating thing that I learned from the book was that Greta started thinking about climate change when she was only six years old, and now she has proved to the world that no one is too small to make a difference.

CHELSEA ELLIS
Portobello High

This book is a collection of the climate change activist Greta Thunberg's speeches. It is done in chronological order, and it is repeating the same message used in almost every Greta Thunberg speech, that is no one is too small to make a difference in the world. As a teenager myself, I find Greta Thunberg's speeches to be easy to read, and inspiring because the information is conveyed in a simple way using a short book which will appeal to young people. Her speeches also mention the fact that businesses and corporations are the ones who are primarily in the wrong as they are using fossil fuels for

their individual pursuits to make millions at the cost of the Earth's health. Greta Thunberg is an inspiration for young people to fight for the world they want to live in. This book is a great extension of her work and an amazing way to get the word out.

HAMISH HAZLEWOOD
St Augustine's High

Unbelievable Football

Matt Oldfield
Wren and Rook £6.99 ISBN 9781526362445

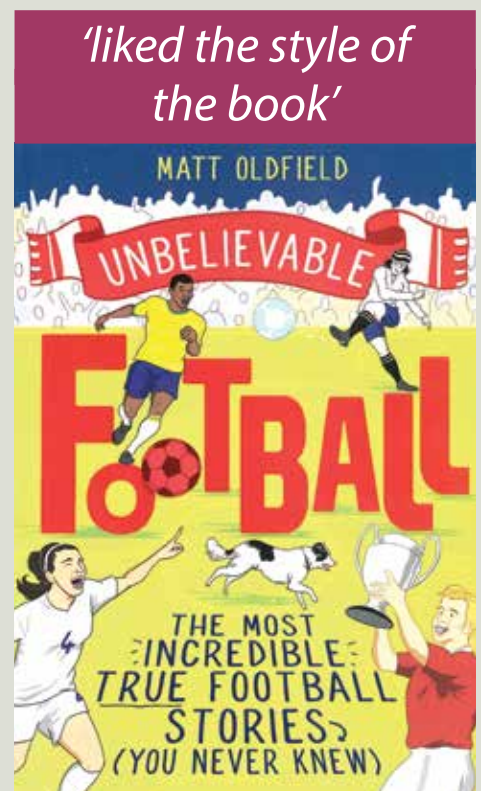
Curious and true football stories: discover players who pretended to be dead, played with a broken neck or who didn't play a match at all in 24 years! Discover escapades, missing trophies, weird mascots, the conman, famous managers and players from around the world.

I liked the chapter about the Christmas truce because we had talked about this in school a few years ago and it reminded me about what had happened. I liked some of the chapters but wasn't interested in reading all of them.

LUKE PAXTON
Forrester High

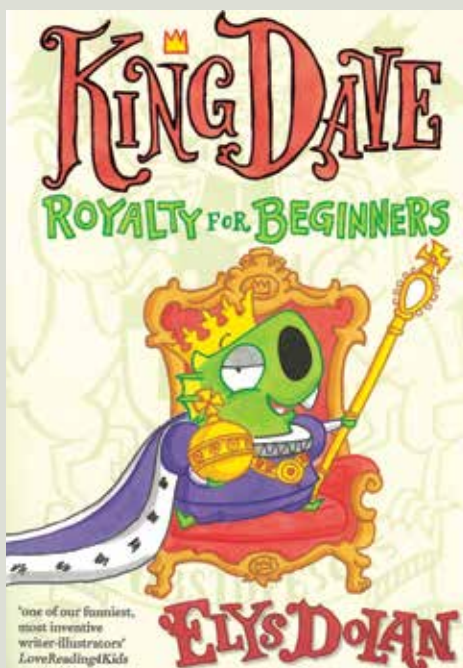
I've read some of the *Ultimate Football Heroes* books by this author and kind of liked them, but I don't really like reading much. I liked the style of the book. It had lots of chapters about different things about football, managers, players and teams but I have no enthusiasm for this book.

RILEY SHIELS
Forrester High



JUST FOR LAUGHS

JUST FOR LAUGHS



'funny book'

King Dave: Royalty for Beginners

Elys Dolan
OUP £6.99 ISBN 9780192763990

The King is called away, leaving Dave and Albrecht in charge of the kingdom, with 'A Royalty for Beginners' book to guide them through their duties.

This book was funny and the pictures really added to the story; it made the book nice to look at as well as good to read! I usually listen to audiobooks, so this was a good link to printed stories. I like this kind of adventure, and I was impressed by the list of Albrecht's German words at the end.

LUCIA BAINOMUGISHA
St Thomas of Aquin's High

The word 'beginners' in the title showed who this book was aimed at! It looked like a kids' book, because of its size, pictures and

childlike cover, but we thought it was a good title, encouraging developing readers to try chapter books. There were lots of illustrations which helped us to visualise the story when the vocabulary was not very advanced. We also liked the glossary of Albrecht's German words which would help primary pupils learn a new language. This was a funny book which appealed to the 'young' side of us and offered light relief from the hardcore reading we usually do.

SAFWAN MOHAMMED AND CHARLIE COOK
St Thomas of Aquin's High

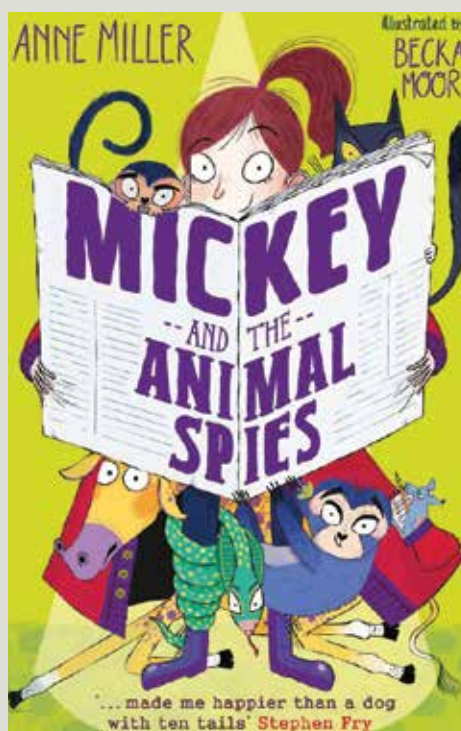
Mickey and the Animal Spies

Anne Miller
OUP £6.99 ISBN 9780192773630

The first in a new adventure series starring Mickey who loves code-cracking and is desperate to solve mysteries. Solving a coded message left on a bus leads to Mickey joining a secret spy ring and adventures follow. This book contains codes to solve!

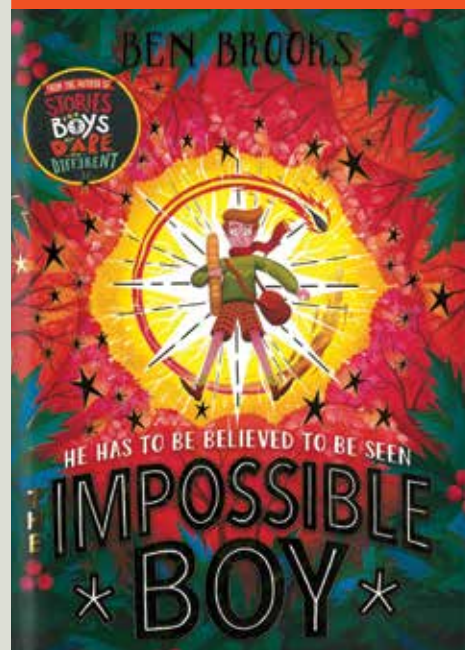
We really enjoyed *Mickey and the Animal Spies*. The main character Mickey is a very intelligent girl who loves solving codes and puzzles and it's great to read about a clever character. The book is fun to read aloud.

CAITLIN BRECHIN, MHAIRI LAIDLAW, STRUAN RAMAGE, KC LUSHA, ERIN MCNEILL, IAN HAMMER AND LOGAN MARSHALL
Liberton High



'fun to read aloud'

'lots of twists'



The Impossible Boy

Ben Brooks
Hachette £9.99 ISBN 9781786540997

Emma and Oleg, who are missing their friend Sarah, decide to create an imaginary friend called Sebastian. They use him to fool their supply teacher, to take their mind off their troubles at home and to lay aside their worries about moving to a new school. But when a 'real' Sebastian eventually appears, things become even more chaotic.

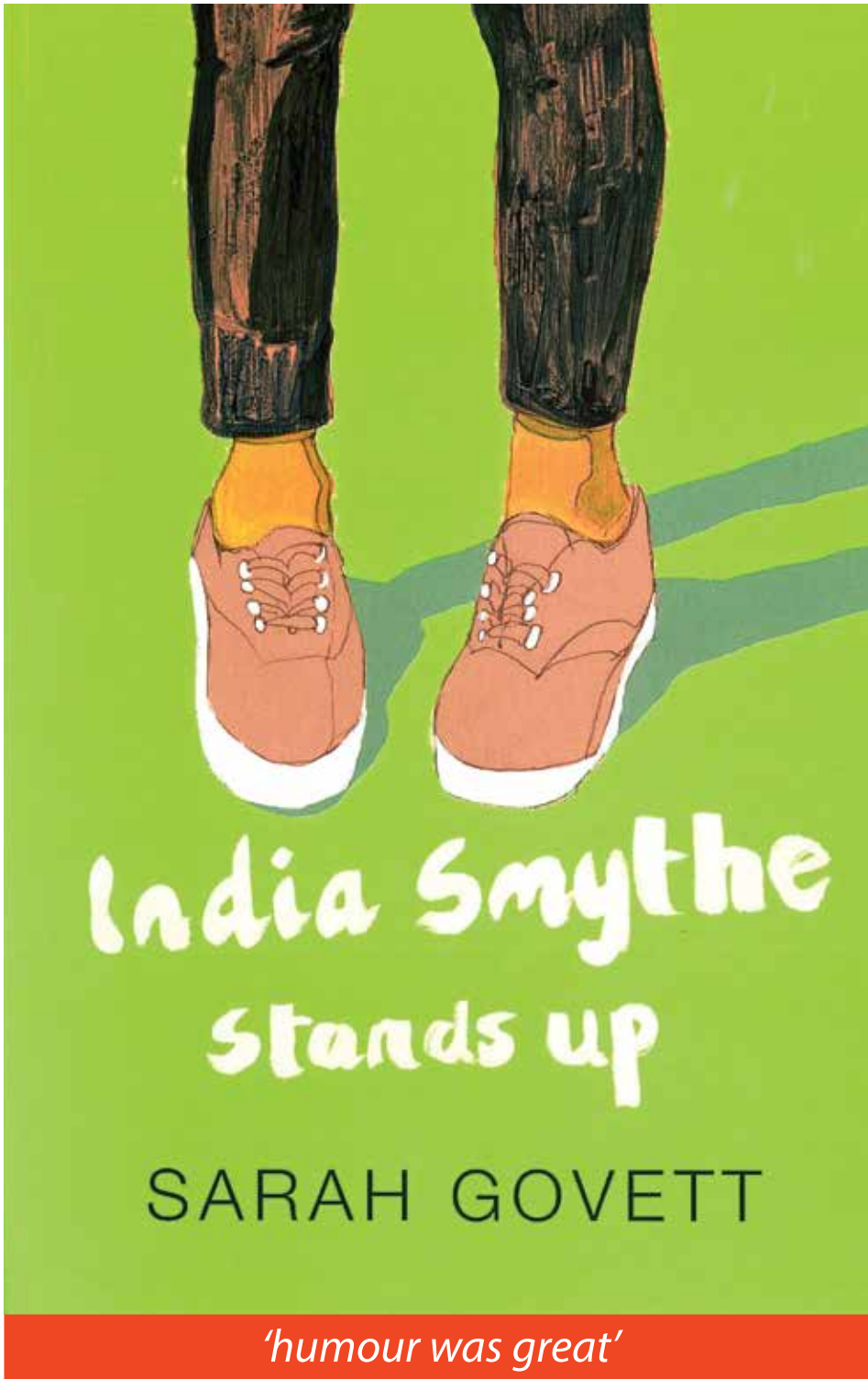
This book was really good; I found it fun, exciting and dramatic. It had lots of twists in the plot and a contrasting pace which offered breaks from all the action. I liked the scientist as she was cool, wacky and seemed to know everything. My favourite part of the story took place in the rainforest, when the children found a big tree; that was really tense. I'd never heard of Ben Brooks, but the cover of the book reminded me of David Walliams and Ben had the same style but with a stronger component of fantasy. I'd definitely read another of his books.

POLLY DICKSON-SMITH
St Thomas of Aquin's High

India Smythe Stands Up

Sarah Govett
Marotte £7.99 ISBN 9781916152601

After deciding to go to a party wearing ill-advised but very photogenic make up, India finds herself in a relationship with Ennis, one of the hottest boys in her year. All she has to



do is ignore that niggling voice in her head that tells her that Rich Evans, the orchestra geek who actually makes her laugh, is much better boyfriend material.

I thought the humour was great! I don't usually read comedy but it's got a lot of fun teen humour. I thought India was a very relatable character who complains about the big things and the little things. Her way of seeing the world is a bit over the top compared to the target reader. My favourite part was just India's personality. She's got the sassy 'Why, world?'

kind of attitude and that's what makes it funny for me.

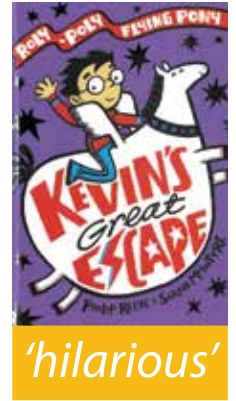
GEORGIA ROSE
Craigroyston Community High

Kevin's Great Escape

Series: Roly-Poly Flying Pony, no 2
Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre
OUP £8.99 ISBN 9780192766113

Kevin the flying pony loves his best friend Max, his rooftop nest and his biscuit diet.

Pop star Misty has just moved into town and loves collecting exotic pets like Kevin, even if they don't want to be collected. Max, his sister and their friends – both new and old – need to come up with a plan to get Kevin home again.



This book was hilarious. There were lots of children defying parents in it and also a big misunderstanding which in turn led to a rescue mission. There was stuff that younger readers would like as well as things that people my age would get (I'm 14)! I think anyone who likes comedy would enjoy this book. Also, this is a good book if you struggle with reading.

AILSA GEAR
Holy Rood High

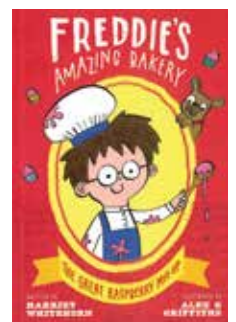
I thought that this book was funny. This is the kind of book I like to read anyway, and I think that anyone would like this book whatever age they are!

SUMAN JAVED
Holy Rood High

The Great Raspberry Mix-up

Series: Freddie's Amazing Bakery, no 1
Harriet Whitehorn
OUP £5.99 ISBN 9780192772015

The town of Belville is holding a cake competition, and Freddie would like to win so that he can buy a new cooker and make his bakery even more amazing. But Bernard isn't playing fair, and Freddie will need the help of a friend or two to make sure his cake isn't a disaster.



Freddie enters a baking competition and fights off competition from Bernard who cheats. I found this book a bit too simply written for my level. It is longer than a book like *Hairy McClary* so there is more to it, and there are good tips on bakery and even a recipe. But I was annoyed, as by chapter 2, I had counted 29 'ands'. Not a book for me, but good to add to the library for people who like baking!

FINN MCEWAN
St Augustine's High

PAST TIMES

PAST TIMES

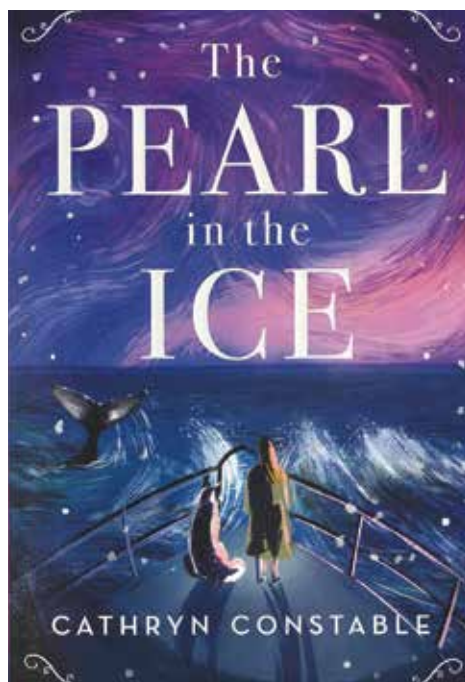
The Pearl in the Ice

Cathryn Constable
Chicken House £6.99 ISBN 9781912626519

The story of a girl who stows away on her father's boat and discovers the undercover work he is engaged in.

This was a believable story, set in the past, which showed the sexism that girls faced. Although Marina was definitely not a 'girly-girly', her dad wanted her to learn to be a lady, to the extent that he ignored her own wishes. This book dealt with serious issues such as equality and environmental issues. It wasn't my usual choice of reading but it was a gentle story that will appeal to many. I thought the cover really stood out; it's what drew me to the book in the first place.

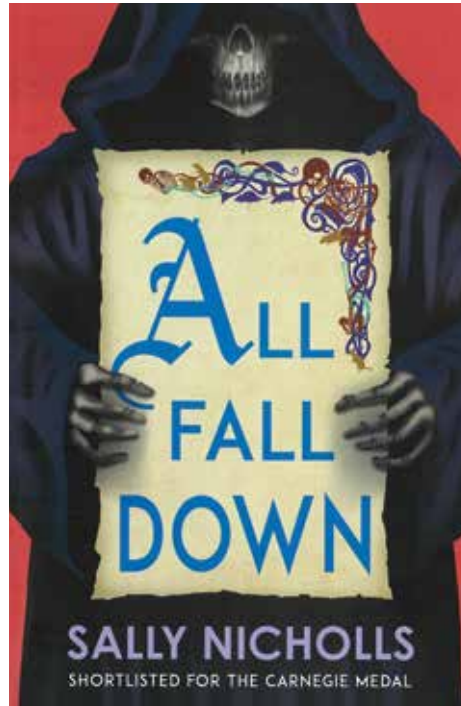
LIVI TAGUE
St Thomas of Aquin's High



'dealt with serious issues'

For me this book sounded better than it was. The cover suggested lots of action and I liked how Marina sneaked away on the boat, but it didn't really keep my interest after that. People who like history might enjoy it; it's easy enough to read.

HAIDER SALMAN
St Thomas of Aquin's High



'very atmospheric'

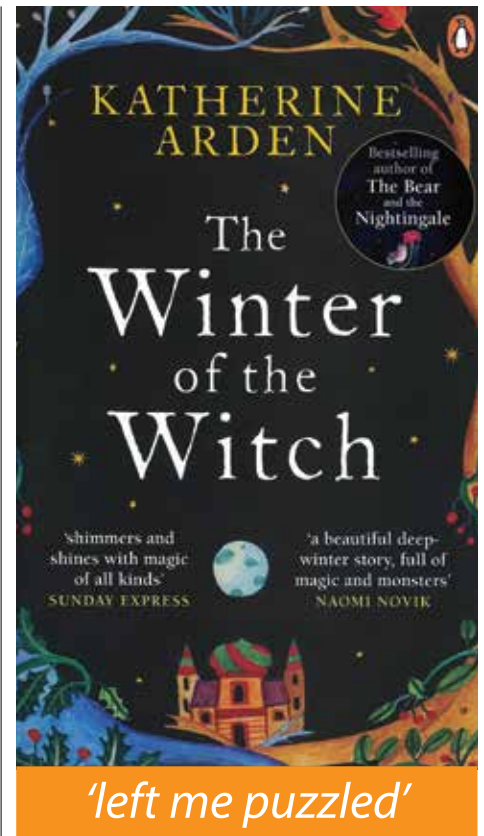
All Fall Down

Sally Nicholls
Andersen Press £7.99 ISBN 9781783449316

Set in Yorkshire during 1349, this book tells of the impact of the Black Death on Isabel and her family and how society consequently changed.

This book helped me learn more about the plague and the impact of the disease on the lives of ordinary people. It was very atmospheric and showed what a tough life people had then; how they had to get water from a well, sleep on straw mattresses, etc. The gothic chapter headings and the cover added to the medieval and creepy feeling of the book. At the start, Isabel wasn't a very nice character, but I warmed to her as she dealt with her troubles and I realised what a strong character she was. I found her romance with Robin too weird though and skipped that part! This was a strong, unusual and sometimes peculiar story – it portrayed the Black Death as the devil – but I would recommend it to others.

DAVID MOCHAN
St Thomas of Aquin's High



'left me puzzled'

The Winter of the Witch

Series: Winternight Trilogy, no 3
Katherine Arden
Del Rey £8.99 ISBN 9781785039739

In medieval Russia, Vasya – who has magical powers – has to run for her life after she is condemned for being a witch. When the demon Medved returns, Vasya is forced into battle with him to save the world.

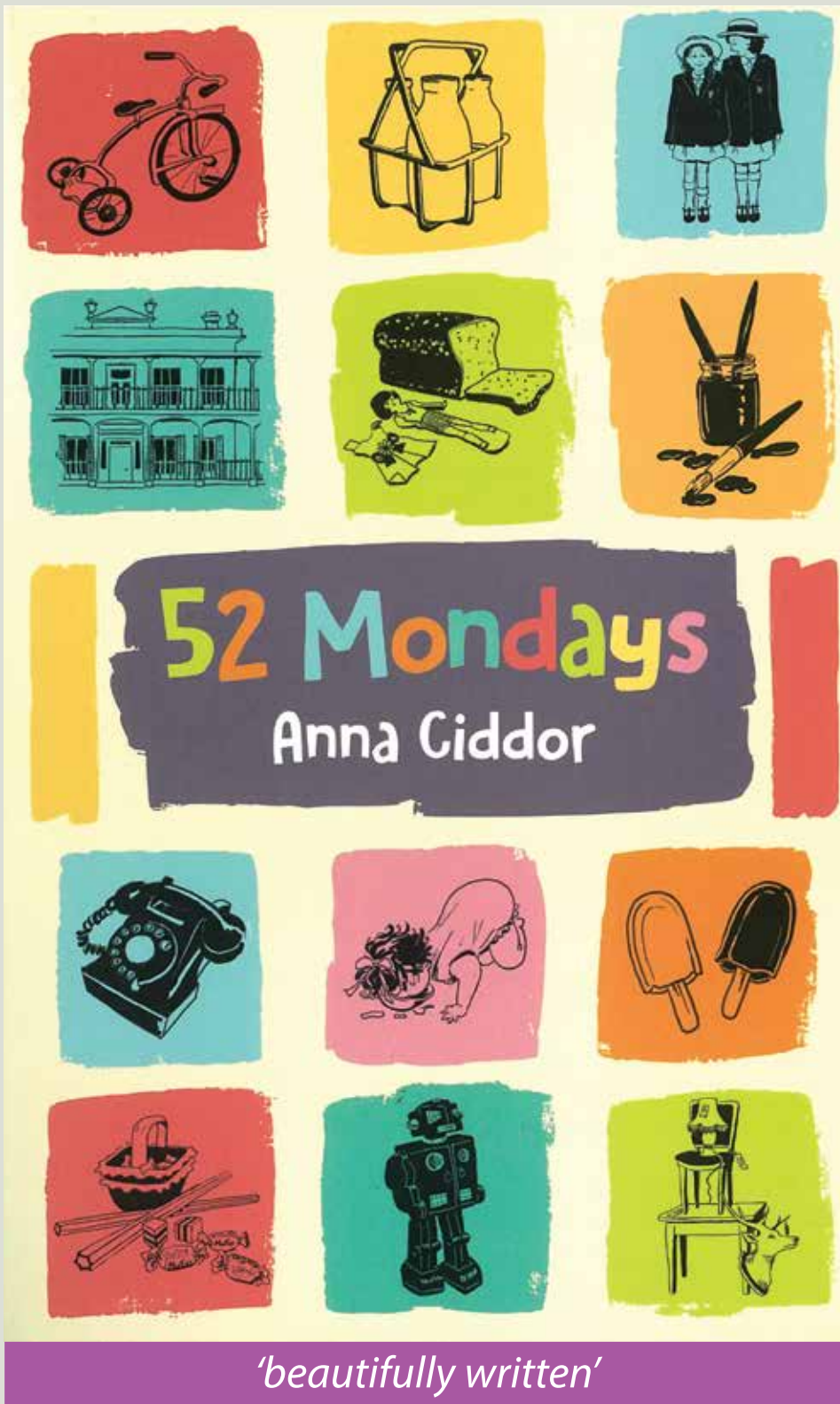
Just before the Christmas holidays I was given *The Winter of the Witch* to review. I wasn't busy but I couldn't bring myself to read past the third chapter. It isn't my kind of book, I was more confused by everything happening than wanting to know why it was happening. I had so many questions instantly and it didn't seem like I was going to get any answers. I can't say this book is particularly good or bad, but I will say it left me puzzled and slightly bored.

GABRIEL CREWE
Craigmount High

52 Mondays

Anna Giddor
Allen and Unwin £6.99 ISBN 9781911631255

An autobiographical and nostalgic look at family life in 1960s Australia. Follow a year in Anna's life as she and her sisters invent games to amuse each other, have adventures,



and celebrate Passover and birthdays. Will Anna ever own the antique doll she so desperately wants?

52 Mondays is a beautifully written book. It tells the story of Anna Lewison and her family – they are one of the few Jewish families in the school area – living in Australia during the 1960s. I like that the author weaved in little strings of adult themes such as someone Jewish being considered ‘strange’ and ‘different’. This theme

especially represents a quarter of the book’s story, and it should be analysed as much as Anna’s quest to find her doll. Something that surprised me is how quickly Anna brushed off this view of being different and moved on to the next thing. We do have to keep in our heads that some of the stories were inspired by the author’s childhood, so did this happen to her on more than one occasion? For me the only thing that deterred me was how little the doll

search corresponded to the rest of the story. I think Anna could have connected that to her grandparents and maybe how the family ended up in Australia. On the whole, I think it is a great book, but it might be more suited for younger people.

AMIE TOURAY
Boroughmuir High

White Eagles

Elizabeth Wein
Barrington Stoke £7.99 ISBN 9781781128961

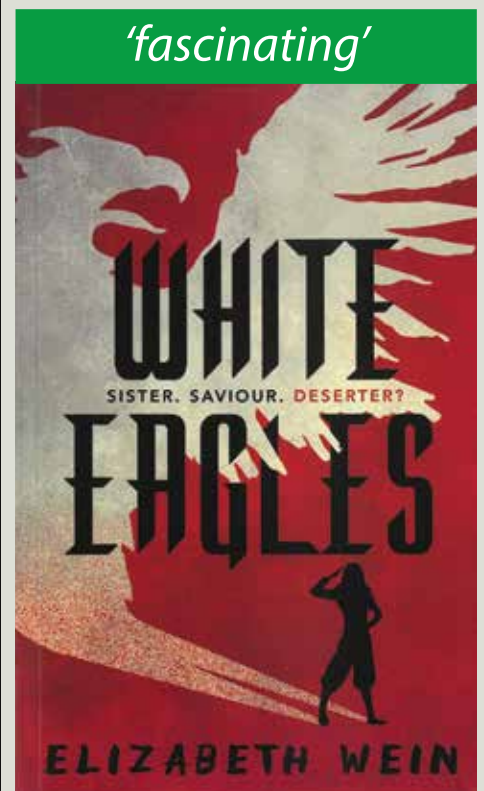
This story is set in Poland at the start of WW2. Kristina’s dream comes true when she’s called up to join Poland’s air force. When Nazis invade the town where she is based, she makes a quick decision to fly out of Poland – her only chance of survival. This is the story of what happened to Kristina and the stowaway she found in her plane.

White Eagles is a good short book. It has strong characters and a twist at the end. I would describe this book as adventurous and exciting with some funny moments.

ALEX PELLE-NORRIS
Drummond Community High

I found it fascinating finding out facts from this book about WW2 and how quickly Poland was invaded. It contains amazing detail that makes you want to keep turning the pages. It’s also a short book which I found annoying since it was so good!

JOSEPH HAOUS
Drummond Community High



SCI-FI & FANTASY

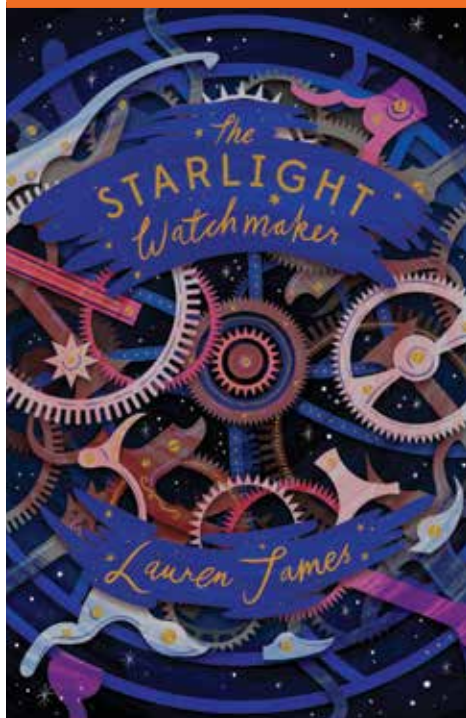
The Starlight Watchmaker

Lauren James
Barrington Stoke £7.99 ISBN 9781781128954

Abandoned by his previous owner, Hugo the android makes his living as a watchmaker. He is contented until Dorian shows up, with a watch that is missing its power source. Who is stealing the quantum energy from watches? What do they intend to do with it? And how can Hugo and Dorian stop them?

This isn't something I would usually read – I usually read stories that are more realistic – but I liked it. I liked how Hugo explained the way he felt when he thought everything was moving too fast for him. I didn't like that the story was so

'I love it'



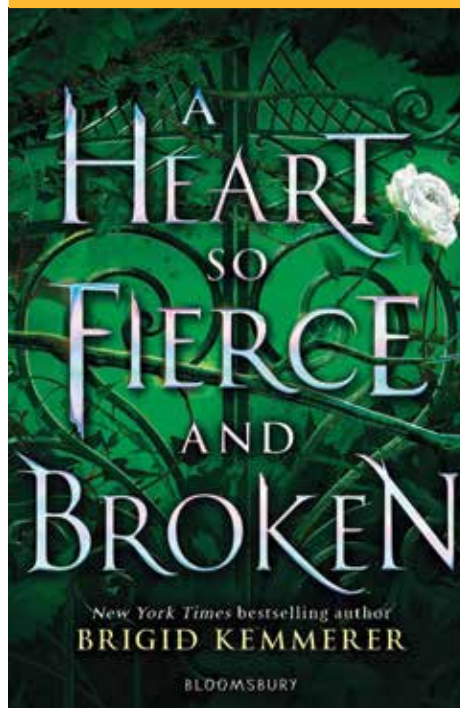
focused on the watch because I wanted to hear more about the fantasy world and the people in it. But I thought Hugo's little watch helpers were so cute! I think people who like books about adventures with something a bit magical in them will like this book.

JOSH HEATH
Castlebrae Community High

I've almost finished this book, and I love it! It was a bit boring at the very start, but then Dorian came along and he made it fun because it turned into an adventure. Hugo is my favourite character, and I really want there to be an explosive ending but if not then I hope that Hugo gets a happy life.

BILLY PATERSON
Castlebrae Community High

'felt like I was there'



A Heart So Fierce and Broken

Series: Cursebreakers, no 2
Brigid Kemmerer
Bloomsbury £7.99 ISBN 9781408885086

Harper has freed Rhen from his curse and so it should be easy now to unite the kingdom and help it prosper. But rumours are rife of a rival heir, and Karis Luran and her daughters plan to take advantage of the unrest to expand their own lands. And what of Grey? He has his own secrets, and needs to decide his loyalties.

I really enjoyed this book. I had read the first in the series, and this was what a sequel should

be. It was about character development and it answered questions that were left unanswered in the first book. This book was filled with so much detail that it felt like I was there with the characters. Usually things end happily ever after, but *A Heart So Fierce and Broken* introduced a new problem that wasn't predictable but was also enjoyable. I enjoyed the middle of it when the characters interacted the best with each other and, in my opinion, it was how real people talk and act around each other. The dialogue between them was especially good as it was how people would talk, and not being constantly positive about everything. They had moments that they felt like they couldn't do it and you felt that sadness with them.

MANON MAURAGE
Castlebrae Community High

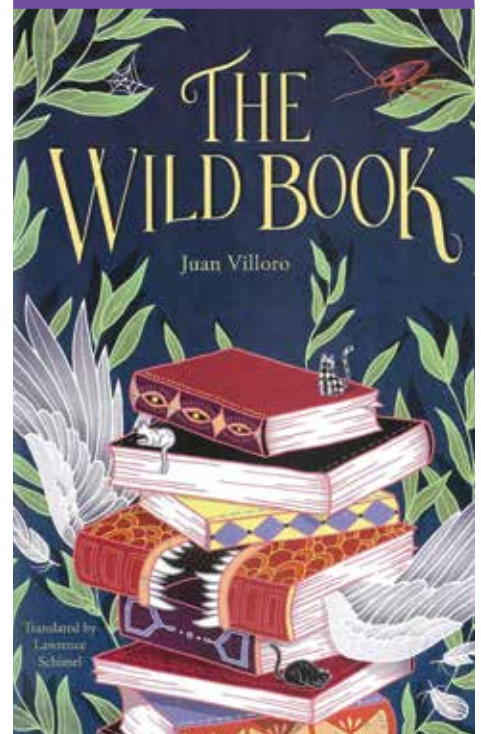
The Wild Book

Juan Villoro
HopeRoad £8.99 ISBN 9781916467101

Juan has been invited to live with his eccentric uncle for the summer in a labyrinthine house full of dusty old books. How dull! Unless, as Juan discovers, you're a Princeps Reader with power over books. Can Juan and local girl Catalina tame the books enough to track down the elusive Wild Book before the Pirate Book steals its story?

This book is easy to read and you can connect with the characters since they are easy to relate to and well described. I often found myself being pulled into the book and switching

'pulled into the book'



off from the outside world when reading. I, however, felt that there were one or two areas that could be improved as they felt rushed and it was easy to get distracted while reading these passages. Apart from that, this is a great book which I enjoyed a lot.

ASHKIN KAZIMOGLU
Portobello High

This book was something that I never thought that I would enjoy, but I did! I usually read more adult fiction, but I really enjoyed this book as it contains magic, comedy, and is also a portrayal of family life. All book lovers should read *The Wild Book* since it really brings out the magic in literature.

ALISHA SHABAN
Portobello High



Wayward Son

Series: Simon Snow, no 2
Rainbow Rowell
Macmillan £12.99 ISBN 9781509896882

Once a hero, Simon is now feeling so low that he can't be bothered to do anything or go anywhere, but is persuaded by Baz and Bunce to embark on a road trip across America. Their trip is full of magic, danger and all sorts of creatures – plus a sprinkling of passion!

Wayward Son resumes from where Rainbow Rowell's *Carry On* left off, and renews its



protagonist Simon Snow's magical world. Its compelling themes of action, romance and fantasy create a wonderfully fun, adventurous, young adult story. It follows Simon Snow, whom, after his recent victory in defeating the Mage, is newly idle and unoccupied. With his relationship with Baz left uncertain, and his detachment with the world becoming more severe, his best friend Penelope arranges for a thrilling road trip to America to visit their old friend Agatha. Despite Simon's lack of association now with the World of Mages, their trip results in taking unexpected, daring, magical turns that make for an enjoyable sequel. This book will be enjoyed by anyone fascinated by stories that encompass magic, conflict and adventure, and especially by fans of *Carry On*, who will be able to discover the fates of Rainbow Rowell's lovable characters in this marvelously spellbinding tale.

ANNIE SCHOFIELD
Drummond High

Normally I would read the first book in the series and, although I didn't, I could still follow the story. I would recommend, however, reading *Carry On* first as it would give you a better understanding of the magical world and the connections within it. I enjoyed reading this fairytale-esque themed novel with its strong, convincing and relatable characters. A fascinating read that pulls you in!

REBECCA BOWMAKER-MEES
Drummond Community High

Worzel Gummidge

Series: Worzel Gummidge
Barbara Euphan Todd
OUP £6.99 ISBN 9780192774484

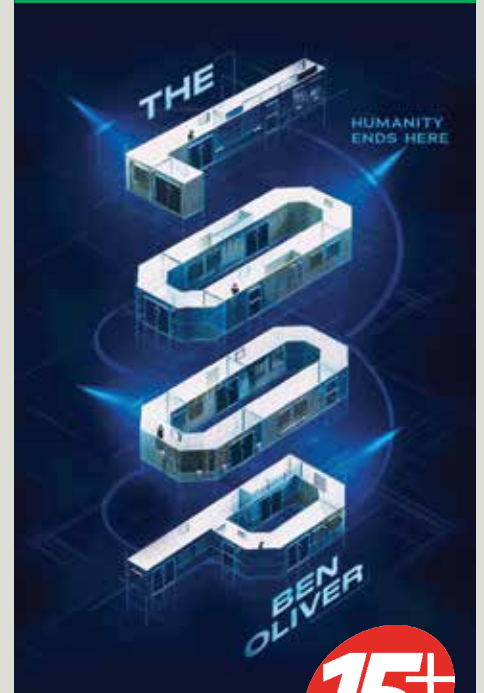
This fantasy adventure is set in the English countryside in the 1930s. Susan and John are on holiday getting bored when they meet Worzel, who is half human, half scarecrow and a wizard too!

I thought *Worzel Gummidge* was enjoyable because of its characters. Worzel the scarecrow was interesting, to say the least. He was funny, a bit silly and magical! I found some of the words were a bit confusing. The reason they were confusing is that they were old-fashioned words, as this book was first published in 1936. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes books with magic in them.

IAN HAMMER
Liberton High



'stunning read'



The Loop

Series: The Loop, no 1
Ben Oliver
Chicken House £7.99 ISBN 9781912626557

The main character Luka in this dystopian thriller has been imprisoned for more than two years when he starts to hear rumours of war. The monotony and torture of The Loop is broken when he receives an urgent message – he desperately needs to find a way to escape and soon.

I found this book compelling as many characters were thinking about the consequences of their actions. I thought this book was quite sad and unfair, as in the world it depicted you were either lucky or unlucky and no matter what you did you couldn't change that. The plot was well thought out as what you found out at the beginning of the book meant something different later in the story. I can't wait for the next book in the series.

ORRICK KNOWLES
Drummond Community High

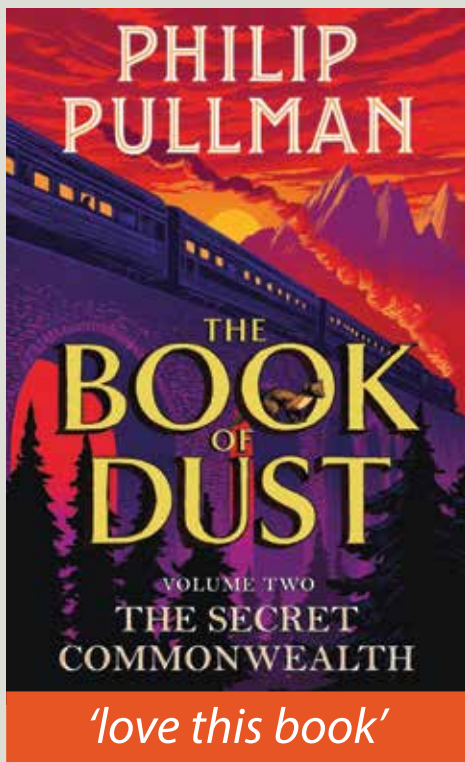
The Loop is a stunning read! It's one of those books you can not put down, it's quick, fast-paced and a good read for those who love action and books which are based in the future.

LUKAS OZENECKAS
Drummond Community High

This is an exciting and action-packed book. It is the first in a trilogy and fans of *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* will love it.

HANNAH MILNE AND LILLI FORREST
Firrhill High

SCI-FI & FANTASY



The Secret Commonwealth

Series: The Book of Dust, no 2
Philip Pullman
David Fickling £20.00 ISBN 9780241373330

Seven years after Lyra's adventures in the frozen north and beyond, she is now a student at Oxford studying the alethiometer. But her life is not going the way she planned: shockingly, her relationship with her daemon Pan is falling apart. And when Pan decides to leave, possibly for good, Lyra has no choice but to try and find him.

I love this book as it is an amazing type of writing the writer does. I would definitely say to everyone who hasn't read any of *His Dark Materials* or the first *Book of Dust* to definitely read them and *La Belle Sauvage* first and then *The Secret Commonwealth*. My favourite character has to be Lyra. She is just an incredible character.

ABIGAIL STRACHAN
Broughton High

Cyborg

Series: Virtual Kombat, no 3
Chris Bradford
Barrington Stoke £6.99 ISBN 978171127087

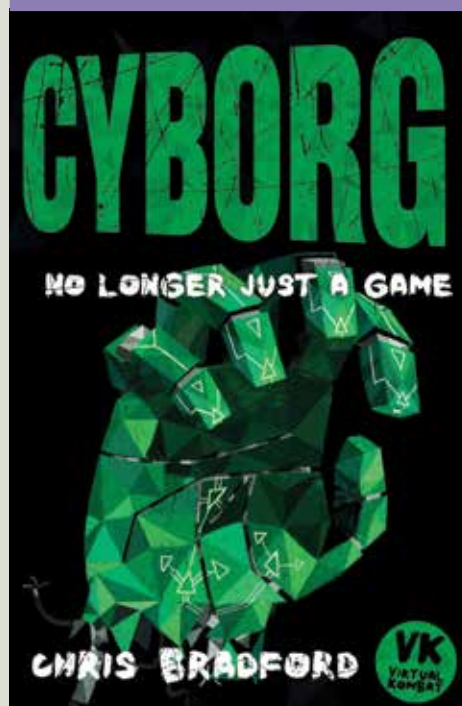
Three months ago, Scott and his friends were able to defeat Vince Powers, the villain behind the dangerous online game Virtual Kombat. Now Scott and the techno-hackers are training in virtual reality and going about

their lives. That is, until Scott thinks he sees Vince Powers' face on a screen. Maybe VK is not dead after all?

This extraordinary book is a dyslexia-friendly novel which means that it is easy to read and understand for everyone. Highly recommended to gamers; a good all-round book.

SCOTT ROME
Firrhill High

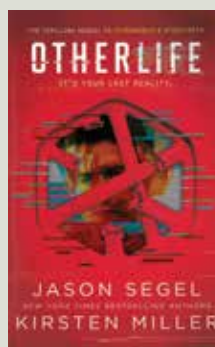
'highly recommended to gamers'



Otherlife

Series: Otherworld, no 3
Jason Segel and Kirsten Miller
Rock The Boat £7.99 ISBN 9871786076786

In this final instalment to the *Otherworld* trilogy, Simon, Kat, Busara and Elvis now find themselves desperately escaping the clutches of the evil and all powerful tech supervillains known as the Company. The Company aim to permanently change reality via a VR game experience called OtherEarth but Simon will do whatever it takes to stop them.



'very exciting'

This book was very exciting. I haven't read the other books so some parts were confusing for me. Otherwise I really enjoyed it. There were things I didn't expect to happen. It also had some funny elements as well. I think it's a very good book.

CAROLINE KANNAMPUZHA
Broughton High

Frostheart

Jamie Littler
Series: Frostheart, no 1
Puffin £7.99 ISBN 9780241355220

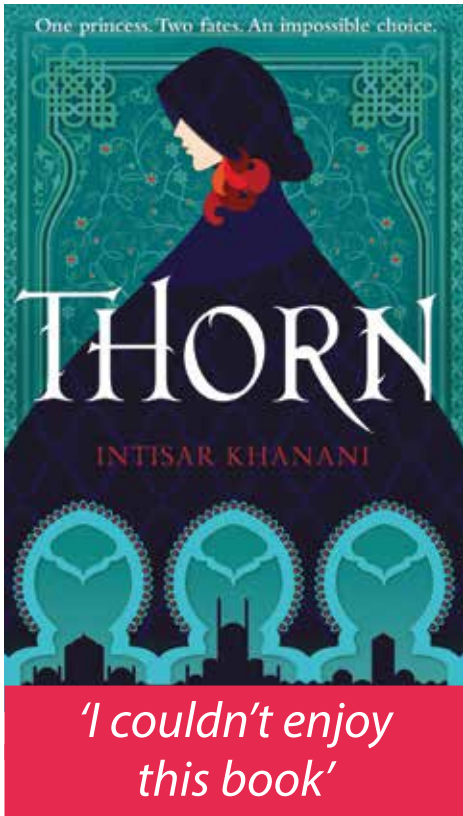
Ash lives with his Yeti guardian in a world covered in snow, where humans can only live on elevated strongholds because beneath the Snow Sea live Leviathans, monsters who love to eat humans for supper. Only outcasts known as Song Weavers can stop them, and after an accident is blamed on Ash he is exiled and decides to board the sleigh Frostheart to set off on an adventure and hopefully find his long lost parents.

I really enjoyed *Frostheart*. The characters and the world were both really well-drawn. What's more the illustrations were cute and helped the reader imagine the story. What I liked most was the adventure element of the story and the relationships between the characters. I think Ash is realistic and relatable. I am very excited about the sequel, and I cannot wait to find out what's next.

TORIN FRANKLIN
Broughton High



'very excited about the sequel'



Thorn

Series: Dauntless Path, no 1
Intisar Khanani
Hot Key £7.99 ISBN 9781471408724

Mistreated by her family and a victim of her brother's cruelty, Princess Alyrra accepts her betrothal to a foreign prince. But during the journey to the new kingdom and her new home, a sorceress casts a spell on her. Alyrra is divided: try to win her identity back, or start a new life.

Thorn was a fantasy story following the epic journey of a young princess who has to make an impossible choice. Unfortunately I couldn't get into *Thorn*, only making it a quarter of the way through because of how detailed and dense the writing was. I do not usually read magic/fantasy books so maybe this is why I couldn't enjoy this book. Therefore I urge people who love fantasy to give it a try as they may have different views to me!

EILIDH CLARKE
Broughton High

Isadora Moon Puts on a Show

Series: Isadora Moon, no 10
Harriet Muncaster
OUP £8.99 ISBN 9780192768698

Isadora is a young half-fairy, half-vampire. As the annual Vampire Ball approaches, Isadora is worried about not fitting in with the other

vampire children. Her family expect her to perform at the Ball's talent show but are her ideas too magical and not vampire enough?

I think that this book is a very quick and easy read. I don't think that teenagers are the target audience, but I think maybe someone in primary might enjoy this book though. It was difficult to get into but as I said I don't think that someone my age is the target audience.

RACHEL MILLER
Royal High

Kitty and the Moonlight Rescue

Series: Kitty, no 1
Paula Harrison
OUP £5.99 ISBN 9780192771650

Kitty's mum is a superhero, going out each night to help people. But when a cat comes to her for help it is Kitty who must be brave enough to go out into the night.

My favourite character is 100% Kitty because she takes on new challenges as they come and protects the town. My favourite scene is where she is climbing up the tower in the dark and faces her fears. I would definitely say this book is for younger readers as it's quite short, easy to read and wasn't very challenging for me.

JOANNE REEVES
Forrester High

My favourite characters were the cats that Kitty and her mum can talk to. I have two cats at home, so enjoyed reading about them. I thought the book was clearly for younger children, but I still enjoyed the plot.

KAITLIN GRIEVE
Forrester High



For me, *Kitty and the Moonlight Rescue* was maybe too young. My favourite character was definitely Figaro because he always said encouraging words to Kitty and was there to help. My favourite thing about the book was Kitty getting over her fears and helping Pumpkin, even though she didn't know her. She didn't do it to prove anything to anyone. She did it out of pure kindness and just wanting to help. This is a perfect example for younger pupils to follow. Overall, I liked the adventure in this story and the little mishaps that happened along the way, but think it would be enjoyed best by younger people.

KASEY REEVES
Forrester High

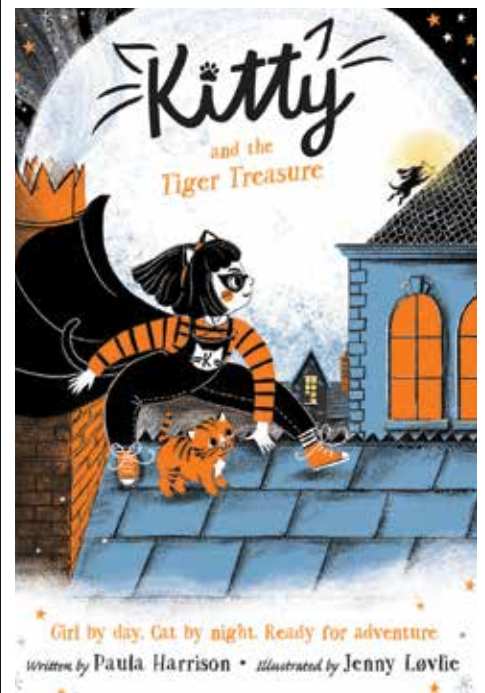
Kitty and the Tiger Treasure

Series: Kitty, no 2
Paula Harrison
OUP £5.99 ISBN 9780192771667

Join Kitty on a new adventure as she discovers a robbery at the City Museum. Can she help find the famous Tiger statue and unmask the villain?

The book is very well illustrated, and I liked how the layouts for the pages were put together. I would recommend this book for younger readers as the words used are very simple and easy to understand. The plot isn't very creative, but it also wasn't predictable.

CYNTHIA CHEN
Boroughmuir High



'very well illustrated'

SCI-FI & FANTASY



Evermore

Series: Everless, no 2
Sara Holland
Orchard Books £7.99 ISBN 9781408349526

Jules Ember has discovered that she is the reincarnation of the Alchemist, a notorious and legendary figure who stole the Sorceress's heart and doomed many of the city's people to an early grave. Now the Sorceress, reincarnated as Caro, must break and then consume Jules's heart to complete her bid for power. On the run, Jules must learn from her past lives to save herself and the person she loves.

Everless was one of the best books that I have read for a long time but I felt its sequel *Evermore* was lacking in the same fundamental things that the first one possessed. If you've read *Everless* then I 100% recommend reading *Evermore*. It has such an amazing conclusion with a subtle build up, but for me that was it – there wasn't much substance in between and even though it has an amazing ending there are other books that have amazing beginning and middle parts as well. Things were too fast paced. Jules was running, then coming back, then running away again. The way this was done made no sense to me whatsoever. One thing I did really like about the book was the love story between Jules and Liam, however briefly it was conveyed. In general, I would say it was a good book, just not a great book.

AMIE TOURAY
Boroughmuir High

The book was very good and, although I found the storyline original and absorbing, its writing was too similar to too many popular authors. To understand the plot better, reading the first book would be advisable and would add to the story and suspense. Although the story was quite alluring, the characters were rather dry, especially the main character Jules. I am not sure if the author meant to write her like this, but I soon discovered that despite everything happening around Jules, she had no set character flaws. This was a big letdown for me, as I would have thought character development in the second book would have been a big theme – especially in making important decisions and situations where a strong sense of character could have interested the reader. Jules as a character had so much potential, which the author could have used to her advantage. Another thing I didn't particularly enjoy was the cliché romance between Jules and Liam. It didn't stick out like a sore thumb, so it was fairly entertaining and added a small sub plot to the book. Overall though, this book will appeal to anyone who is a fan of romantic fantasy and enjoys popular writing styles with a taste for heartbreak.

NATALIA NOWAK
Boroughmuir High

The End and Other Beginnings: Stories from the Future

Veronica Roth
HarperCollins £14.99 ISBN 9780008347765

This is a collection of six different stories, but each equally gripping in detail. In one story, Matt's life is hanging by a thread after a car accident and his one request is a chance for him and his best friend, Claire, to revisit shared memories. In another, will Otho tell his story to get a chance of release from prison?

I thought this book was different because it has six small stories instead of one big one. I like that there are so many different ideas in this book and I liked how creative those ideas were. I also like the author's attention to detail. The different plot lines, however, made the whole book a little confusing.

WILLIAM CURRIE
James Gillespie's High



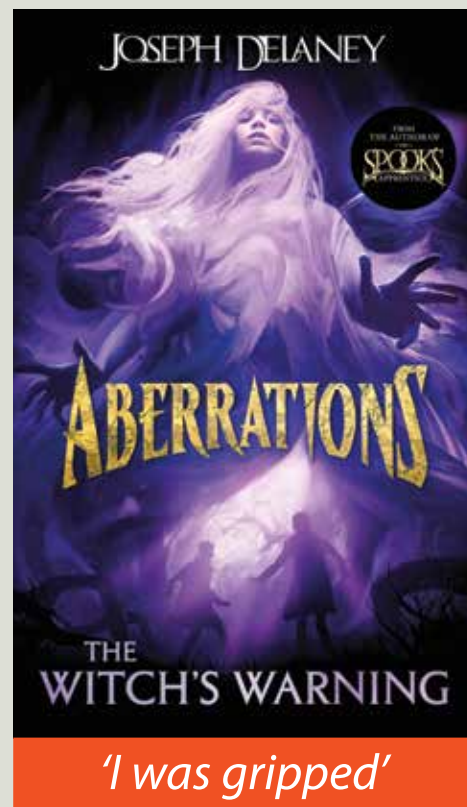
The Witch's Warning

Series: Aberrations, no 2
Joseph Delaney
Penguin £6.99 ISBN 9780241349953

The story of Crafty, a fey with magical powers, who has to defend Lancaster Castle against the Shole, a strange mist which kills or changes people into dangerous aberrations.

I'm a fan of the *Spooks* series so I was really keen to read this and it didn't disappoint. It had a great atmosphere and I liked how the author gradually built up the characters and the monsters. Lick was my favourite because of her confidence and I also liked Crafty's inquisitiveness and determination. There was real tension in the story when Crafty tried to kill the monster without enough weaponry and I was gripped wondering if he'd make it.

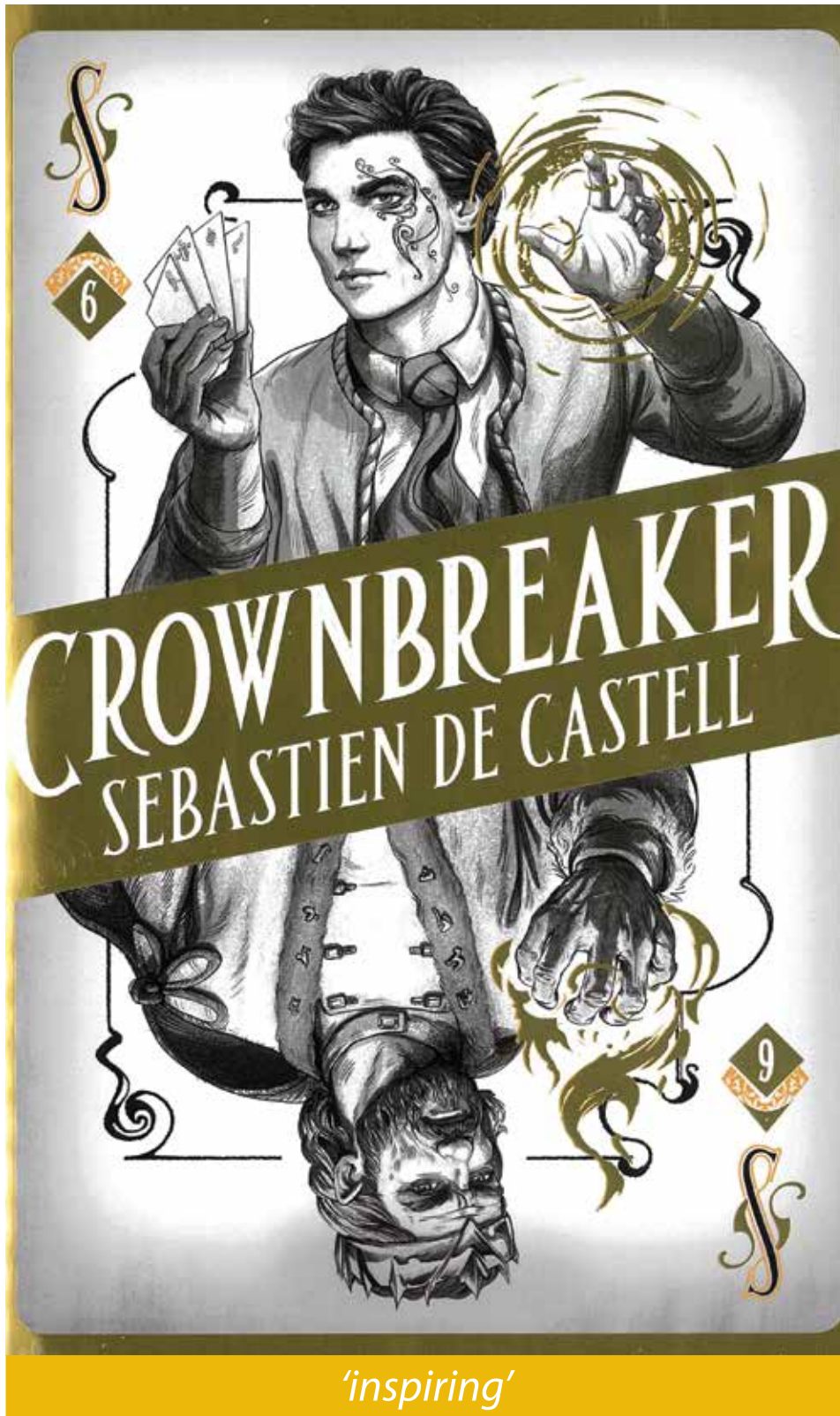
JOANNA BOULIS
St Thomas of Aquin's High



Crownbreaker

Series: Spellslinger, no 6
Sebastien de Castell
Hot Key £12.99 ISBN 9781471405495

The sixth and concluding book in the Spellslinger series. Kellen and Reichis have settled into their lives as protectors of the young queen, but when a war starts Kellen finds himself on opposite sides to it to his sister Shalla.



'inspiring'

This novel was inspiring. The cover looks like a deck of cards, and it fits a slot in every book genre from action to fantasy. As I lay in bed before I slept, I had visions of magic swirling around my head, warlocks duelling to the limit and resistance fighters teaming up against evil groups of people, each desperate to cause more trouble than the other. Some nights I saw the main character Kellen passing in and out

of my dreams, making me want to read more. One morning I realised I had finished my book. The author's name Sebastien De Castell sounds mystical as well! This book has some bad words yet it uses lots of great vocabulary. Even if you haven't read the others in the series it still makes sense.

ROBERT SAWYER
Currie Community High

Deeplight

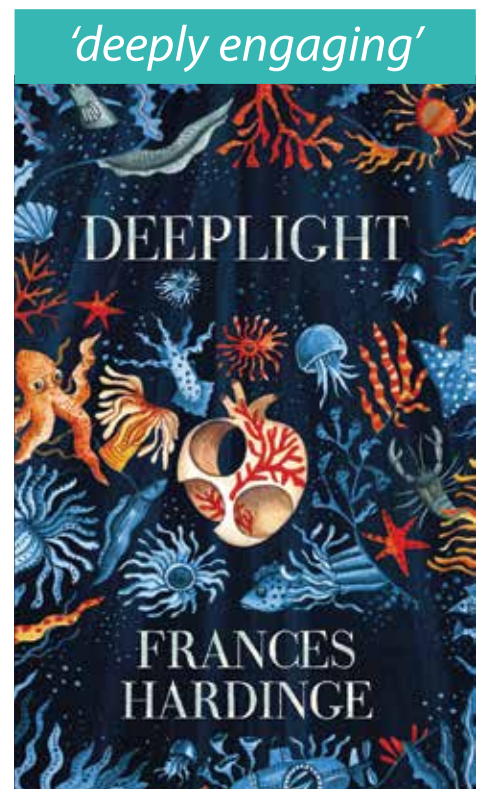
Frances Hardinge
Macmillan £12.99

ISBN 9781509836956

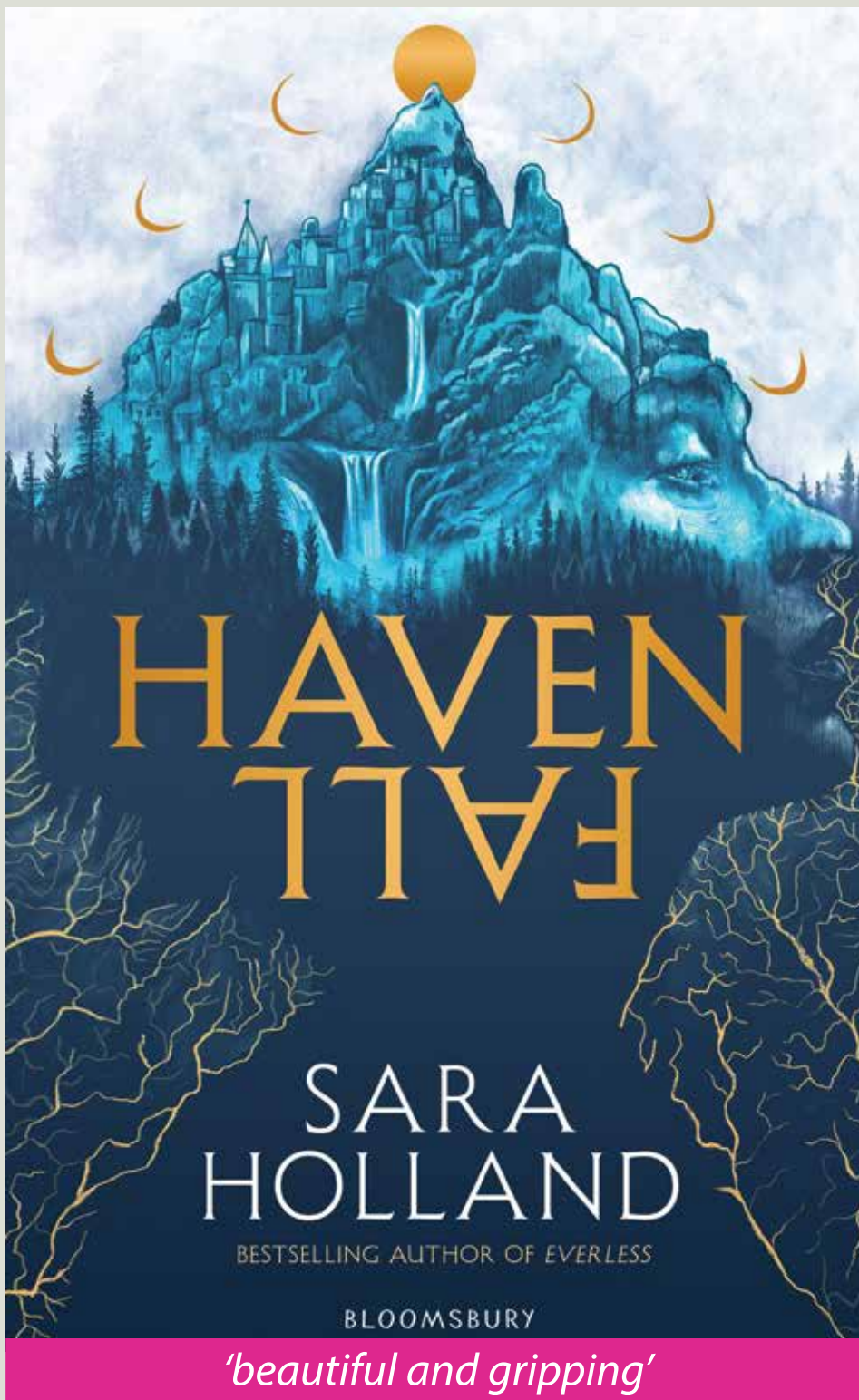
Hark and his best friend Jelt scavenge in the sea for a living, looking for the relics of the long dormant Myriad gods. When Jelt disappears and the gods shortly afterwards awake, Hark begins a perilous journey to save him.

Set in a darkly beautiful world filled with the ghosts of gods both gorgeous and grotesque, *Deeplight* is defined by its unparalleled worldbuilding and ability to draw you into its world and story. Like the Undersea it describes in its pages, its tide is near impossible to escape. The characterisation is also amazing, and the highlight of the story is undoubtedly the character interactions and how they're framed by the world around them. There is a certain bleakness, however, that makes the story hard to read despite its page-turning qualities; there's something to be said for finding a place to take even the smallest break. A little reprieve is an important thing. Despite that, it is deeply engaging and the originality of its setting is unforgettable. Equally excellent is its representation of deaf characters, who are integral to its world and wear their deafness with pride, and its sensitive handling of toxic relationships, particularly non-romantic ones. *Deeplight* is the breathtakingly bizarre and yet deeply human story of a boy finding his own feet in the world while battling, uh, more than a few complications.

KIT SCOTT-SARGEANT
Trinity Academy



'deeply engaging'



Havenfall

Havenfall, Series no 1

Sara Holland

Bloomsbury £7.99

ISBN 9781526614889

Maddie loves spending her summers at her uncle's inn in Havenfall in the remote Colorado mountains. Beneath the manor at Havenfall are portals to three ancient and hidden worlds. When a body is found on the

grounds and her friend Brekken is accused of murder, Maddie has to confront the terrible dangers lurking beneath Havenfall.

Sara Holland masterfully weaves a thrilling tale of love, hurt and betrayal while delving into the mystical realms hidden within *Havenfall*. From shapeshifting monsters to star crossed-teens, *Havenfall* is balancing it all. A truly beautiful and gripping read.

LAURA KELLY
Craigmount High

The Last Spell Breather

Julie Pike

OUP £6.99

ISBN 9780192771605

Rayne is being trained in the art of spell breathing by her mum. She hates the hours of practice it involves, but it is spell breathing that keeps her village safe from monsters. It is, however, a fragile magic, and with her mum away Rayne makes a dreadful mistake that plunges the village into danger.



I found this book to be fun and packed with adventure. It kept me guessing and had a great storyline. I, however, think it was perhaps targeted at a younger age group than myself (I would recommend it to 9–12 year olds). The characters on the whole were believable; the main character Rayne was easy to identify with, although, even more intriguing was Frank, who was a talking fox. In conclusion this is an enjoyable read for those that are into fantasy.

EVA CARTER
Queensferry Community High

Night Terrors

Series: Night Speakers, no 4

Ali Sparkes

OUP £6.99

ISBN 9790192749987

Matt and Elena are Night Speakers and have the ability to speak to animals. When two eagles appear in the middle of the night to tell them that their friend Tima, who is hundreds of miles away and in terrible danger, Matt and Elena know that they have to rescue her. Can they get to Tima before it is too late?



I really enjoyed this book because it was quite unique and not something I would usually read. My favourite character of the book was Tima. She's really outgoing, adventurous and brave, and she's willing to put herself in danger for her friends, family and others to be safe. My favourite part of the book was when Tima was riding a deer down a mountain.

EBONI MCFARLANE
Wester Hailes Education Centre



All things *Jelly* with Clare Rees

Clare Rees was interviewed by Sophie Bell, Caiden Kivlin and Ebony Meighan from Firrhill High School about her debut novel *Jelly*.

Q How did the characters get onto the jellyfish?

A I hinted at this information in one of the chapters (when Old Albert is speaking). I imagined all of the characters being grabbed out of boats. In particular, I set

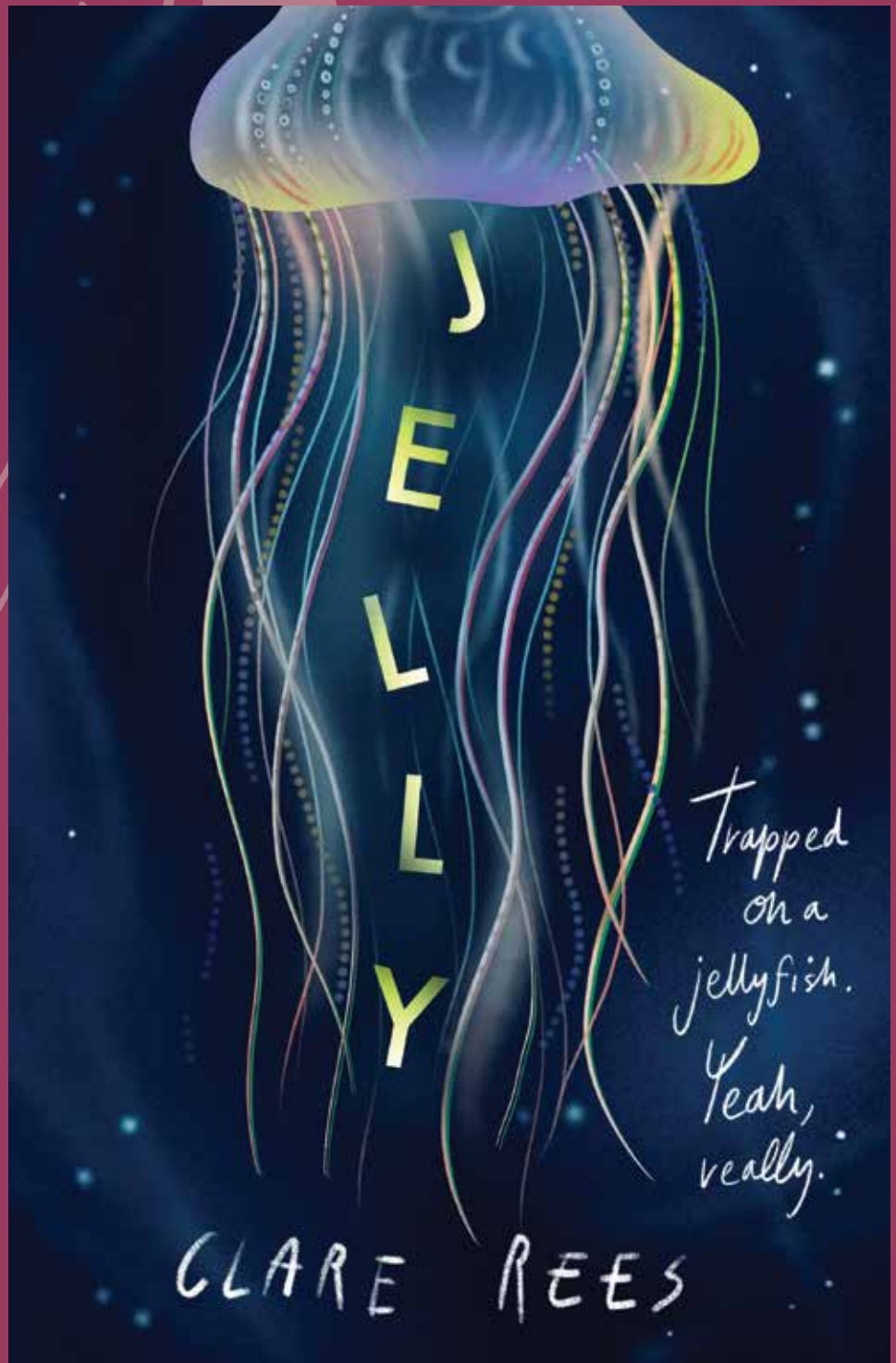
the book near a place where ferries leave for various destinations, so (although I didn't actually say this!) I pictured all of the characters as having been grabbed off a ferry before it sank.

Q What would happen if the characters never left the jellyfish?

A I think they would get eaten. The jellyfish was starting to feed on its passengers already, so if they had stayed then the rest of the characters would have been eaten too.

CLARE REES

- Q** Why did Peter try to escape even though he knew he couldn't?
- A** There are so many possible reasons for this: boredom, fear, desperation. Possibly and slightly morbidly, he was trying to kill himself.
- Q** Why was the woman who was in charge staring into space?
- A** I do think people would suffer from depression in this scenario – or even just extreme boredom. There wasn't much else to do, and many of the characters on board were a little odd, so I had her thinking deep thoughts and watching the shore.
- Q** If they were to continue to try to make a life on the jellyfish would they stay or finally be forced to leave?
- A** If the jellyfish was farming them then it would still end up eating some of them, so either way it was probably a good idea to leave. I am also not sure I'd want to bring up a baby on a giant killer jellyfish!
- Q** Will there ever be a second book and what will the characters' new life be like?
- A** There are no plans for a second book at the moment, but I did imagine the characters all making it to safety and the inland castle. I didn't imagine life being straightforward for them there. Perhaps they could go and see if any other people are trapped on other jellyfish around the coast.
- Q** If Peter was never there would they have known what would happen if they tried to escape?
- A** I'm not sure! I think they might have eventually realised that escape was a possibility, but his 'almost escape' certainly gave them the inspiration.
- Q** What inspired you to get into writing?
- A** I've always enjoyed telling stories – but this one was really inspired by my students. I'm a teacher, and I wrote sections of this book for use in lessons to help my students with their creative writing.
- Q** What made you want to write a book about a jellyfish island?
- A** Two main reasons: firstly, I was reading a Viking saga the week I started this and there was a bit in that in which the kraken, which was a sea monster, is described as being like an island which people could live on. I was really interested in this idea – especially as it also gobbles ships. Secondly, I watched a YouTube clip of a President Trump supporter saying that climate change was a good thing, because sea levels had already risen before in the Bible and God had used it as a way of cleansing the world of bad people. I was interested in this idea but also horrified that somebody could think it was a good thing, and I thought about what would happen if all of the stories and fables about the sea were real.



'unique and imaginative'

Jelly

Clare Rees
Chicken House £7.99 ISBN 9781912626298

After a traumatic event which no one can fully remember, Megan, Peter and their friends find themselves trapped on a giant killer jellyfish in the sea. While they are near to shore and safety, they can not figure out how to escape there. They decide that they

have to find a way or die trying.

Jelly is a unique and imaginative book. My favourite part is where Peter kept trying to escape but kept failing. When you read this book you feel like you are being sucked onto the jellyfish with the characters. One of the characters is very creative in his ways of trying to escape. Wait until the end for a great surprise!

EBONY MEIGHAN
Firrhill High

TEEN ISSUES

JackPot

Nic Stone
Simon & Schuster £7.99 ISBN 9781471186905

Rico lives with her mother and little brother. Her life consists of school and double shifts at the local gas station to help her mother pay the bills. On Christmas Eve an elderly lady comes in and buys a lottery ticket worth millions of dollars, but she never comes back to claim her prize. Rico decides to go on a mission to find the lady, and asks the exceptionally rich and good looking Zan to help her with her quest.



I thought this was a story that really highlighted the issues of money and class. It was very well written, with wonderful stylistic paragraphs written from the perspective of inanimate objects. In fact I loved them so much I wanted more! For me, the ending was slightly disappointing – but altogether a great book full of surprises!

ROSIE BRETT
Broughton High

I think the book is really good, but also it gives readers insight into what it means to struggle with money and how far you would go for your family just to make sure that they're happy. I thought that Rico was very confident and had a lot of responsibility on her shoulders. I wasn't too happy with the ending – it was a happy ending but I would've preferred it to have been more developed.

CATHLEEN JENKINS
Broughton High

'one of my favourites'

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



Looking for Alaska

John Green
HarperCollins £7.99 ISBN 9780008584128

The TV series tie-in for bestselling author John Green's classic 2005 debut novel. For naive teenager Miles his life only starts to begin when he goes to Culver Creek, his new boarding school. He meets and falls in love with the mysterious and free-spirited Alaska

Young, but when tragedy strikes nothing will be the same again.

Looking for Alaska is an amazing story with so many ups and downs. The main character Miles Halter is a bouncy, fun character with a mysterious past. Reading it was like an emotional rollercoaster with love, hate and death as its central themes. This book will always stay with me and is one of my favourites.

MAGGIE BROWNE
Balerno High

Letting GO

How far should
you go to keep
a promise?

‘Scottish mountains are some of the best in the world’ – Cat Clarke

Royal High School students David Smith
and Ruby Smart interviewed Cat Clarke
about her novel *Letting Go*.



Q What was your inspiration for Agnes' situation?

A I've wanted to write a story set in the wilderness for ages, but I hadn't quite found the right idea yet. Then one day, Agnes pretty much appeared fully formed in my mind – the idea of this grumpy girl put in an impossibly awkward situation because of a promise she made at a funeral.

Q Do you envisage what would happen next after the book ended?

A I always prefer to leave that to the reader. I have my own ideas, but readers always manage to come up with far more interesting scenarios! I'm not sure Agnes will ever go near a mountain again though, and

I'd like to think that she and Steve become pals.

Q Why did you set it on the mountains and does the specific mountain in the book have any significance?

A Scottish mountains are some of the best in the world, and Scottish weather can be some of the worst. I wanted to combine those two elements and use them as a dramatic backdrop for a relationship story. The mountain in the book is fictional though. I named it after a gorgeous loch in the Trossachs.

Q How has this book impacted on your life?

A Writing *Letting Go* allowed me to work with one of my favourite publishers, Barrington

Stoke, which has been a total delight. I think that every book you write makes you a better writer, so hopefully that's true in this case! I thoroughly enjoyed writing Agnes' story.

Q What inspired you to become an author?

A I've wanted to write since I was about thirteen. I've always been obsessed with books and stories, so I started writing my own stories from a young age. At first I copied the style of my favourite authors, but gradually I found my own voice. I showed my stories to a few people and they seemed to like them. I feel incredibly lucky that I get to do my favourite thing in the world as my job.

Q Was *Letting Go* based on events in your life?

A Definitely not! I'm not sure I'd have been as quick-thinking as Agnes. I'd probably have panicked and fallen off the mountain. Agnes is a character very close to my heart, though. There are certain things we have in common – but I'm not telling you which ones! I named Steve after Steve Harrington in *Stranger Things* – he's one of my favourite characters. I even have two t-shirts with his face on them.

Q Do you come up with the characters and settings first and then plot or do you just go along with it?

A It varies from story to story. Sometimes I come up with a character first, and sometimes a plot pops into my head. In this case, the setting came first, followed by the character. I loosely plotted the story and had a vague idea of how I wanted it to end, but I didn't want to know too much before I started. It can be fun to discover the story as I write. Sometimes the characters do or say something that surprises me, and that takes the story in a completely different direction. That's probably my favourite thing about writing. It almost feels like magic.

Q Do you have any regrets or want to make changes after you publish your books?

A I find it very hard to read my books after they're published. There are so many things I would change! Usually it's small things, like word choice, but sometimes it's bigger things. That can be very annoying, which is why I try not to think too hard about a book as soon as it's in the shops. It's too late to change anything, so I try to focus on writing my next story instead.

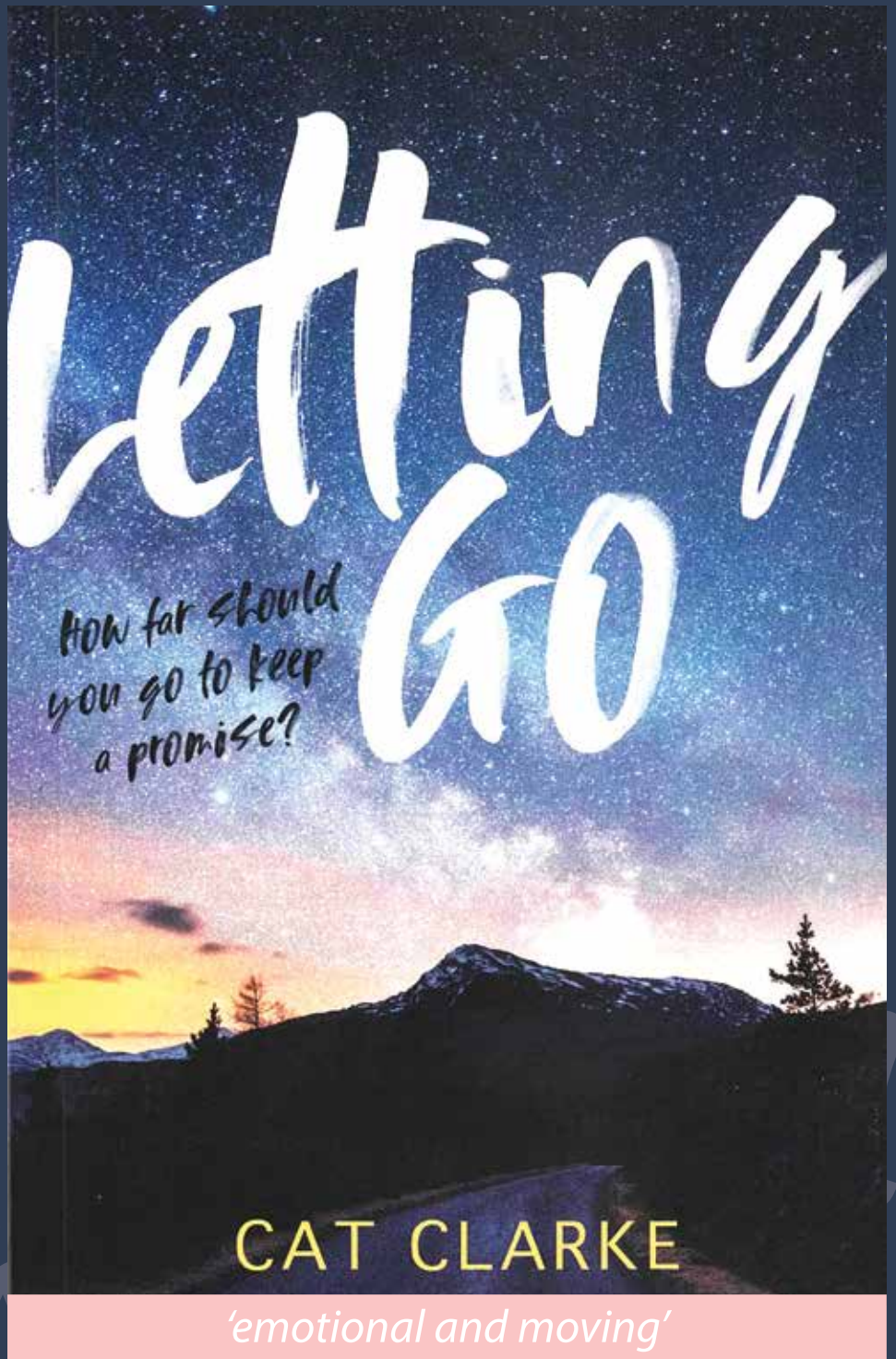
Letting Go

Cat Clarke
Barrington Stoke £7.99 ISBN 9781781128381

Agnes promised her girlfriend Ellie at her mum's funeral that she would help her to scatter her ashes on a remote Scottish mountain. But, a year on, they have broken up and Ellie has a boyfriend, Steve. As they climb the mountain, the weather deteriorates and tensions between the three of them escalate.

The plot-line of a young woman supporting a friend after a loss is not especially unusual, but what really made it intriguing was that they had been in a relationship before. It's a little ironic that when one of them lets go, they are high up in the sky, meaning their emotions are spread across the alpine tops. There were some things that I didn't like about it, such as there was little possibility of a sequel. The relationship could also have been explored in more depth. Overall though, this was a very good read.

DAVID SMITH
Royal High



I really enjoyed it. The dialogue was great; some of it was quite emotional and moving but there was also a comedic side to it. I liked the end; how it was a bit of a cliffhanger. I enjoyed imagining what would happen next. I also thought that the characters were very well developed. By the end of the book I had a very good understanding of their backgrounds and personalities, and also how they were all linked up. The length of the book was good; it was quick to read which made the story quite powerful.

RUBY SMART
Royal High

It was detailed and that was cool. The characters seemed nice, like you'd want to be friends with them. It was sad at the end – I didn't expect that.

HOLLY LAWSON
Wester Hailes Education Centre

There is a lot of drama, romance and adventure. It is also realistic because things like that happen in life. It will be enjoyed by those who like books about break-ups, romance and tragedy.

SALMA WERFALI
Wester Hailes Education Centre

THRILLERS & CHILLERS

THRILLERS & CHILLERS

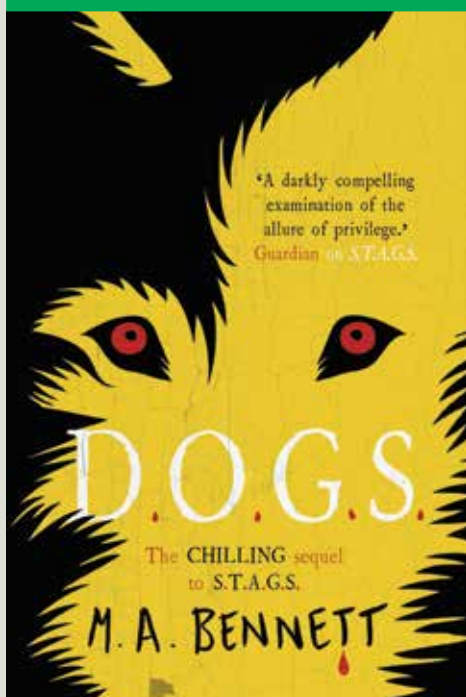
D.O.G.S.

Series: S.T.A.G.S., no 2
M A Bennett
Hot Key £7.99

ISBN 9781471407994

Greer, a scholarship pupil at STAGS boarding school, is in her final year. Looking for something to direct for her drama finals, she mysteriously discovers the first act of a lost Elizabethan play. A play so dangerous that it

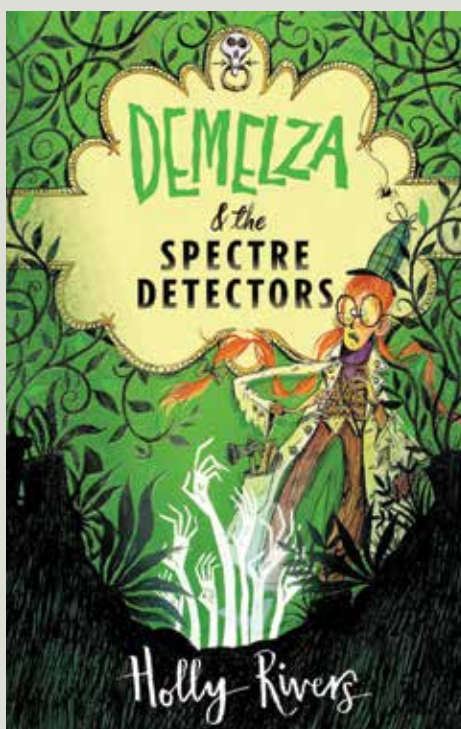
'didn't absorb me'



was banned, all theatres were closed, and its writer imprisoned. As more pieces of the play are found, life at STAGS becomes sinister and Greer suspects a connection to the terrible tragic events of last year and the powerful society that she thought she had defeated.

D.O.G.S. was a mysterious novel; however, it didn't absorb me or interest me as much as I had hoped it might. I didn't find the storyline very entertaining, but I think maybe I would have enjoyed it slightly better if I had read the first book in the series. I'm afraid I wouldn't recommend this book; however, I may have had a different opinion if I had read the entire book.

HANNAH CURRY
Royal High



'fun book to read'

Demelza and the Spectre Detectors

Holly Rivers
Chicken House £6.99 ISBN 9781912626038

Demelza is a fantastic inventor, always coming up with new ideas that she creates in her Grandma's attic. Discovering that she has inherited a very different skill, Demelza must set aside her faith in science and learn how to deal with ghosts and help the recently bereaved say goodbye to their loved ones. When her Grandma is kidnapped, she must use both science and the supernatural to rescue her.

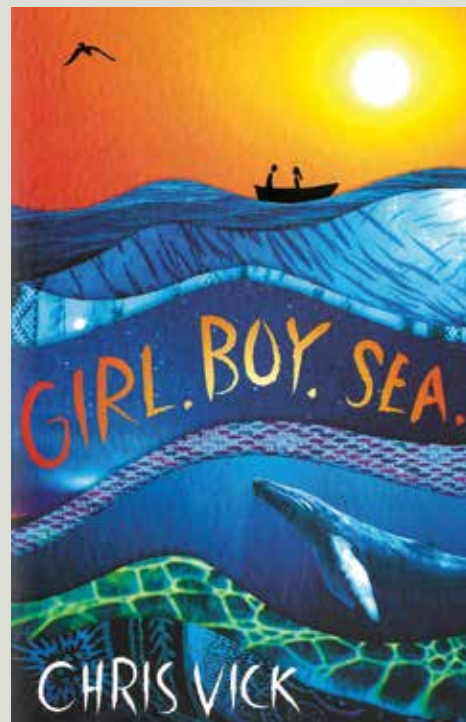
I really enjoyed reading this book because I thought it had a lot of twists that were very

unexpected. A lot of the things that happened in it shocked me.

EVE YELL
Forrester High

I enjoyed the idea of the book, being able to summon up ghosts, combined with the mystery of trying to find Demelza's kidnapped gran. It was a fun book to read, but I think it is aimed at younger pupils.

IBUKUH SAMUEL
Gracemount High



'unputdownable'

Girl. Boy. Sea.

Chris Vick
Head of Zeus £10.99 ISBN 9781789541373

When Bill's yacht sinks, he finds himself alone on a boat. Adrift at sea, he comes across another sea wreck, from which he rescues Aya. Hungry and with no clear idea if they will be rescued, Aya tells Bill tales of magic from her Berber tribe and together they cling to a thin hope that they will eventually find home.

Most of the book is set in the ocean. I like how the author makes something so plain into such an incredible story! I read 100 pages non-stop in one hour! The story is realistic and ordinary people will be able to relate to it because there are times in life when you have to battle against impossible things. The main character, Bill, however, just keeps on trying. I found myself not on the pages but on the boat with Aya and Bill. I knew them so well by the end because they have been described so beautifully. The word choice is magnificent. I'm so glad I read this

THRILLERS & CHILLERS

book. It is unputdownable. If you get a chance to read this book, be prepared to read for hours on end.

LAYLA ROZELLE
James Gillespie's High

I thought *Girl. Boy. Sea.* was a very good book as it describes the amount of hope Aya and Bill find through telling stories and their beautiful friendship. I think everyone should read this book.

MICHAELA SPARK
James Gillespie's High

Tin Boy

Steve Cole
Barrington Stoke £6.99 ISBN 9781781128725

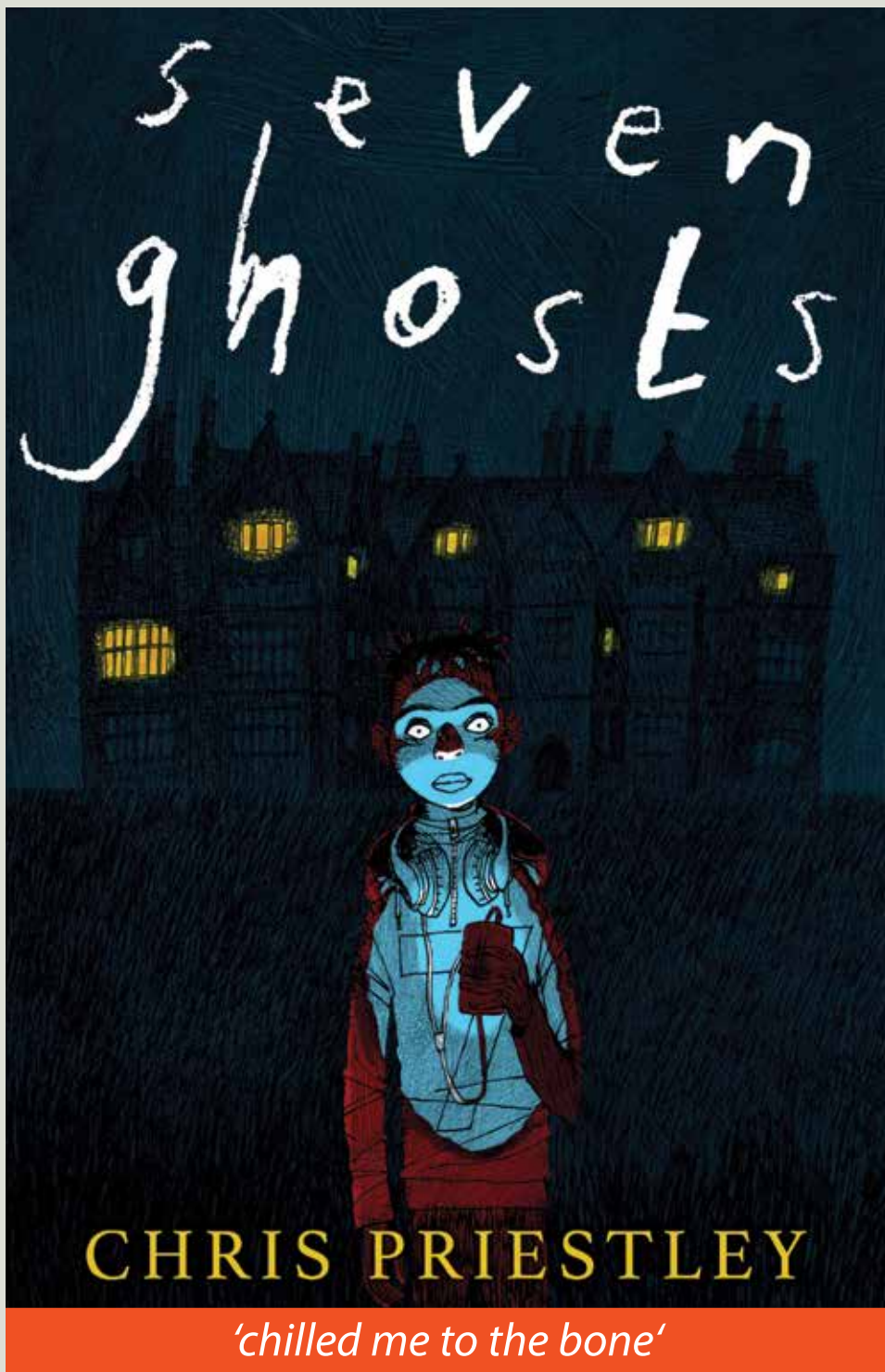
Tono leads a harsh life with his strict uncle, scavenging for tin. Things change forever when an underwater avalanche almost kills him and a girl nurses him back to health. From that moment on he is known as Tin Boy, and others think he is a good luck charm. But things are way more complicated than they seem.

I like *Tin Boy* because it is a good adventure story with a twist, and I love the character of Tono. It is reader-friendly to everyone as well, as it has yellow pages and nice font. I love this book so much. I also love the blurb as it doesn't tell you everything but it does make you want to read it.

ABIGAIL STRACHAN
Broughton High



'good adventure story'



Seven Ghosts

Chris Priestley
Barrington Stoke £6.99 ISBN 9781781128947

Jake is the finalist in a story writing competition and has found himself invited on a tour of Grimstone Hall, one of the country's most haunted houses. As they learn the stories of some of the most infamous ghosts, Jake can't shake the feeling that there is something the tour guide is not telling them.

I usually only read true life stories, but I found

this book one of the scariest I have read. Of the seven ghosts in the book, ghost 2 – Maisie – was the one that I felt sorry for. This book chilled me to the bone.

SHAMSIYAH SAAD
Gracemount High

I loved this book! It was quick to read and one of the best I have read for a long time. I liked the fact that Jake was forced to write the story and then won the competition. I also liked how all the stories were linked to the house.

EMMA JANSCH
Gracemount High

ARMARNA FORBES

‘The whole idea started twelve years ago’ – Armarna Forbes

Catriona Hall, Luke Norman, Antonina Puchala and Kitty Styles from Trinity Academy interviewed American but now Edinburgh-based YA writer Armarna Forbes about her debut novel *Dead Remnants*.

Q How much has *Dead Remnants* changed since you first started writing it?

A Quite a lot. When I first started writing it, I kind of knew what I wanted to do but at the same time didn't really. I started to write the opening chapter but I soon realised I wasn't ready to write it, so I put it away and on hold for a long time. It has changed a lot in my mind since then, but from when I started writing it again not that much. The opening chapter is in fact the bit that changed the most.

Q How long did it take you to write overall?

A The whole idea started twelve years ago. I moved here to Edinburgh four years ago and I worked on some short stories for a while and then I started writing *Dead Remnants* again three years ago. I worked on the first draft for about a year and a half and then I did about another six months of further editing.

Q *Dead Remnants* involves a lot of Denver City's architecture and real life history. How much time did you spend researching that?

A I did quite a lot of research but I lived there for about ten years, so it was mostly going over stuff that was already familiar to me.

Q What were your main influences with *Dead Remnants*?

A I see it as a cross between Neil Gaiman, Stephen King and Joss Whedon. Joss Whedon is a film and television director with a very dry sense of humour and created *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Guillermo del Toro, who is another director and made *Hellboy* and *Pan's Labyrinth*, was another main inspiration. They have both got a dark, quirky, interesting style.

Q If you were going to make a film of the book, who would you cast as Ashen?

A I would want someone who has not been in anything else to be her, mostly because I think of America as a big melting point and when I thought of Asher I didn't want her to have one identity. All I do when



ARMARNA FORBES

I describe her is say that she has brown hair and brown eyes and freckles and a pair of Converse shoes. That is all that you really know about Asher because when you speak to a bunch of Americans they are all different types. I am partially Native American, partially Italian American, partially Scottish and I have got various other nationalities in my background also. We are kind of a lot of people, so that is what I wanted Asher to be.

Q Is this the kind of book that you would like to read?

A Yes, it is the book I have read the most in my life. With all the editing that it involved, I have read it many, many times now. I write about what I like.

Q So, if you went to the library and saw it there would you probably borrow it?

A Yes. I like anything to do with ghosts.

Q Are you working on a sequel?

A It depends on if I get enough interest for *Dead Remnants* but I have got the seeds for one. There are hints of things that will become more explained if I do a sequel, but at the same time I wrote it in such a way that it could just end there.

Q When you were young did you want to be an author or did you have another ambition?

A I initially wanted to be a palaeontologist because I loved dinosaurs and then I wanted to be an archaeologist because I wanted to be a female Indiana Jones. I have always been involved with history, but I have always written as well. I didn't take it on until later in life as an actual career choice though.

Dead Remnants

Armarna Forbes

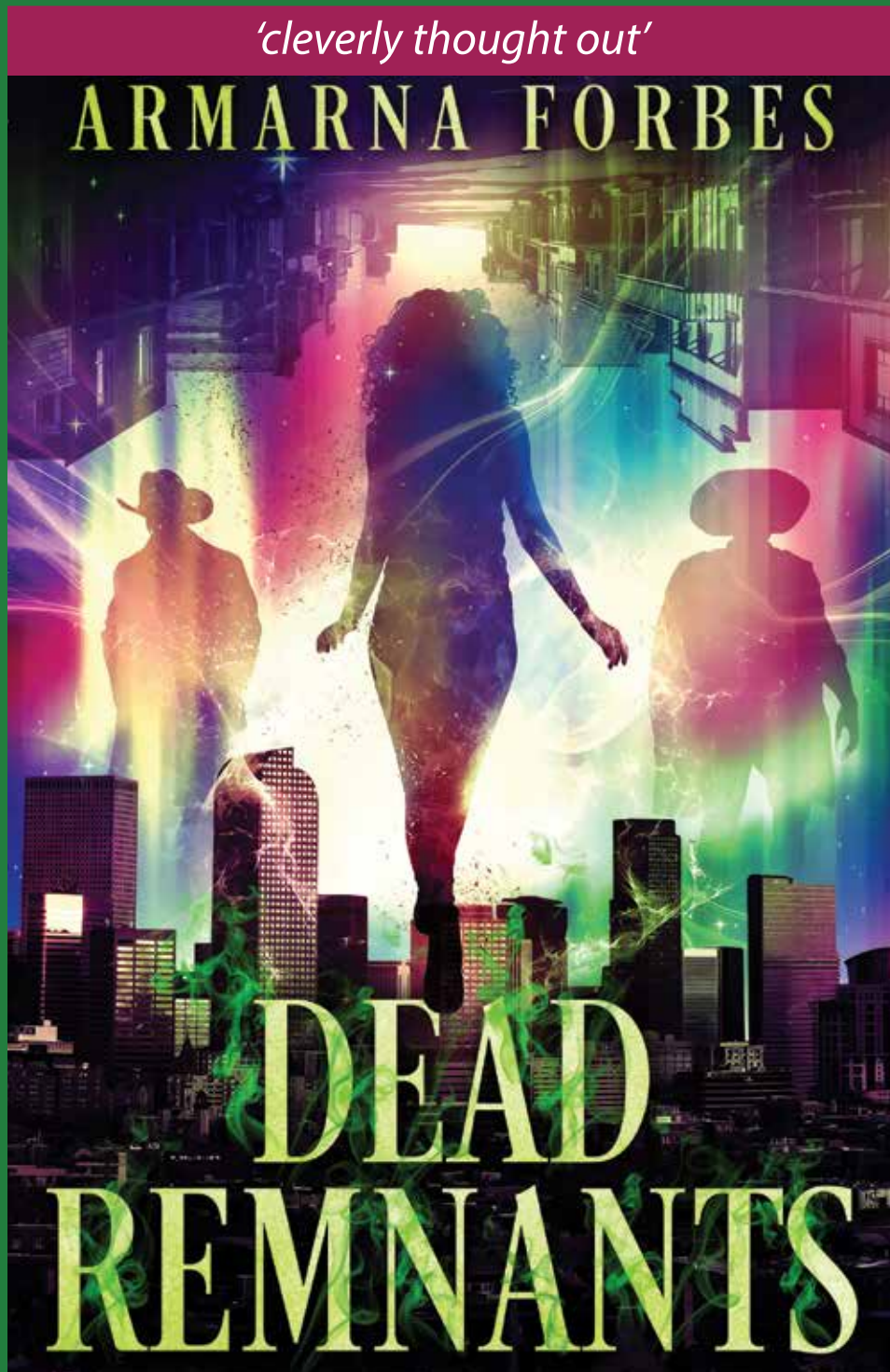
Sun Disc £7.99

ISBN 9781916173413

Denver teenager Ashen is killed in a bus crush and discovers that she is trapped in the afterlife. She finds that her best friend Jacob, who was with her, is still alive, but stuck in a horrific curse. Will Ashen be able to find a cure before she is doomed to wander the city as a ghost forever?

I greatly enjoyed *Dead Remnants*. Although I found the beginning of this book quite slow and difficult to become involved in, after the first few chapters I became more interested and found it an excellent novel. At times it was quite tragic, but that added to its charm. It also described things realistically without sugar-coating them. It is also quite funny and has several comedic moments interspersed. It is the kind of story that sticks with you long after you have finished it.

ANTONINA PUCHALA
Trinity Academy



It was a cleverly thought out novel with great characters and an exciting storyline. I think it was very original, and I appreciated that Armarna Forbes had included real historical events in there too. At times I was a little confused but after re-reading those chapters (there were only two bits I got confused by) it made complete sense. All in all, it is a great read.

KITTY STYLES
Trinity Academy

I liked *Dead Remnants* but struggled to get into it at first. I was confused at first but then when I did understand it I found it really entertaining.

I was surprised at its historical depth and accuracy as it is something a lot of novels miss out on, but it made the whole book better.

CATRIONA HALL
Trinity Academy

I enjoyed *Dead Remnants* because of the characters' strong personalities and the novel's in-depth historical content. Armarna Forbes goes into great detail when describing characters and scenes and it is an impressive read.

LUKE NORMAN
Trinity Academy

AUTHOR FACTFILE



Photo © Red Forge Studios

Chris Vick

Chris Vick

Chris is a graduate of the Bath Spa MA in Writing for Young People. He lives near Bath and splits his time between writing, teaching and working in marine conservation. You can read a review of *Girl. Boy. Sea.* on page 22.

Roopa Farooki

Roopa is an established adult novelist. Her books have been published internationally and translated into a dozen languages. She has four children, including twin girls and lives in south-east England. Her latest endeavour has been to retrain as a doctor. *The Cure for a Crime* is reviewed on page 4.

Roopa Farooki



Photo: Beth Evans

Cathryn Constable

Cathryn Constable

Cathryn read Theology at Cambridge University before working for *Vogue*, *W*, *Elle Decoration*, *Elle* and the *Independent*. See page 8 for a review of *The Pearl in the Ice*.

Sebastien de Castell

Sebastien spends his time writing, travelling, and going on strange adventures. He lives in Vancouver with his wife and two belligerent cats. See page 14 for a review of *Crownbreaker*.

Sebastien de Castell



Photo: Pink Monkey Studios

AUTHOR FACTFILE



Nic Stone

Nic Stone

Jackpot (reviewed on page 19) is Nic's third novel. She was born in Atlanta and has lived in Israel, working extensively in teen mentoring. She is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Dear Martin* and *Odd One Out*.

Jamie Littler

Jamie is an author-illustrator. His interests are pretty varied, though he does have a soft spot for wild animals and things that go bump in the night. *Frostheart* (reviewed on page 12) is Jamie's first foray into writing fiction.

Jamie Littler



Photo © Charlotte Knee Photography



Ben Oliver

Ben Oliver

The Loop (reviewed on page 11) is Ben's first novel. He began writing creatively at age seven, and was promptly placed into the lowest reading and writing group at school. Frustrated by his lack of immediate success, Ben chose to step down from the world of writing – he is now a high school English teacher.

Mary H K Choi

Mary is a writer for the *New York Times*, *GQ*, *Wired* and the *Atlantic*. She has written comics for Marvel and DC. Mary grew up in Hong Kong and Texas and now lives in New York. *Emergency Contact* is reviewed on page 4.

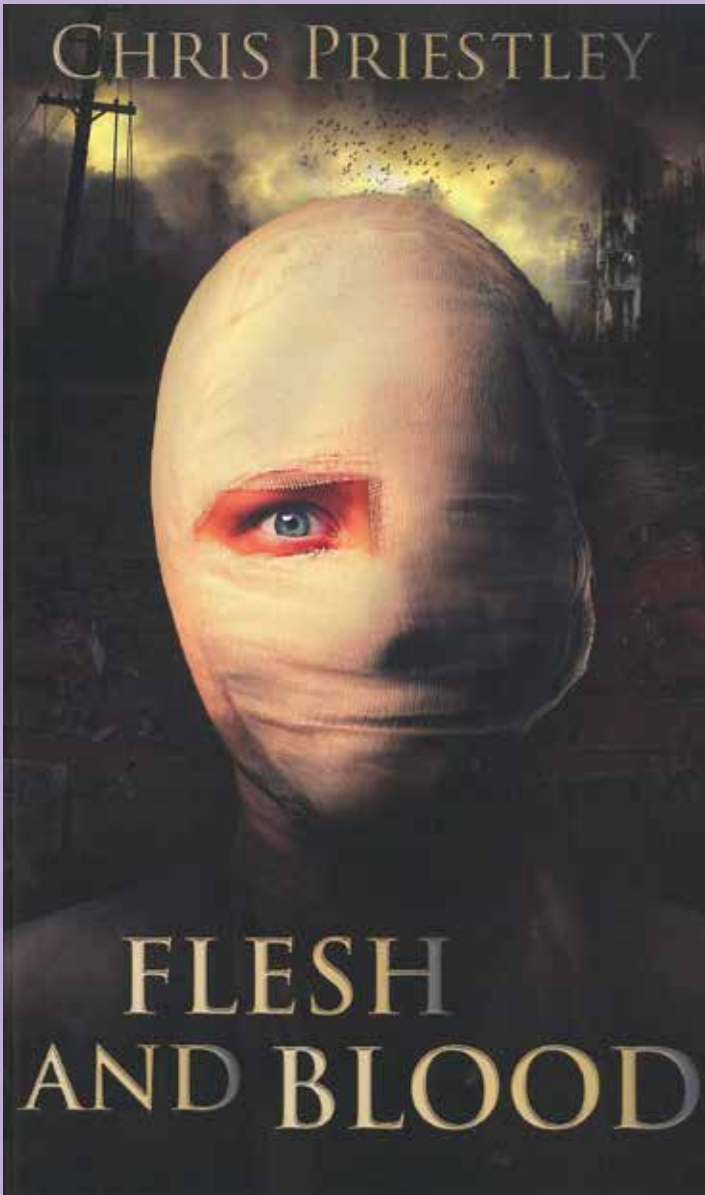
Mary H K Choi



Photo: Aaron Richter

READERS WRITE

We are delighted to publish reviews from AKS in Lytham, Buckie High School Book Group in Moray, Hayesfield Girls' School in Bath and Cardinal Allen Catholic High School in Lancashire. Many thanks to all those who sent reviews in. If you would like to see your reviews in print, please send them to us!



Ellie Collinge, AKS rates ...

Flesh and Blood

Chris Priestley

This gripping story is set in WW2 against a backdrop of air raids and bomb shelters. One day the main character Bill hears screaming from a house, but only he can hear it. Inside the house there is a boy who

is later rushed to hospital. This boy has bandages all over his face with terrible burn marks. Eventually, this boy comes to live with Bill's family. But something isn't right. I really enjoyed reading this book with all its hints of the paranormal within the storyline. This book will be a great addition to the library stock, potentially hooking many curious readers in who enjoy horror books.

Lucy Turpie, AKS rates ...

Glubbslyme

Jacqueline Wilson

After a row with her friend Sarah, Rebecca wades into a pond near her house and meets a very unusual friend: a warty toad! This toad is no ordinary toad though as it can speak but can it help Rebecca to be friends with Sarah again? I loved reading this book because the way the author writes it made me feel like I was there with the characters. It is very imaginative and original, one of my favourite reads.

Zain Nightingale, AKS rates ...

Doctor Who: The Krillitane Storm

Christopher Cooper

When the Tardis arrived in an abandoned city, the Doctor immediately notices something is wrong. Taking it upon himself to investigate, he is horrified to learn that an alien race called the Krillitane could be involved. You won't want to put this book down until you're finished. It is a great read.

Sam Wilson, AKS rates ...

Ghost Boys

Jewell Parker Rhodes

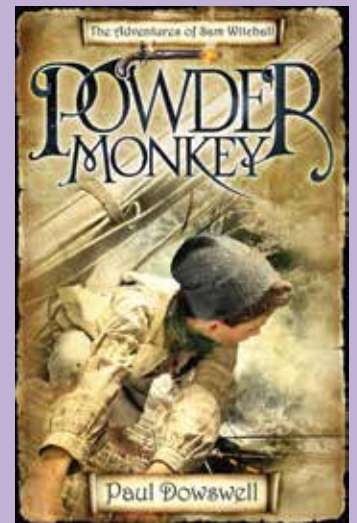
Ghost Boys is about Jerome who is getting bullied at school. One day a new boy called Carlos starts at his school. Carlos and Jerome become friends, but when the school bullies come and try to hurt them Carlos pulls out a gun! People who like good cliffhangers and surprises, and books with lots of action will enjoy this book.

Jamie Lane, AKS rates ...

Powder Monkey

Paul Doswell

Powder Monkey is a historical novel about a teenage boy who discovers the horrors of being on a ship of war after he is forced to join the navy. There is a very tense atmosphere throughout this book. The main point that the author is trying to get across is the idea of surviving in a world where everything else is trying to kill you. I did not expect the ending at all, so when it hit me I was quite surprised.

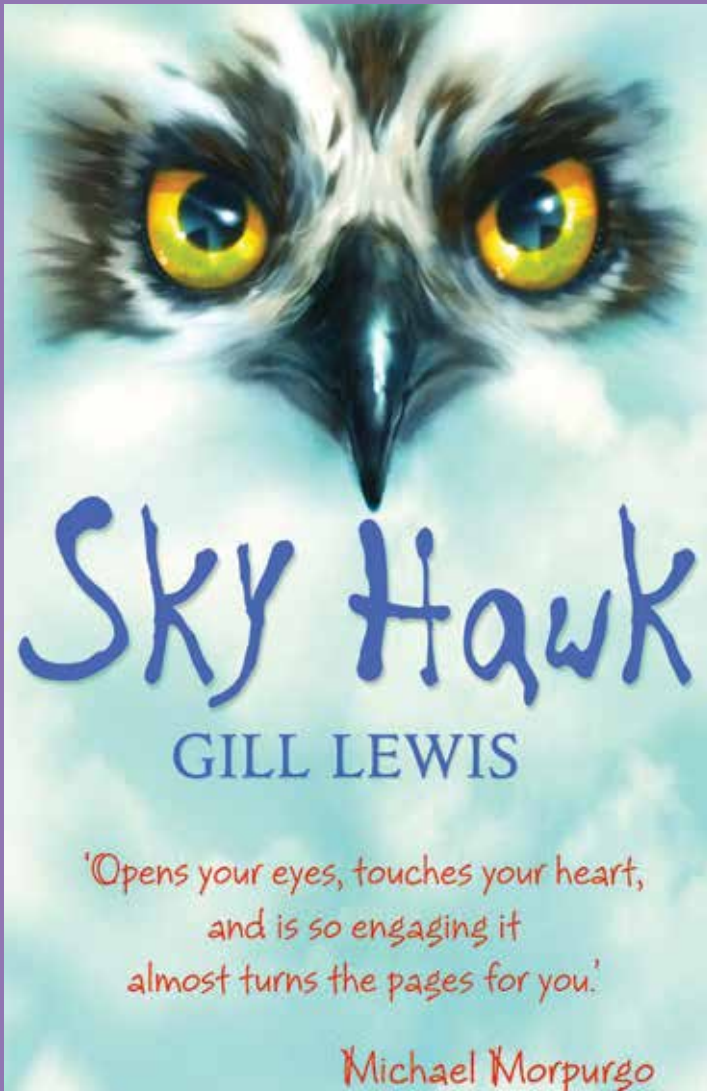


Lucy Wane, AKS rates ...

Respect!

Michaela Morgan

Tully and his little brother Eddie are sent to a children's home in London when their parents die. The other kids all make fun of Tully and Eddie. But Tully had an amazing footballing talent which wins him a place in history. *Respect!* is a great short book for a nice quick read. I would recommend anyone to read this if you don't like seriously long books.



Charlotte Clayton, AKS rates ...

Sky Hawk

Gill Lewis

Sky Hawk is about a young boy who follows an osprey's journey around the world. Much of the setting of it takes place on a farm where a rare species has been discovered. I found this book very captivating; it leaves you wanting more. While I was reading this book, I learnt a lot about ospreys and how they travel to Africa in the winter.

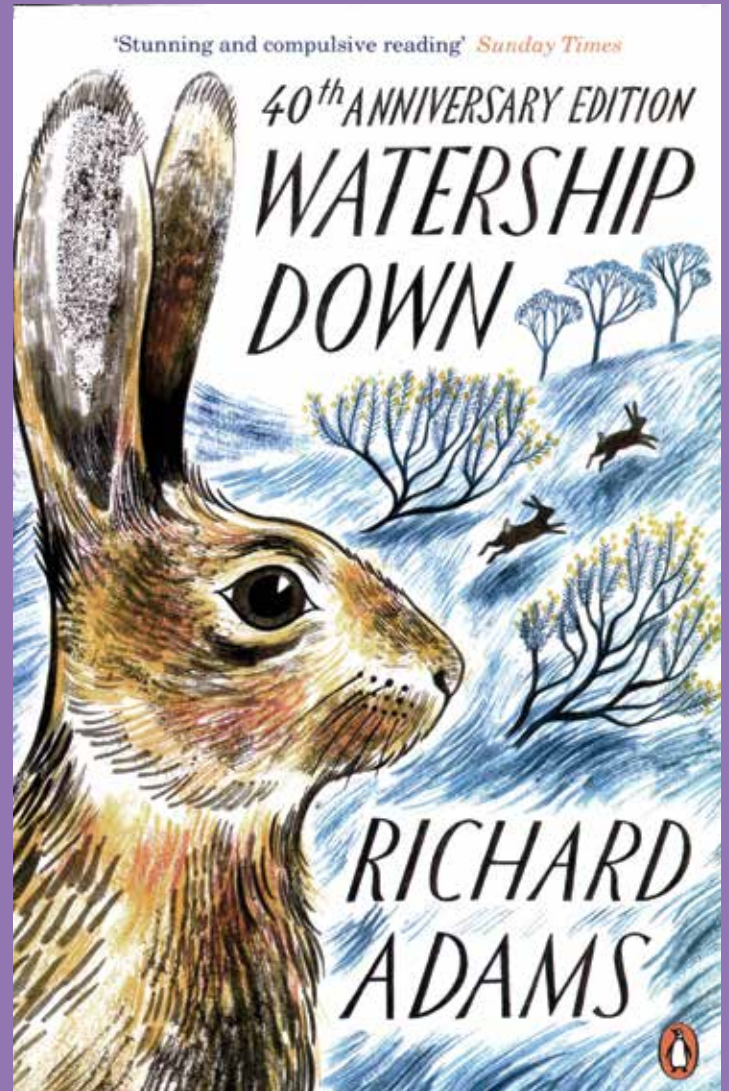
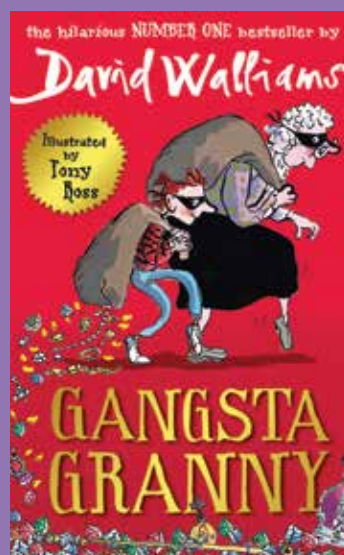
Erin Combe, Buckie High School rates ...

Gangsta Granny

David Walliams

Gangsta Granny is one of my favourite books because it's got a lot of humour and the characters

are the best. David Walliams is a really good author because he puts a lot of humour into his work and makes a story that seems bad into a really funny story! The end of the story is emotional and made me have a few tears in my eyes.



Rosie-Willow Clarke, Buckie High School rates ...

Watership Down

Richard Adams

Watership Down is without doubt my favourite book. This is because it's full of wonder and adventure. Its heart-warming tale makes me feel all happy inside. It makes me think of family and how I would never want to lose them. When you start reading it, you can't stop.

Carrera Morgan-Middleton, AKS rates ...

Stage Fright

Jo Cotterill

Stage fright is written by Jo Cotterill, it is about a girl called Alice who has the lead role in the school play,

but struggles from panic attacks. I have learnt from this book to be kind to people, to talk to people and to try and make them feel happy if I see that they are alone. I would read more of these books by the same author.

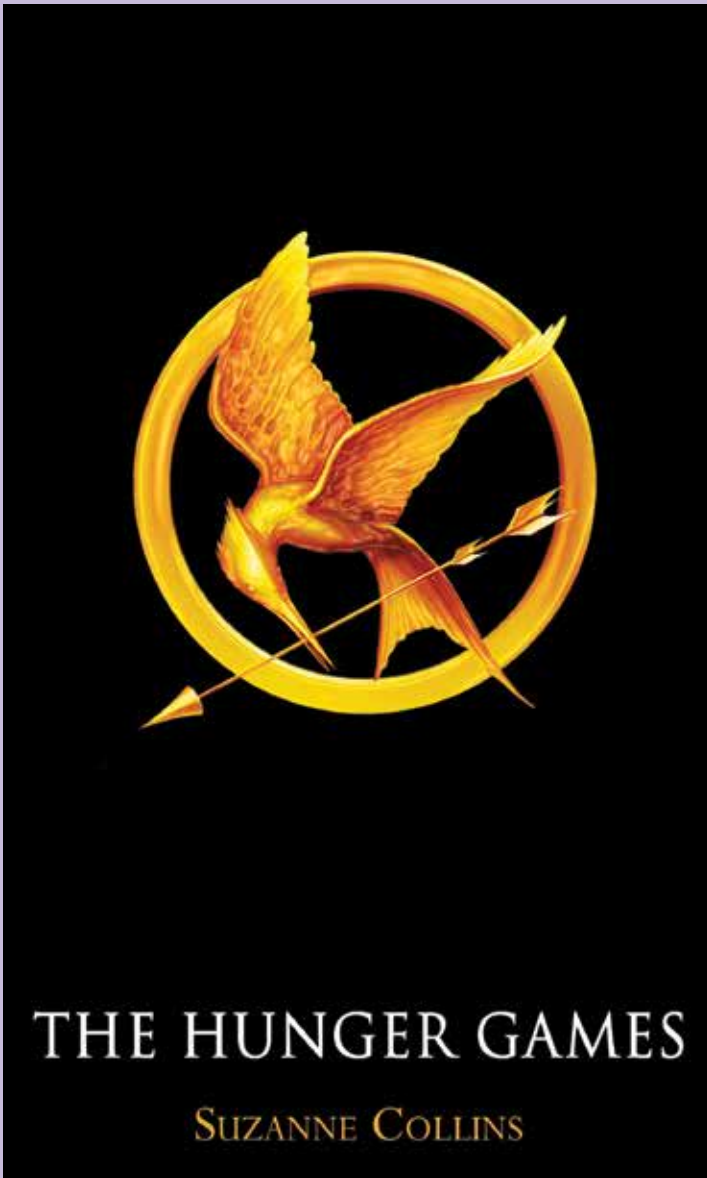
Emily Walls, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Emmy In The Key of Code

Aimee Lucido

This book reveals the many fascinating ways in which music, poetry and coding intersect. Told in verse, you will fall in love with Emmy, who is very relatable as she navigates fitting in through her love of programming and music. This story really brings STEM to life and sings beautifully the tune of being yourself and finding true friendship.

READERS WRITE



Kaydee Cowie, Buckie High School rates ...

Hunger Games

Suzanne Collins

The Hunger Games is my favourite book by far. After each chapter I just wanted to read more to see what happened next. This book was better than I expected because it had a twist in the tale.

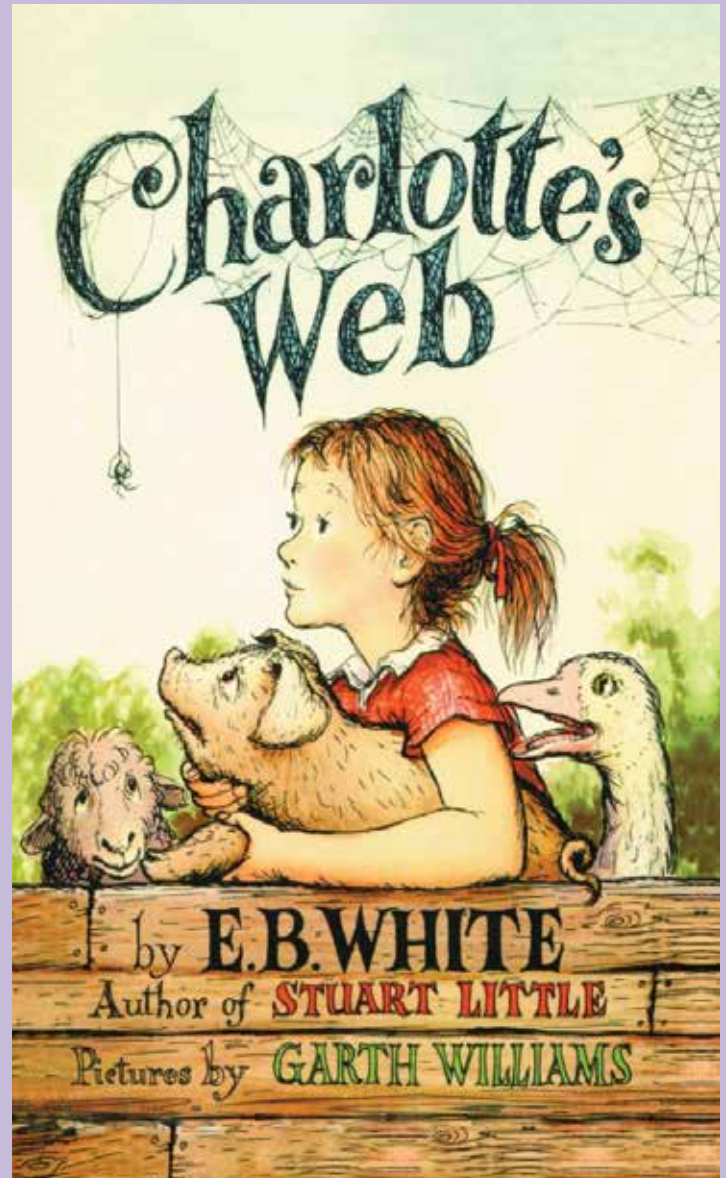
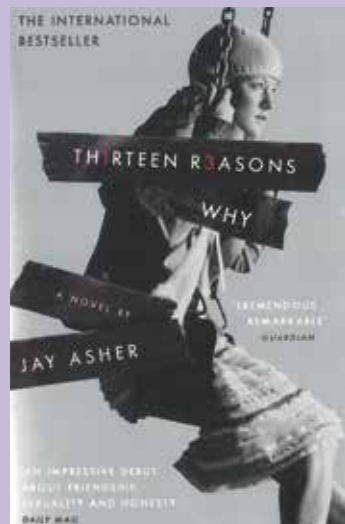
Maya Cormack, Buckie High School rates ...

Thirteen Reasons Why

Jay Asher

I read this breathtaking book in one week. Its amazing style of

writing grabbed my emotions and took it on a twisty turning train ride. I highly recommend it for anyone looking for a heart-warming text.



Charley Gordon, Buckie High School rates ...

Charlotte's Web

E B White

Charlotte's Web is a real page turner and is one of my favourite books by far! It is full of excitement and adventure. It brought a tear to my eye at some parts as well.

Anna Shearwood, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Am I Normal Yet?

Holly Bourne

Am I Normal Yet? was everything I wanted in a book. It's about Evie, who was diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder and anxiety. Her overthinking was something I

could relate to. What I most enjoyed about it was that it involved lots of emotive topics like feminism and sustaining friendships. I will happily read it again.

Grace Buckeridge, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

The Girl Who Fell

Violet Grace

I love *The Girl Who Fell* because it hooked me from beginning to end. I was quite sceptical at first because it included fairies and unicorns. I really, however, loved the story of how Chess discovered her previous life. Jules is also so cool and professional whenever she does anything! I enjoyed it very much.

Lily Dee, Buckie High School rates ...

Doctor Who: The Nightmare Of Black Island

Mike Tucker

This is probably one of the most scary and funniest books ever written. The Doctor and Rose were exactly how I would imagine them in the TV series, funny and heroic!

Alessandra Tapparo, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

The Amber Spyglass

Philip Pullman

Lyra and Will continue their adventures, in the third book of the *His Dark Materials* series, moving between worlds to understand more about Dust. I always like how you never know what will happen. I would recommend this to anyone who likes fictional science and adventures.

Anna Zanelli, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Ready Player One

Ernest Cline

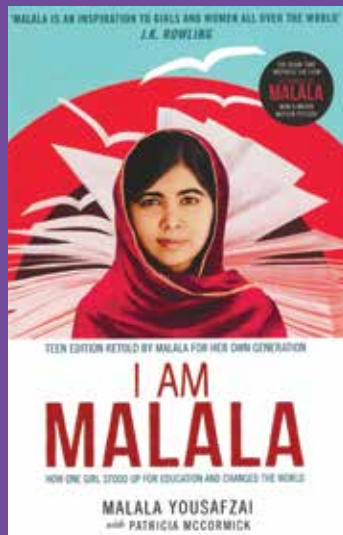
Ready Player One is an amazing, unpredictable novel about Wade Watts who is trying to complete an over-complex treasure hunt in a virtual multiverse called 'The Oasis', created by James Halliday, the prize of which is Halliday's fortune. This book entices you into its captivating story, you can't put the book down for fear of not knowing what's going to happen next.

Merin Twinkle, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

I Am Malala

Malala Yousafzai

This is Malala's autobiography, who fought for her right to be educated, and was shot for it. The book is



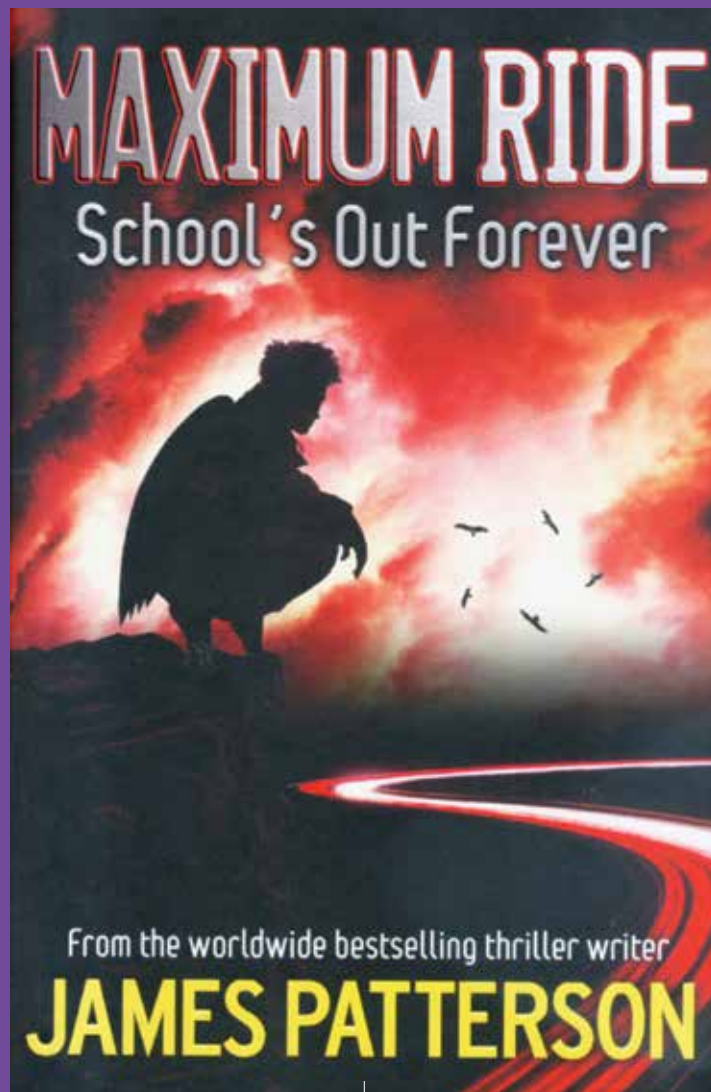
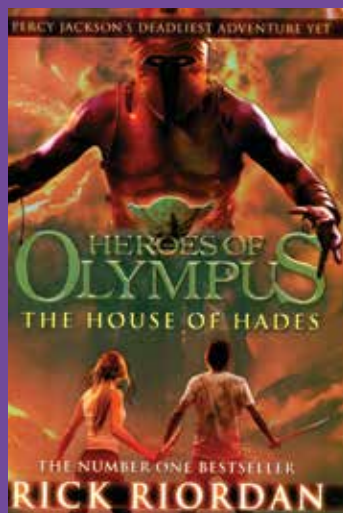
intense, and I think everyone should read it once in their life. It really inspired me to do well and help my community. It was the perfect way for me to understand what is happening in the rest of the world.

Arielle Major, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

The House of Hades (Heroes of Olympus 4)

Rick Riordan

This book is about 7 demigods on a quest to stop an evil goddess from destroying the world. I really like this book because it has a lot of action and humour. My favourite character is Leo Valdez. He's had a tough childhood, but he is funny and creative. I would recommend this book to anyone.



Felicity Cray, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Maximum Ride

James Patterson

This book is about winged people who try to find their place in the world. I enjoyed it because it can show you how bad people can be when you don't fit in. I would recommend it to people who like futuristic and mystery stories.

Erin Bagshaw, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Maximum Ride

James Patterson

This is an amazing series about the struggles of being different in an incredibly judgemental world. It is a compelling series which follows a teenage girl called Maximum Ride and her flock as they try to

survive with their unusual and incredible abilities. They have wings! Join the flock as they search for their families, travel the world and dodge danger everywhere. The books tackle real world issues in the form of an amazing fantasy adventure and I would definitely read them again!

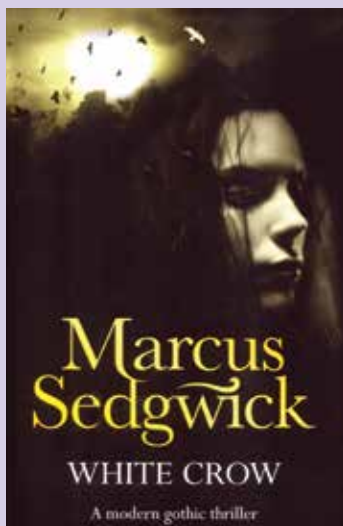
Elka Darby, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Letters From The Lighthouse

Emma Carroll

I really loved *Letters from the Lighthouse* by Emma Carroll. Set in World War Two every chapter ends on a cliff hanger. It shows what it was like for children in World War Two, that children missed their family at home, and it made me feel tense reading it.

READERS WRITE



Belle Harris, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

White Crow

Marcus Sedgwick

If you are looking for a fabulously gothic thriller, look no further than *White Crow*. This book is a wonderfully-written novel that is full of twists and turns, and which really makes you think. The way in which Marcus Sedgwick plays with the idea of Heaven and Hell is a thing to admire, and the way in which he makes you empathise with the characters is inspirational. This book is an absolute page-turner.

Charlotte Puzey, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

I Am Not a Number

Lisa Heathfield

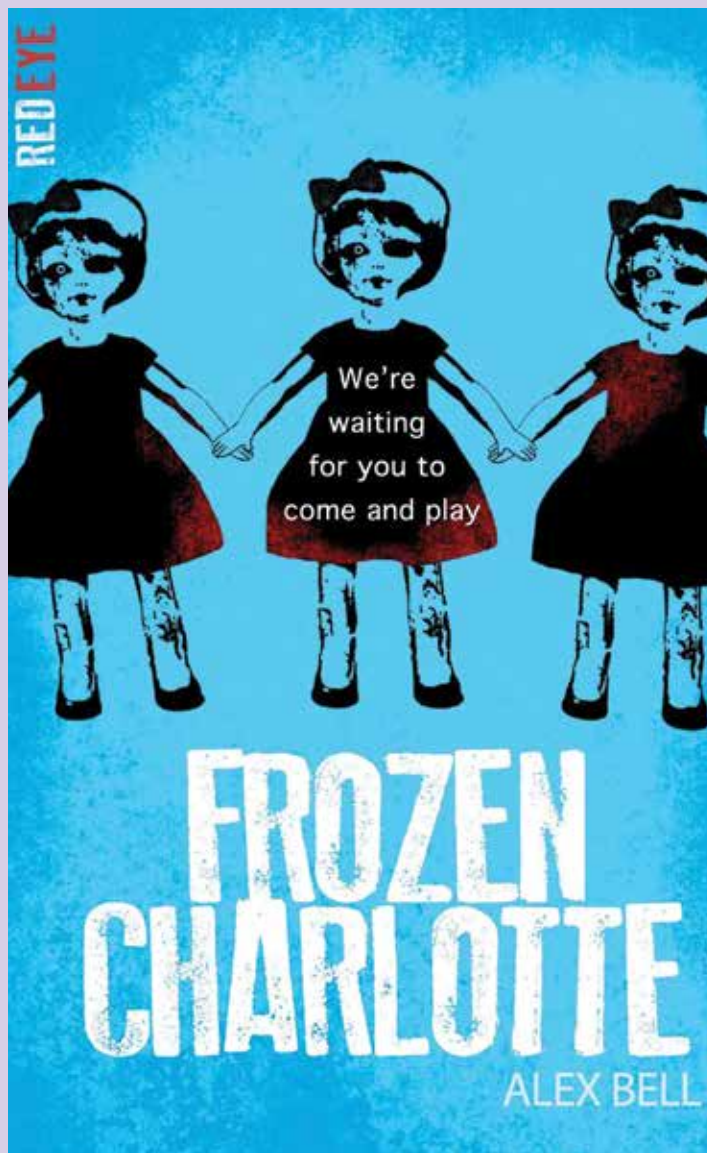
Ruby's life is changed forever when she finds out she's being taken to a prison camp, but she is determined to not give up and is going to stay strong. I recommend this book for young adults who like to read powerful, heart-wrenching and thought provoking books.

Student, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Frozen Charlotte

Alex Bell

The book is about Sophie who plays with an Ouija Board with her



friend Jay and, later on, he dies under mysterious circumstances. I do not usually like to read, but when I started to read *Frozen Charlotte* I was so intrigued I could not stop. The story really shocked me, and got me reading loads of other books too.

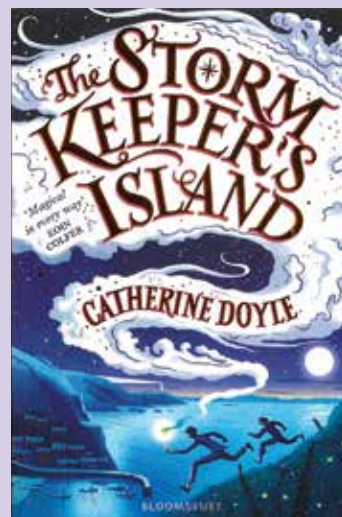
Mia Whitaker, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Letters To The Lost

Brigid Kemmerer

This book is beautiful. You really feel what the characters are going through and feel part of their story. It speaks about grief, coming to terms with your losses, connecting with people and most importantly reaching out to people and

letting yourself accept what has happened. This book taught me so many lessons that really opened my eyes to the real world.

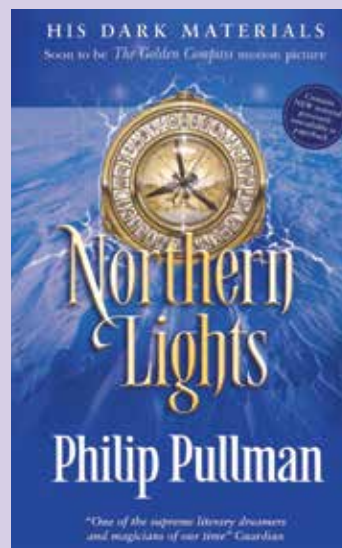


Imogen Willis, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

The Storm Keeper's Island

Catherine Doyle

The Storm Keeper's Island is a brilliant story with a great plot line. I really enjoyed reading this book and I can't wait for the follow-up in the summer. It is one of my favourite ever books that I have read.

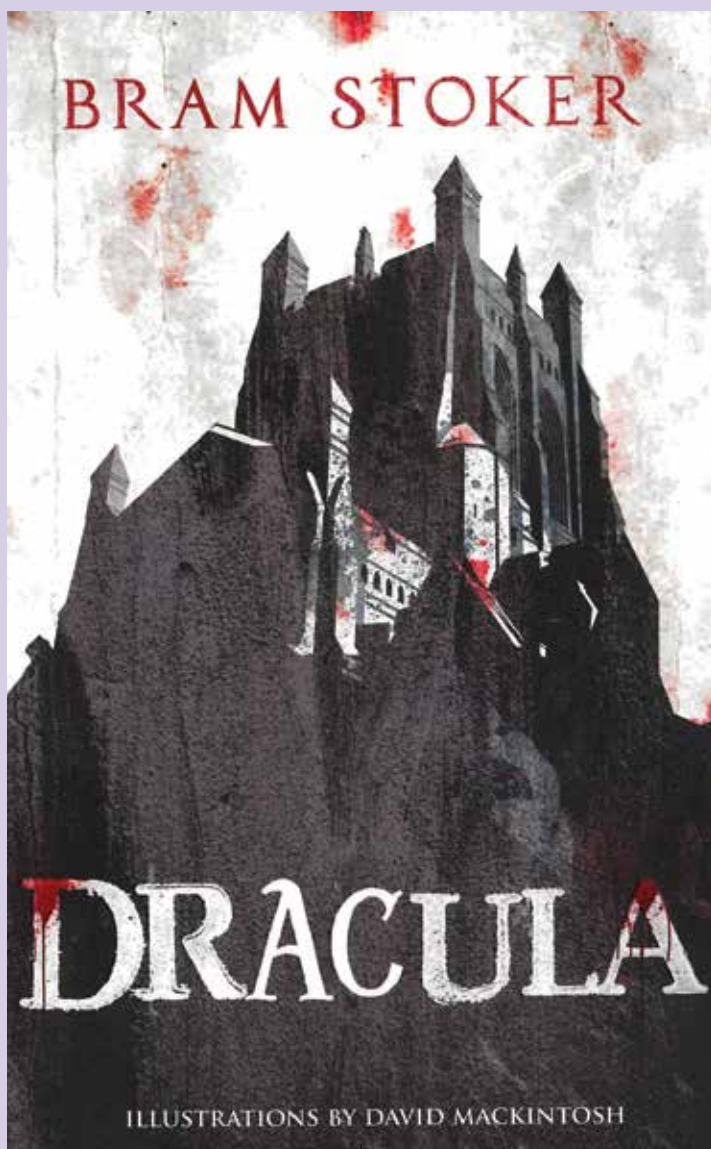


Darcey Hall, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Northern Lights

Philip Pullman

An interesting story line packed with emotions. It shows how people can hide things from you and that not every story has a perfect and happy ending.



Finley Bagnall, Cardinal Allen Catholic High School rates ...

Dracula

Bram Stoker

The story is about the vampire Dracula, who sneaks into people's houses and sucks their blood. It is one of the best books I have ever read. It kept me wondering how the heroes would defeat Count Dracula.

Alice Hill of Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

Opposite of Always

Justin A Reynolds

Jack falls in love with Kate at a party. Six months later Kate dies

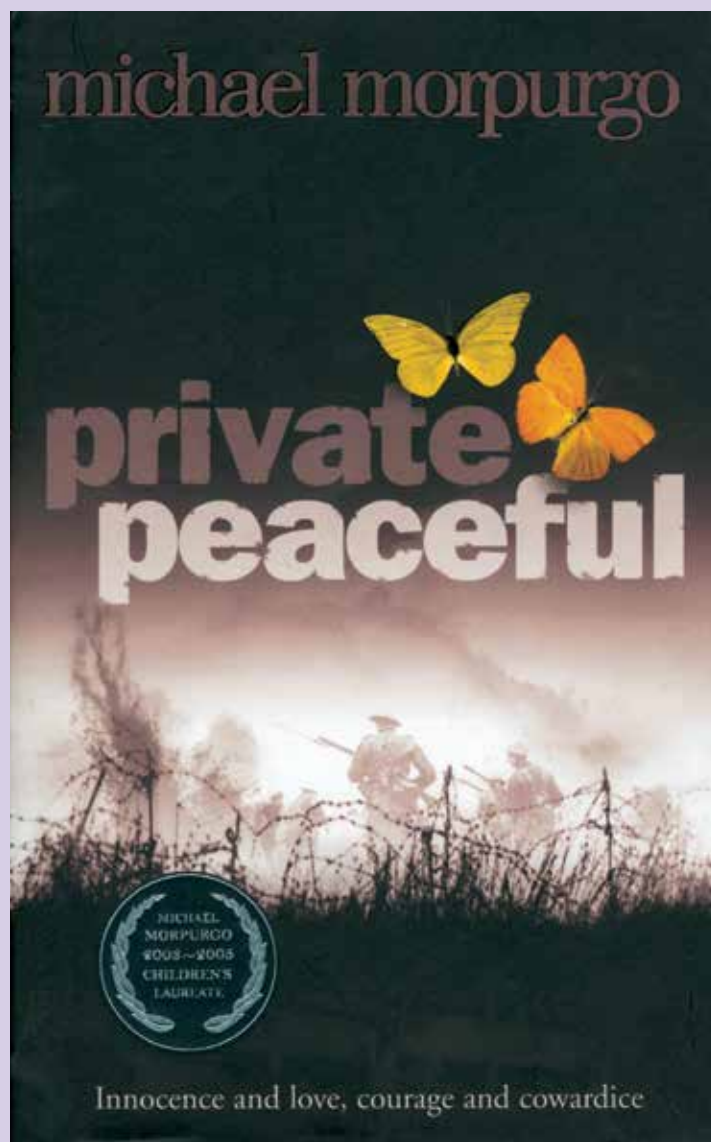
and her death sends Jack back in time to the moment they first met, giving him a chance to save her life. But his actions could put his best friend in danger, and he has to make a decision, choose to save Kate or lose his best friend. I loved this book and I think it is most definitely one to sink your teeth into.

Jack Ellinsworth, Cardinal Allen Catholic High School rates ...

Private Peaceful

Michael Morpurgo

The story is about Tommo and Charlie, two brothers who go off to fight in World War One. It has the very important theme of telling us



in lots of detail what it was like to be in the war. It also makes very clear that we are lucky that we don't have to go through what the soldiers in World War One did.

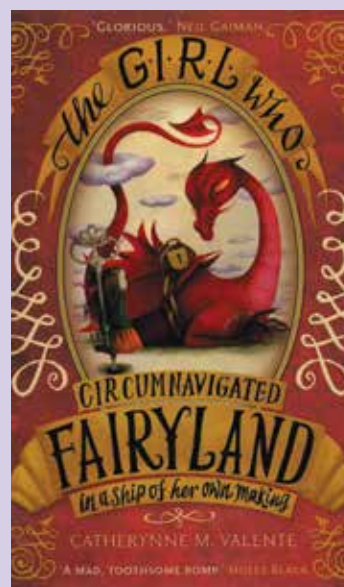
Emilia Shackel, Hayesfield Girls' School rates ...

The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making

Catherynne M Valente

When the green wind knocks on September's window, asking if she wishes to go to fairyland, how can she resist? This is an

incredible book full of adventures and Wyverns! The writers use of language is brainbogglingly pleasing to read. It's a lovely book!



THANK YOU

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Salma Werfali

Escape, Connect, Relate



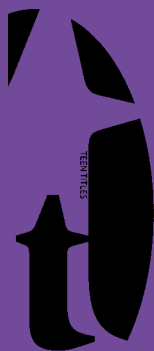
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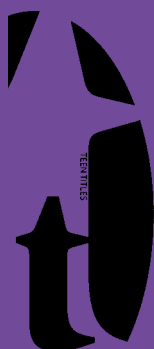
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