

Eliza Vanda's Button Box

By Emily Rodda
Publisher: Harper Collins
ISBN 9781460759608 SCIS: 5358301
\$22.99

PRIMARY FICTION
BOOK OF THE
MONTH

Blurb:

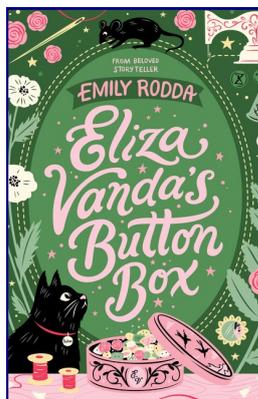
From the author of the award-winning *His Name was Walter* comes another magical mystery story that will delight Emily Rodda fans.

Buttons three, attend to me! Take me where I want to be!

No one saw Eliza Vanda arrive in Tidgy Bay that rainy winter afternoon. The sign advertising 'Cabins for Rent' was almost hidden by a pile of builder's rubble, but Eliza Vanda didn't seem at all put out by the mess. 'This is a nice little pocket,' she said. 'It should suit us very well.'

Life hasn't been much fun for Milly Dynes lately. There seem to be problems everywhere she looks. She's always loved her home in Tidgy Bay, but at the moment she wishes she was somewhere -anywhere - else. Then Eliza Vanda turns up-and magic comes with her...

A sparkling new fantasy adventure from multi-award-winning author Emily Rodda.



Lamont Review:

Milly lives in Tidgy Bay and she has always loved it. But lately things seem a bit different.

But when Eliza Vanda magically appears in the Bay, Tilly's life will never be the same again!

This is Emily Rodda at her very best. Tilly is a wonderful character - caring, kind, helpful and always ready for an adventure. Eliza Vanda is a magical dress maker, who with her assistant Victor, needs Tilly's help urgently.

What follows is an epic adventure, full of fun and mystery. Readers will absolutely love this book and be hoping (like I am) that this is the beginning of a new series. A wonderful mystery story for readers in Year 4 and above.

Reviewed by Michelle

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

Wednesday Weeks and the Tower of Shadows

By Denis Knight and Cristy Burne

Publisher: Hachette / Lothian Children's Books

ISBN 9780734420190 SCIS: 5356559

\$16.99

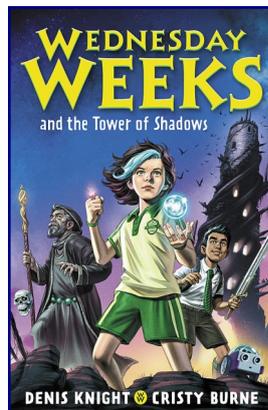
Blurb:

In a world of magic, can science save the day?

Wednesday Weeks never wanted to be a sorcerer's apprentice. She'd rather study science than magic. But when her cloak-wearing, staff-wielding grandpa is captured by a power-hungry goblin king, Wednesday must find a way to embrace her magical heritage and rescue him from the dreaded Tower of Shadows.

Luckily, she's not alone. Her best friend Alfie is a prime-number fan and robotics expert who's all-in on Wednesday's epic plan involving parallel universes, swords of power, and a wise-cracking talking skull.

But it's going to take more than science, magic, and the world's cutest robot to take down this bad guy. Because the goblin king is playing for the ultimate prize - and Wednesday and Alfie just walked into his trap...



Lamont Review:

This is a perfect middle grade novel, and one of the best that I have read in a while.

It has two wonderful main characters, in Wednesday and Alfie. They are smart, funny, caring and, best of all, the story is one big adventure!

Cleverly entwining magic and fantasy with real science, their quest to save both Grandpa and the world will keep you enthralled from the first page.

Add in the characters of Grandpa and Bruce (a talking skull), and this book will be a firm favourite with readers. I can't wait for the next instalment.

Will be enjoyed by all readers in upper primary and lower secondary levels.

Reviewed by Michelle

A Glasshouse of Stars

By Shirley Marr

Publisher: Puffin / Penguin

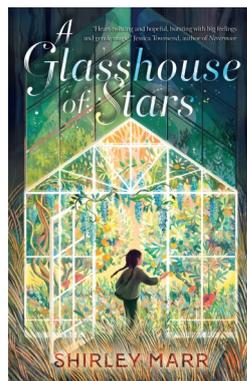
ISBN 9781760899547 SCIS: 5358321

\$16.99

Blurb:

Meixing Lim and her family have arrived at the New House in the New Land, inherited from First Uncle who died tragically and unexpectedly while picking oranges in the backyard. Everything is vast and unknown to Meixing and not in a good way, including the house she has dubbed Big Scary. She is embarrassed by the second-hand shoes given to her by the kind neighbours, has trouble understanding the language at school, and with fitting in and making new friends. Her solace is a glasshouse in the garden that inexplicably holds the sun and the moon and all the secrets of her memory and imagination.

Her fragile universe is rocked when tragedy strikes and Ma Ma refuses to face the world outside. Meixing finds herself trapped within the shrinking walls of Big Scary. Her parents said this would be a better life for them all, but it feels like the worst and most heart-breaking experience of Meixing's entire existence. Surviving will take all the resilience and inner belief of this brave girl to turn their world around.



Lamont Review:

Meixing Lim is in a New Land where she hardly speaks or reads the language and, after migrating with her Ba Ba and Ma Ma, she is finding the transition difficult. This is made even harder when her father dies in an accident, and her heavily pregnant mother refuses to leave the house.

With the help of two other outsiders from school, Meixing finds the strength to both do well at school and help her mother. Her neighbour, Mrs Huynh, is also leading light, providing care and food.

This is a heartfelt and hopeful story of a girl trying to just make sense of a strange New Land. Entwined with a little magic, you will be swept along with Meixing's journey and be glad to have shared it.

With themes of migration, death, racism, bullying and family traditions, this is a terrific, easy to read novel that is best suited to ages 10—13.

Reviewed by Rob

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

Elsewhere Girls

By Emily Gale and Nova Weetman

Publisher: Text Publishing

ISBN 9781922330451 SCIS: 5358347

\$16.99

Blurb:

An exciting collaboration from two of Australia's favourite middle-grade authors.

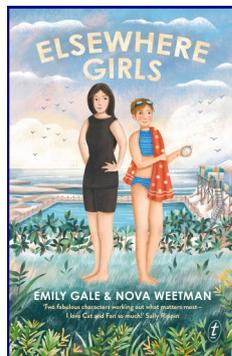
It's midnight and I'm alone in the kitchen eating a cold potato scallop. Coach O'Call would say something like, 'That's not what I expect from a scholarship girl!' because I have to be up for squad training in five hours and I'm not supposed to go near potato scallops, and-oh, yeah-it's my fifth.

Cat has recently started at a new school on a sports scholarship, and she's feeling the pressure of early morning training sessions and the need for total commitment. Fanny loves to swim and she lives for racing, but family chores and low expectations for girls make it very hard for her to fit in even the occasional training session.

Cat and Fanny have never met. They both live in the same Sydney suburb, but in different worlds, or at least different times - Cat in current-day Sydney, and Fanny in 1908. But one day, time slips and they swap places.

As each girl lives the other's life, with all the challenges and confusion it presents, she comes to appreciate and understand herself and the role of swimming in her own life.

Narrated in alternating chapters by Cat and Fanny, *Elsewhere Girls* is a moving and funny story of two girls with a deep connection, one based on the Australian Olympic champion, Fanny Durack. It's a fresh and engaging exploration of the challenges and pressures for young women growing up in the past and today.



Lamont Review:

Cat and Fanny are two swimmers born in different centuries. One day they are both swimming in Wylie's baths and time slips and they swap lives.

Cat struggles to cope with the enormous difficulties of living in 1908, while Fanny marvels at the technology that makes life easy in 2021 and is amazed at what women are allowed to do.

This is a fantastic novel showcasing the different challenges faced by two young swimmers from different eras. It is told one chapter from each at a time, so you get a wonderful sense of how confused each girl is and how they are trying to understand the vastly different societies they find themselves in.

This is a brilliant novel for those who love history and sport, but will resonate particularly with girls. Best suited to readers in upper primary and lower secondary levels.

Reviewed by Michelle

Night Ride into Danger

By Jackie French

Publisher: Harper Collins

ISBN 9781460758939 SCIS: 5358358

\$16.99

Blurb:

Six mysterious passengers and seven dark secrets. Who can be trusted? It's a dark and dangerous journey for the Cobb and Co night mail coach, but when his coach-driver father is injured, young Jem Donovan must take the reins. Surely a boy like Jem can't handle a team of four horses and guide the coach on a rough bush track through fog and untold dangers? But there are six passengers on the coach tonight, each with a secret. And if Jem can't get them all to their destination by morning, the seventh secret could be deadly...



Lamont Review:

Set aboard a Cobb and Co coach as it travels at night to Goulburn to deliver six passengers and the mail.

Jem's Dad has been an exemplary driver for 14 years, with Jem luckily accompanying him for the last six. On this fateful night, things go terribly wrong, when the horses slide on hazardous ice - one dies and Jem's Dad is badly hurt.

One passenger goes into labour and another turns out to be a notorious bushranger, who must get to the train on time. So Jem is forced to take control of the reins in a desperate dash to Goulburn.

Lifelong friendships are formed, and secrets are uncovered, during this wonderful story that, as with many of Jackie French's novels, is heavily steeped in Australian history.

This is a terrific read, with themes of tenacity, family, racial tensions and history, that will be most enjoyed by readers aged 10 - 14 years.

Reviewed by Rob