

Changing Gear

By Scot Gardner

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760631468 SCIS: 1862371

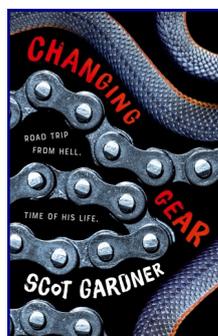
\$19.99

SECONDARY
BOOK OF THE
MONTH

Blurb:

The vivid story of a teenage boy and the road trip that clears his head and his heart.

Merrick Hilton's done a runner. His folks think he's studying, but the real world has been calling for years and he can't ignore it any longer. A postie bike, a bedroll and a big sky - that's all he needs. But there's no telling how he'll handle roadkill, stolen oranges and unexpected romance, let alone the rough stuff. And in the real world nothing goes entirely as planned. Thankfully Victor - the old bloke Merrick meets on the road - knows a thing or two about broken bike chains. And broken hearts.



Lamont Review:

Scot just gets adolescent boys and what they want to read about. He understands their emotions and takes us on a journey of discovery of the person inside.

In *Changing Gear*, Merrick is about to have his two weeks of study time before his Year 12 exams. However, since his grandfather's recent death, Merrick misses his steadying influence and with a split family he finds it easy to have them believe he is studying hard at the other parent's house, whilst in reality he has hopped on his old postie bike and hit the road.

The journey is the real story, as he meets an old vagabond called Victor (and Dog) who shares many life experiences and words of wisdom. He meets the gypsy-like Felicity, who briefly shares his journey, and he gets beaten up by idiots who believe he and Victor are paedophiles.

At the end, Merrick goes home to face those exams, and with a fresh outlook on life, achieves a 97.5 Atar score. But where will this take him is still unknown...

I have known Scot Gardner since he wrote his first book, and as I was reading *Changing Gear* I wondered how much he had drawn on his own personal experience given he was his schools' dux and went first to work with the local councils parks and gardens, followed by many other jobs. When he spoke at our recent Author Event, I wasn't surprised to hear him confirm that he had drawn on his personal experience in crafting *Changing Gear*, and this really shines through in the gritty realness of the story.

He is an inspiring and intriguing man who writes stories that are the same. I love Scot's work and *Changing Gear* is a perfect example of what he does best.

This is a fantastic read for all, but will be best loved by boys 14 and older.

Reviewed by Rob

George Parker Goes Global

By David Metzenthen

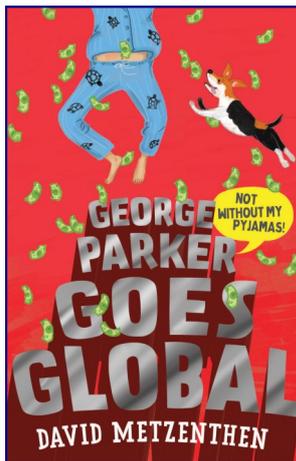
Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760523466 SCIS: 1862369

\$16.99

Blurb:

Get the jet! What could go wrong when cautious, scientific, singlet-wearing George Parker and reckless rich-kid Chase Landon-Bond take off on a global rescue mission? Just about everything! There are private jets, troublesome pets, crazed criminals, treacherous trips, chaos, too much coffee, and two hundred million missing dollars. There are close calls, ridiculous disguises, accidental haircuts, and that's just the first bit! Are George and Chase doomed? Will friendship and silly ideas save the day? Does wearing a cape make you brave? Get in planes, trains and automobiles with George and Chase...and HOLD on tight!



Lamont Review:

When nerdy George Parker's hair cut goes horribly wrong, he becomes a huge hit with the ultra-wealthy Chase London-Bond.

There follows the holiday trip of George's lifetime! Aboard private jets travelling the world he tries to help Chase's family recover their recently lost 250 million dollars, all the while avoiding the bad guys who are chasing them.

It is always over the top humour with George inexplicably finding crazy ways to keep them out of trouble. It also tackles idea of doing right for the world, the power of friendships (however unlikely they may be), and the differences in people's outlook on money and the future.

This is David Metzenthen writing for a totally new reader, and is a hilarious and unlikely adventure that is pure escapism. A great read, it will be loved by many but will most appeal to boys in upper primary - lower secondary school.

Reviewed by Rob

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

Brontide

By Sue McPherson

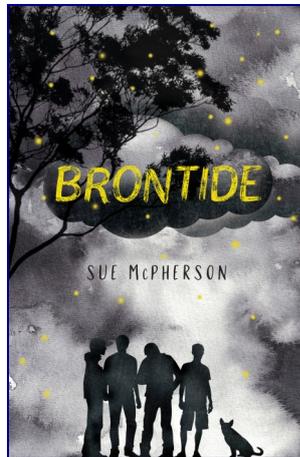
Publisher: Magabala Books

ISBN 9781925360929 SCIS: 1862378

\$14.99

Blurb:

A coming of age story about four boys and their lot in life. Recounted through storytelling sessions at their school over a period of five days, these boys chronicle their lives. They are at times demanding, occasionally rude, always funny and unexpectedly profound. The boys like to challenge themselves and the rules, and soon realise that not everything goes to plan...



Lamont Review:

Sue McPherson had the good fortune of attending Taralune High School near Noosa and interviewing some of the students. Whilst this is such an obvious way to produce a book, I loved it!

Reminiscent of Papunya and Alison Lester's primary picture books produced through collaboration with a school community, *Brontide* is the wonderful result of Sue's collaboration.

It is often hilarious, at times raw, and mostly touching, but always insightful and totally readable. This book gives us a rare, first hand look into teenage lives, set in a small, mixed cultural community. It will be picked up by reluctant readers who gravitate to books with this small word count format. And I'm sure they will find it awesome!

It is best suited to lower and middle secondary students, particularly boys.

Reviewed by Rob

A Thousand Perfect Notes

By C. G. Drews

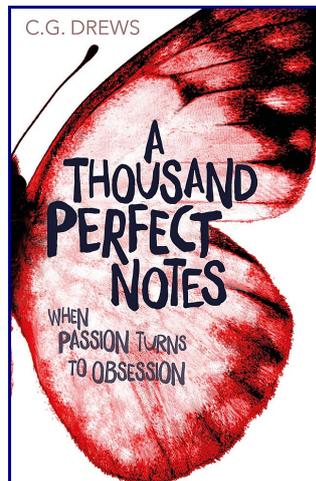
Publisher: Orchard Books/Hachette

ISBN 9781408349908 SCIS: 1867401

\$16.99

Blurb:

An emotionally charged story about the power of dreams, and how passion can turn to obsession. Beck hates his life. He hates his violent mother. He hates his home. Most of all, he hates the piano that his mother forces him to play hour after hour, day after day. He will never play as she did before illness ended her career and left her bitter and broken. But Beck is too scared to stand up to his mother, and tell her his true passion, which is composing his own music - because the least suggestion of rebellion on his part ends in violence. When Beck meets August, a girl full of life, energy and laughter, love begins to awaken within him and he glimpses a way to escape his painful existence. But dare he reach for it? Thrilling and powerfully written, this is an explosive debut for YA readers which tackles the dark topic of domestic abuse in an ultimately hopeful tale.



Lamont Review:

Debut Australian author and influential book blogger C.G. Drews has written a powerful novel full of music, friendship and tackling the topic of family violence.

Our main character Beck - short for Beethoven - is a classical pianist, as his mother was before him. And therein lies Beck's problem - his mother (the maestro) fled Germany and her musical world after a stroke rendered her hands incapable of playing the piano, but she was determined that her family legacy would continue through Beck. The piano was to be his whole world and nothing short of perfection would be accepted, with anything else ending in violence. Beck is also forced to raise his kindergarten aged sister Joey, as mothering is not part of the maestro's vocabulary.

But when the persistent, quirky and enlightening August gets teamed up with Beck for a school assignment, his world gets turned on it's head. His mother won't allow any distractions, but Beck starts to understand that he must start forcing the change that he longs for.

This is a fantastic coming of age novel that shows us a scary world that we hope can be overcome. The characters, particularly Beck and August, are wonderful and the story thunders along to a great finale!

A novel about finding yourself, best suited to middle secondary and up.

Reviewed by Rob

My Outback Childhood - Growing Up In The Territory

By Toni Tapp Coutts

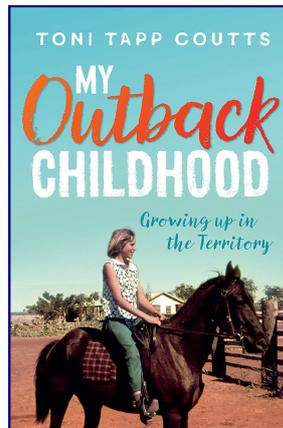
Publisher: Lothian Children's Books

ISBN 9780734418333 SCIS: 1862306

\$16.99

Blurb:

There was something interesting around every corner, be it brumbies and wild donkeys disappearing through the bush, or a little waterhole where the snakes and kangaroos came to drink. Toni's childhood isn't like other kids'. She is only five years old when her mum packs a small suitcase and takes the family over 300 kilometres on a scratchy dirt track to live at Killarney, a remote cattle station in the Northern Territory. Toni grows up among the cattle and horses, with the wild Territory climate and even wilder native animals around her. She has adventures with Old Dora and Daisy, the Aboriginal women who help raise her and her brothers and sisters. They teach her about bush tucker and tell her stories of debil debils. *My Outback Childhood* is the story of Toni's unconventional upbringing on Killarney - stalking goannas, helping in the cattle yards, riding horses and sleeping under the stars. Young readers will be captivated by this true story of a childhood filled with Outback adventures. Fascinating for city kids and country children alike, this is a unique story that educates as well as entertains.



Lamont Review:

This is a fascinating insight into what life is like growing up on a remote cattle station in the Northern Territory.

Toni's life is very unconventional and is a real eye-opener for readers!

Together with her family and the Aboriginal women and children who all live and work side by side, Toni learns about surviving in the bush, cattle mustering, riding horses and sleeping under the stars.

It is a book about courage, family, perseverance, hardship, friendship and love. Both boys and girls in lower secondary will enjoy this book.

Reviewed by Michelle

Eve of Man

By Giovanna & Tom Fletcher

Publisher: Penguin

ISBN 9780718184131 SCIS: 1868383

\$22.99

Blurb:

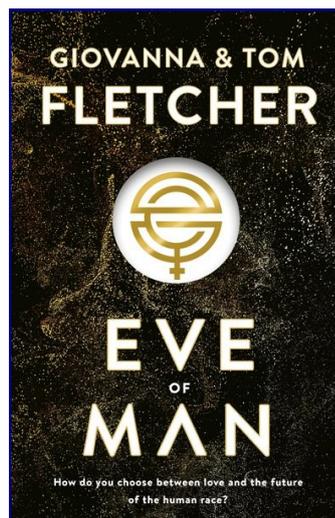
They had predicted the end of the world would be epic - a nuclear war, a plague, an asteroid. But it came with a whisper, not a bang.

For over fifty years, no girls have been born - only boys.

The youngest and last generation of women alive are now in their fifties. Not only are their looks fading, but these greying women are humanity's only hope for survival.

Until there is sudden hope: a girl is born. And in that moment, she instantly becomes the most important person in history.

She is their saviour. Her name is Eve.



Lamont Review:

Humanity is on the brink of ceasing to exist. For 50 years there has not been a single female born in the world. Out of nowhere, a baby girl is born. Her name is Eve and the fate of all humanity rests with her. Every minute of her life is planned, checked and controlled. She must be in perfect health to produce another girl.

This is an engrossing dystopian novel about Eve's perfect world, and the real world that she is being protected from. Why are huge groups of people protesting and trying to set her free? Where do all those looking after her fit in?

As Eve starts to question her upbringing, the people who love her most come to her aid.

This is a perfect novel for readers in middle secondary and above. It is entertaining and page turning, with great characters and an intriguing storyline. Great for fans of the Divergent series.

Reviewed by Michelle