

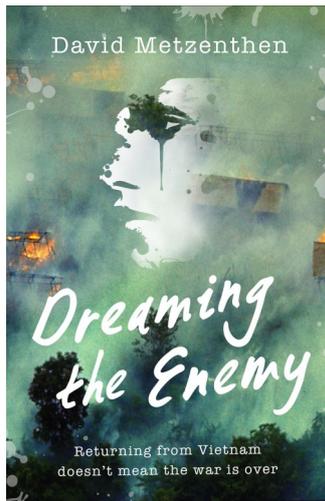
Dreaming The Enemy

By David Metzenthen
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
ISBN 9781760112257
\$19.99

**SECONDARY
BOOK OF THE
MONTH**

Blurb:

I am still moving despite the fact that this dreamed-up bastard Khan walks with me - no, he doesn't walk with me, he rises up to fire, has my life in his hands, my head in his sights, and that is the image of all images that I have somehow to lose...Johnny Shoebridge has just returned from fighting in the jungles of Vietnam. He no longer carries a weapon - only photos of the dead and a dread of the living...Pursued by a Viet Cong ghost-fighter called Khan, Johnny makes one last stand - knowing that if he cannot lay this spectre to rest, he will remain a prisoner of war for ever...Drawing on courage, loyalty and love, Johnny tries to find a way back from the nightmare of war to a sense of hope for the future...An elegant and deeply moving novel, set in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, by one of Australia's finest writers...



Lamont Review:

This is a moving account of life after the Vietnam War, seen through the eyes of Johnny Shoebridge who carries so much of what happened in his mind.

Through this we also learn of the Viet Cong through a fighter that Johnny remembers, who he calls Khan and imagines what life would be like for him after Johnny basically shot his arm off in their last battle.

Johnny imagines much of this as he recalls images and events of what actually happened. Through all of this he is gradually readjusting to life after war and re-establishing his life in Australia.

This is a fantastic middle secondary reader that looks at an awful period in our history, where our returning soldiers were mistreated by many for being a part of a war that they believed we should never had been involved in.

Brilliantly written and constructed by master novelist David Metzenthen. I would highly recommend the use of this novel as an introduction to the topic of war, particularly the more recent Vietnam War.

Reviewed by Rob

Frankie

By Shivaun Plozza

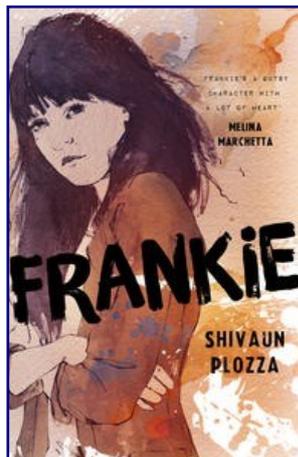
Publisher: Penguin

ISBN 9780143573166

\$17.99

Blurb:

Frankie Vega is angry. Just ask the guy whose nose she broke. Or the cop investigating the burglary she witnessed, or her cheating ex-boyfriend or her aunt who's tired of giving second chances... When a kid shows up claiming to be Frankie's half brother, it opens the door to a past she doesn't want to remember. And when that kid goes missing, the only person willing to help is a boy with stupidly blue eyes and secrets of his own. Frankie's search for the truth might change her life, or cost her everything.



Lamont Review:

When you have been abandoned at a children's farm by your Mum as a four year old and raised by an Aunt who runs a kebab shop, you learn to be tough. Meet Frankie.

She's already broken the nose of a jerk at school that made fun of her and she's angry about everything. So when a guy called Xavier shows up claiming to be her half brother, Frankie's world is teetering.

But even though Xavier is a petty thief living rough, when he disappears Frankie is hell bent on finding him, or at least finding out what happened to him.

Frankie is a raw, hard hitting novel with a gutsy lead character that is not always likeable, but you can't help getting behind her story and hoping that she will come through stronger.

It will be best suited to a 15+ reader with mature themes that deal with the seedier side of humanity.

Reviewed by Rob

The Secrets We Keep

By Nova Weetman

Publisher: University of Queensland Press

ISBN 9780702254215

\$16.95

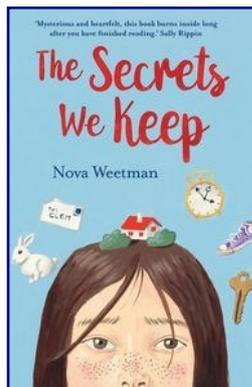
Blurb:

I don't know if you've ever seen a house burn, but it's not like anything else . . .

Clem Timmins has lost it all – her house, possessions and clothes. Now living in a tiny flat with her dad, she has to go to a new school far from what she knows.

On her first day, Clem meets Ellie. To fit in, Clem reveals a secret and immediately regrets sharing too much with her new friend.

How can Clem face everything in her life when all she wants to do is run away?



Lamont Review:

It's been six weeks since Clem's house burned down, and now everything's different.

Her Mum's gone, she's moved to a new neighbourhood, she can't find her feet at her new school, and she's carrying a secret that makes her so angry that it pulses through her like adrenaline. Bit by bit she discovers a new kind of normal, but when a little lie becomes a big one it threatens everything that she's worked so hard to build: new friendships, her new home, and the person she's trying so hard to become. What happens when the secret she's keeping isn't a secret anymore?

This story of a young girl dealing with a life changing trauma is sympathetically and realistically written. Clem tells her story in the first person, and while the secret that she's keeping is so private and deeply internalised it isn't revealed to the readers until late in the story, it colours and affects every decision she makes in the narrative.

This is a really interesting book about grief and loss, but it's not heavy-handed or sad. Clem's a resilient character. She's strong, and knows how to overcome the challenge of losing her home and all her belongings. *The Secrets We Keep* is as much about how we choose to overcome adversity and how we deal with negative emotions as it is about Clem's personal growth as she takes on new responsibilities and moves towards adulthood.

Best suited for girls in lower secondary.

Reviewed by Lian

Special

By Georgia Blain
Publisher: Random House
ISBN 9780857988072
\$19.99

Blurb:

I am a Lotto Girl. I should not be here. Why haven't they come for me? Fern Marlow is alone, datawiped and in hiding. Her mobie says she's Delia Greene, a ReCorp refuse sorter. Every day she queues to work, to earn just enough to stay alive. Every night she dreams of the past and the life she's meant to be living, back at Halston, an exclusive school for those wealthy enough or lucky enough to be genetically designed. Her rescuers said her former life was a lie, that she can trust no one. They also said they'd come back for her, and they haven't. Fern doesn't know who to believe. To uncover the truth, and save herself, Fern must answer the one question she can't face. Is she special?



Lamont Review:

Set in a futuristic world that is very grim. So grim that you have to queue to be accepted to sort rubbish in order to earn data that allows you the things you need to survive.

Fern Marlow has been datawiped, but is she really the girl of her memories who attended the exclusive Halston school as a lotto girl, a girl genetically designed to be Special after her parents won a lottery. And if so, why is she here?

More importantly, will those who claimed they were rescuing her and told her to lie low in this awful place, ever come back for her? Who can she trust?

But what defines someone as Special and what lengths would or should we go to achieve this status?

This novel tackles many themes—trust, what makes you who you are, the environment, corporate responsibility and the future.

A great classroom novel that is fine for lower secondary students, but will be best appreciated by a middle secondary reader.

Reviewed by Rob

The Book of Lies

By Teri Terry

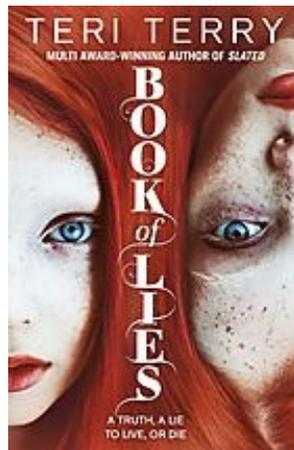
Publisher: Orchard/Hachette

ISBN 9781408334287

\$16.99

Blurb:

They are trapped, frozen. Waiting. Straining against the wood that holds them. The unwary catch a glimpse now and then - feel their desperate hunger, see a glint of red eyes - and scurry out of the shadows of the wood, back to the light. She's coming; it will be soon. They will run free on the moors again. The Hunt will return. And the ground will run with blood. Tell a lie and the darkness will find you. Quinn and Piper are twins, but they've never met. A tragic event brings them together, and draws them into a family curse that stretches across centuries. One twin can command the darkness; the other could hold the key to breaking the curse. But when lies become truth and truth looks like lies, who can you believe?



Lamont Review:

Quinn and Piper are twins who have been deliberately kept apart by their mother and grandmother. So they have never met until an accident brings them together.

Quinn's life has been incredibly hard, while Piper's has been a breeze. But what happens when they both visit the mysterious moors where their family curse started?

Told in alternate chapters from Quinn and then Piper's point of view, this book will keep you turning each page as the mystery of their family unfolds. Will they both be swallowed by the darkness which comes with telling lies and not knowing what is the truth or can they break free and live a normal life?

A wonderful story that your girls who love supernatural mysteries will thoroughly enjoy. It will suit students in Year 8 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

The Special Ones

By Em Bailey

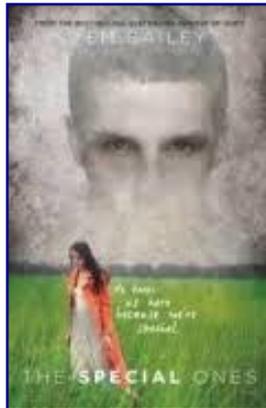
Publisher: Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN 9781742976280

\$19.99

Blurb:

He keeps us here because we're Special. Esther is one of the Special Ones – four people who live under his protection in a remote farmhouse. The Special Ones are not allowed to leave, but why would they want to? Here, they are safe from toxic modern life, safe from a meaningless existence, safe in their endless work. He watches them every moment of every day, ready to punish them if they forget who they are – all while broadcasting their lives to eager followers on the outside. Esther knows he will renew her if she stops being Special, and that renewal almost certainly means death. Yet she also knows she's a fake. She has no ancient wisdom, no genuine advice to offer her followers. But like an actor caught up in an endless play, she must keep up the performance—if she wants to survive long enough to escape.



Lamont Review:

Four people, 'The Special Ones', are kept in a remote farm house and are unable to leave.

They are watched day and night and must adhere to all 'his' rules and live a very simple life with no modern amenities. They must pretend to be Harry, Esther, Lucille and Felicity - four people in an old photograph with a psychopath controlling them all.

But what happens when the current Harry and Esther escape his clutches? Will they finally be free and what about the girls left behind?

This is a wonderful psychological thriller that will keep you turning pages until the end. Em Bailey is rapidly gaining a reputation for highly entertaining novels.

Perfectly suited to Year 9 girls and up who like to be kept on the edge of their seats.

Reviewed by Michelle