Everything I’ve Never Said
By Samantha Wheeler
Publisher: University of Queensland Press
ISBN 9780702260278 SCIS: 1879305
$16.95

Blurb:

Ava would like nothing more than to tell her family she loves them, particularly her big sister, Nic. But Ava has Rett syndrome - she can't talk, can't nod her head, can't even point at a communication card. She understands everything, but no one understands her.

When tragedy strikes her family, Ava becomes even more determined to talk. But it's not until she meets occupational therapist Kieran and new friend Aimee that she is hopeful for change - and to find her voice at last.

A powerful novel about a subject rarely tackled - young people with disabilities and the families who love and support them.

Lamont Review:

Samantha Wheeler is fast becoming a favourite author at Lamont Books. Previously she has written terrific novels for primary students, and now she is writing for a slightly older upper primary/lower secondary audience on a topic close to her heart, Rett Syndrome.

Rett Syndrome affects 1 in 8,500 girls, as boys don't survive long after birth. It slowly takes hold, between the ages of 6 and 18 months, and one of those sufferers is Samantha’s youngest daughter.

Our story begins with Ava at about 13, who cannot communicate or walk and suffers seizures. Through her eyes we see a normal person - a person invisible to the rest of the world. The rest of the world, including her older sister Nic, only see the trouble she causes.

After her Dad suffers a stroke, her Mum realises she needs help, and with this help, comes a hope that there could be more to life for Ava.

This is a fantastic and eye-opening story of hope, that is beautifully written. Ava’s story will touch hearts and provide understanding about this insidious syndrome, the girls who suffer from it, and the treatments that could make their lives better.

An wonderful novel with themes of family, health, acceptance and perseverance that will be loved by many 10- 14 year-old readers.

Reviewed by Rob
The Rift
By Rachael Craw
Publisher: Walker Books
ISBN 9781760650025  SCIS: 1887592
$19.99

Blurb:

The Rift is an action-packed YA fantasy full of heart-pounding romance from award-winning New Zealand author Rachael Craw.

When the Rift opens, death follows. For generations, the Rangers of Black Water Island have guarded the Old Herd against horrors released by the Rift. Cal West, an apprentice Ranger with a rare scar and even rarer gifts, fights daily to prove he belongs within their ranks. After nine years away, Meg Archer returns to her childhood home only to find the Island is facing a new threat that not even the Rangers are prepared for. Meg and Cal can’t ignore their attraction, but can they face their darkest fears to save the Island from disaster?

Lamont Review:

Catastrophe befell Meg Archer when she was eight. The daughter of the head of the rangers she was already well trained and destined to be a Master Ranger.

The Rangers job on Black Water Island was to protect the old herd, particularly if there was a Rift and death appeared through it.

But then a tragic accident occurred and her mother took her to go to the mainland to lead a normal life. But now its ten years on, and Meg and her sick mother have returned to sort out her mothers affairs.

Meg’s childhood friend, Cal, who was not destined to become a Ranger, is now her father’s favourite, but this can’t stop the spark that soon forms between Meg and Cal. Dark and traitorous strategies are at play, as evil forces threaten the very existence of the old herd - and the harmony they provide.

This was an energetic read with characters that you will love. It is a typically enthralling Rachael Crow fantasy, packed with romance and adventure.

Suitable for all YA’s thirteen and older.

Reviewed by Rob
What The Woods Keep
By Katya de Becerra
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
ISBN 9781760637309 SCIS:1879292
$16.99

Blurb:
On her eighteenth birthday, Hayden inherits her childhood home - on the condition that she uncover its dark secrets. Hayden has tried to put the past behind her, and so far it’s worked. She’s getting ready for college, living in a Brooklyn apartment, and hanging out with her best friend and flatmate, Del. But now it’s all catching up with her: her mother’s mysterious disappearance a decade ago, her father’s outlandish theories about a lost supernatural race, and Hayden’s own dark dreams of strange symbols and rituals in the Colorado woods where she grew up. As soon as Hayden arrives at her hometown, Del in tow, it begins: neighbours whisper secrets about Hayden's mother; the boy next door is now all grown-up in a very distracting way; and Hayden feels the trees calling to her. And among them, deep in the woods, Hayden will discover something incredible - something that threatens reality itself.

Lamont Review:
When Hayden turns eighteen she inherits her childhood home. The home she and her father fled from ten years earlier, when her mother mysteriously disappeared.

Hayden has always had dark, strange dreams about the woods surrounding the house, and now she and her best friend Del decide to go to the house and solve the mystery once and for all.

This is a highly entertaining and compelling supernatural mystery. It has paranormal twists and turns woven through the plot, as well as a smouldering romance. It also tackles the issues of how to deal with your past so you can take charge of your own future, even if it is all intermingled with an alien race!

Best suited to fantasy/supernatural enthusiasts in Year 9 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle
Dry
By Jarrod & Neal Shusterman
Publisher: Walker Books
ISBN 9781406386851  SCIS: 1879166
$16.99

Blurb:
When the California drought escalates to catastrophic proportions, a group of teens are forced to make life and death decisions in this harrowing story of survival from New York Times bestselling author Neal Shusterman, and Jarrod Shusterman.

The drought – or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it – has been going on for a while now. Everyone’s lives have become an endless list of don’ts: don’t water the lawn, don’t take long showers, don’t panic. Until the taps run dry. Suddenly, Alyssa’s quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbours and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don’t return, she and her younger brother must team up with an unlikely group in search of water. Each of them will need to make impossible choices to survive.

Lamont Review:
Set in California, but very relevant to many in Australia, Dry is an incredible noel. Just imagine turning on the tap and nothing, nil, zilch! This book explains quite vividly what happens next, and it is not pretty... it starts with a run on the supermarket and then, within three days, it descends into anarchy.

Our characters are a mixed bunch, thrown together by a need - thirst!! Alyssa, through whose eyes we see most of the story, is an independent and driven sixteen year old. When her parents go out and don’t return, Alyssa takes her younger brother Garrett and her dorky neighbour, turned doomsday prepper, Kelton, to find water themselves.

They join with the super tough street kid Jacqui, and the Hollywood hills smoocher Henry, and together they face a realistic and somewhat terrifying look at the decay of the moral and ethical values of a community.

I can’t give away the story, but I read it in a few hours, as it had me engrossed in the roller coaster ride with great and very different characters, whose differences added immensely to the story.

With themes of survival (and at what cost), community, human nature, and of course drought, this is a tremendous and action packed read, suitable for all teenagers.

Reviewed by Rob
Girl Running, Boy Falling
By Kate Gordon
Publisher: Rhiza Edge / Rhiza Press
ISBN 9781925563528 SCIS: 1879301
$17.99

Blurb:
Sixteen-year-old Therese lives in a small town on a small island. Her Aunt Kath calls her Tiger. Her friends call her Resey. The boy she loves calls her Champ. She’s a lot of different things for a lot of different people. Therese has always had her feet on the ground. She’s running through high school, but someone in her life is about to fall ...

Lamont Review:

This is a tremendous coming of age novel. Having a Mum that abandoned her at birth and a Dad that moved on soon after, sixteen year old Therese (aka Tiger, Resey or Champ, depending on who is talking to her) is trying to find her identity.

She is always busy and is pretty much a high achiever, and now her incredible best friend Nick Wallace (Wally), has kissed her. But then the unthinkable happens when Nick, who struggling to live up to the hype that he is going to be football’s ‘next big thing’, takes his own life.

Therese just wants things to keep moving and life should go on as normal. You don’t run away and hide like her Mum did!

With the help of Rhino, a friend from her part time job at the supermarket, Therese goes on adventures that Rhino hopes will make her slow down and smell the roses.

This book handles many themes, that include:
• Step-parenting - her Aunt Kath is a great example and has always been a rock in Therese’s world
• Friendship
• Loss and grief
• Family
• High achievers and coping with stress

It tackles these issues with compassion and understanding, and we see Therese emerge a stronger, and still hopeful, young woman.

The themes make this an ideal read for teenagers 15 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

Teacher Notes for this title, prepared by the publisher, are available on our website.
Zenobia
By Morten Dürr & Illustrated by Lars Horneman
Publisher: University of Queensland Press
ISBN 9780702260254 SCIS: 1879304
$19.95

Blurb:
Zenobia was once a great warrior queen of Syria whose reign reached from Egypt to Turkey. She was courageous. No-one gave her orders. Once she even went to war against the emperor of Rome.

When things feel overwhelming for Amina, her mother reminds her to think of Zenobia and be strong. Amina is a Syrian girl caught up in a war that reaches her village. To escape the war she boards a small boat crammed with other refugees. The boat is rickety and the turbulent seas send Amina overboard. In the dark water Amina remembers playing hide and seek with her mother and making dolmas and the journey she had to undertake with her uncle to escape. And she thinks of the brave warrior Zenobia.

Zenobia is a heartbreaking and all-too-real story of one child’s experience of war. Told with great sensitivity in few words and almost exclusively with pictures, Zenobia is a story for everyone.

Lamont Review:

This is not the typical type of title that we include as part of our Standing Order selections. In fact, it is rare for us to select a Graphic Novel in our secondary selections - although we know they are extremely popular with many, we know they are not for everyone.

This title has been read by most of us here at Lamont, and we all came to the same conclusion - it needed to be selected, as it told a very sad, real and confronting story about the desperation that people in crisis face, but in a very touching way. The story centres on Syrian refugees, but the themes transcend the specific setting and bring the plight of refugees everywhere to life.

With very few words, the very powerful pictures tell us the story. It reminds us all that when things are tough, we need to find the strength of Zenobia in all of us.

This is a book that can be read by all secondary students and will be a very valuable classroom resource.

Reviewed by Sam
**Tales From The Inner City**
By Shaun Tan
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
ISBN 9781760523534 SCIS: 1879133
$35.00

**Blurb:**
Where can we live if not in each other's shadow? World-renowned artist Shaun Tan applies his unique imagination to a reflection on the nature of humans and animals, and our urban coexistence. From crocodile to frog, tiger to bee, this is a dark and surreal exploration of the perennial love and destruction we feel and inflict - of how animals can save us, and how our lives are forever entwined, for better or for worse. Tales from the Inner City is a masterful work, bearing all of Shaun Tan's trademark wit and poignancy in both its prose and exquisite illustrations.

![Tales From The Inner City book cover](image)

**Lamont Review:**
Similar in format to Shaun’s incredible *Tales from Outer Suburbia*, which so many high schools have on booklists for lower secondary English, this book is hugely thought provoking.

The central theme is human interaction with animals or animals metaphorically replacing humans in strange city environs. Some stories are particularly short, while others are much more detailed, but either way, I marvelled at their strangeness while reading them and then realised that it is this very strangeness that makes each story so memorable.

Bears with Lawyers and Rhinoceros on the Freeway have particularly stayed with me as I write this two weeks after reading the book.

Thought provoking and typically wonderful illustrations enrich what is altogether a marvellous book.

With so many short stories that are fabulous discussion openers for many lower secondary English classes, I highly recommend it for all teenagers.

*Reviewed by Rob*