

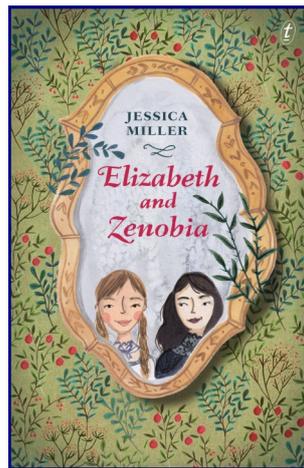
## **Elizabeth and Zenobia**

By Jessica Miller  
Publisher: Text Publishing  
ISBN 9781925355031  
\$16.99

**PRIMARY FICTION**  
**BOOK OF THE**  
**MONTH**

### *Blurb:*

Timid Elizabeth and her unusual and fearless friend Zenobia arrive at Withering House, the old manor where Elizabeth's father and his beloved sister Tourmaline lived as children. Zenobia loves it: she's convinced it's haunted and is eager to make contact with a spirit presence. Elizabeth is relieved when her efforts seem to come to nothing. But strange things begin to happen at Withering House, especially in the East Wing, where Elizabeth and Zenobia have been forbidden to explore. Why do the flowers and vines on the wallpaper in the nursery seem to be alive? Could it have something to do with the strange book that tells a different story after midnight? And what really happened to Tourmaline all those years ago? Elizabeth and Zenobia is a wonderfully mysterious middle-grade adventure story about friendship and courage and the power of imagination.



### *Lamont Review:*

Winner of the Text Publishing award for best manuscript written for younger readers.

Since her mother suddenly left, Elizabeth has felt invisible. Her father, famous botanist and multi-published author on the plant kingdom, is much too wrapped up in his plants to take much notice of her. Elizabeth is quiet and shy, nothing like her outgoing and adventurous imaginary best friend Zenobia.

So when her father decides to return to his childhood home, the now unloved and overgrown Withering House, she is lucky to have such a friend to lift her spirits. They soon discover the mystery of Tourmaline, her father's sister who disappeared, aged 9, and has never been found. Can they solve the mystery?

This is a wonderfully crafted adventure mystery, with a touch of supernatural (séances and toxicology, that Zenobia finds so intriguing). It drags you into their world and makes you want to uncover their mystery. I read it in one sitting as I didn't want to put it down.

It will be best suited to those 9 and up, and will be loved by many.

*Reviewed by Rob*

*Teacher Notes are available for this title at [www.textpublishing.com.au](http://www.textpublishing.com.au)*

## **Sporty Kids: Netball**

By Felice Arena & Illustrated by Tom Jellett  
Publisher: Puffin/Penguin  
ISBN 9780143309086  
\$9.99

### *Blurb:*

Lizzie knew everything there was to know about netball. Her dream was to become a famous netball coach one day... Lizzie loves to talk about netball. So why don't her teammates want to listen?



### *Lamont Review:*

This series is a fabulous for emerging readers, with each one centred around a different sport. But sport plays second fiddle to the lessons that are very subtly taught along the way.

For Lizzie, netball is her sport. It is what she loves and she would love to be a coach one day. But Lizzie teammates do not like the way that she talks to them. She is always telling them what to do and making them feel bad.

So when Lizzie discovers that she has been left out of the team get-together, she shuts down completely.

Can she find a balance between helping and encouraging her friends, without hurting their feelings?

Junior readers will enjoy this story.

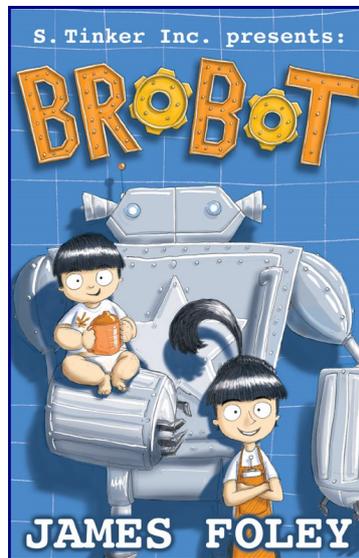
*Reviewed by Sam*

## **Brobot**

By James Foley  
Publisher: Fremantle Press  
ISBN 9781925163919  
\$14.99

### *Blurb:*

Sally is the world's foremost inventor under the age of twelve, and she just knows she can build a better brother than the messy, smelly version she has. Sally's invention Brobot is fantastic, that is until the remote gets broken and Brobot careens out of control. Sally realises that maybe there's more to a brother than just his inconveniences.



### *Lamont Review:*

It is quite unusual for us to come across a graphic novel suitable for our primary selections, particularly one that is aimed at the junior level, and it certainly does make for a welcome change.

At times we all wish for things to be different in our lives, and for Sally, the foremost inventor under the age of twelve, it is her little brother Joe that she thinks that she can improve on.

This is not just a story about invention, although I'm sure many students will get some wild ideas from reading this, it is also a story about forgiveness and accepting our family for who they are.

Perfect for junior readers, both boys and girls.

*Reviewed by Sam*

Teacher Notes are available for this title from [www.fremantlepress.com.au](http://www.fremantlepress.com.au)

## **Axel & Beast: The Grabbem Getaway**

By Adrian C. Bott & Illustrated by Andy Isaacs

Publisher: Hardie Grant Egmont

ISBN 9781760127800

\$12.99

### *Blurb:*

One elite gamer. One shape-shifting robot. Unlimited adventure!

One day, Axel is playing video games when something HUGE breaks into his garage. It's a robot. His name is BEAST. And he's on the run from the nasty Grabbem Industries, who want BEAST back – right now!

Axel has no idea that he and BEAST will soon be best friends and go on the wildest adventures you could imagine. BEAST is no ordinary robot, and Axel isn't your usual gamer. But are they awesome enough together to escape from BEAST's evil creators?



### *Lamont Review:*

This one is one that all gamers will love!

Axel loves video games, and if it wasn't for his online arch rival, BAGGER\_63, he would win far more than he does. But things are tough financially for Axel and his Mum, ever since his Dad disappeared the year before, so he has no way of buying the best Tankinators that would help him win. Unlike BAGGER\_63!

So when Axel finds the giant robot BEAST at his house, his ordinary day takes a dramatic turn and the two of them find themselves on one dangerous adventure. Can Axel and Beast do the impossible and beat the all powerful Grabbem Industries?

This is more than just an adventure story though. It is about the importance of having a go and standing up to those that only think of themselves and, when Axel realises who the rich boy trying to get his robot back really is, it might just become a bit more personal...

This is the first in this new, exciting series that is pitched perfectly for junior-middle primary video game fans.

*Reviewed by Sam*

## **Escape to the Moon Islands: Quest of the Sunfish # 1**

By Mardi McConnochie  
Publisher: Allen & Unwin  
ISBN 9781760290917  
\$14.99

### *Blurb:*

When Will and Annalie's father disappears, they set out on a perilous sea voyage to find him. The motley crew of runaways put their faith in each other, and in a small sailing boat called the Sunfish. In a world transformed by a catastrophic Flood, they embark on an adventure that will test their ingenuity - and their friendship - to the limits... The crew face off against storms and pirates, but the biggest threat of all comes from the Admiralty, the all-powerful navy that rules the oceans of the world. The Admiralty are supposed to be the good guys, but the deeper the Sunfish voyages into the Moon Islands, the more they realise that nothing is what it seems.



### *Lamont Review:*

This is a fantastic adventure set on the high seas.

When twelve year old twins Will and Annalie's father disappears suddenly, they join with Annalie's friend Essie and their talking parrot Graham to try to locate him.

Along the way they first have to break their sailboat, the Sunfish, out of the Admiralty's impound, who then pursue them relentlessly. Despite encounters with high seas, cannibals and pirates, their cunning and ingenuity beyond their years allows their quest to continue.

Set in a time forty years after floods ruined much of the world and the Admiralty are the pseudo government who may not be particularly good, this adventure will appeal to those as young as nine.

Being quite a lengthy read, it will engross good readers for days, and with further adventures to follow it should also give them something to look forward to next year.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## **Valdur the Viking and the Ghostly Goths**

By Craig Cormick

Publisher: Ford Street Publishing

ISBN 9781925272420

\$12.95

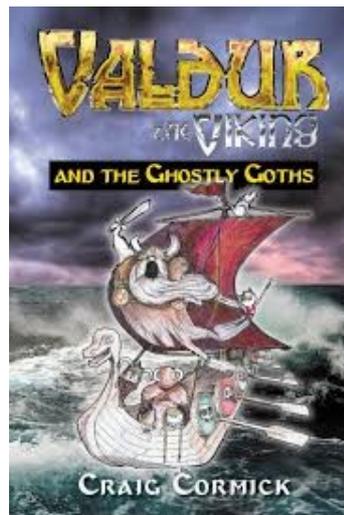
### *Blurb:*

Valdur the Viking is a young ghost with a mission.

The dreaded Goth pirate Germanicus Bottom has raided his father's ship and kidnapped most of the crew.

Valdur, with the remaining Vikings and his dragon dog Ragna, will have to fight Romans, sea monsters and Goth pirates to rescue them.

It's going to be one crazy day.



### *Lamont Review:*

A fun filled rollick on the high seas that will keep you smiling. Valdur is a Viking or, more importantly, a ghost Viking who must rescue his father and his crew from the terrifying Goth pirates.

He will face many challenges, but with his dragon-dog Ragna to help, what could possibly go wrong?

Lots of accurate historical information is scattered throughout the book and the story will keep readers thoroughly entertained.

Perfectly suited to boys in Year 2 - 4.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## **Jackson Payne's Clumsy Christmas Spectacular**

By Adam Wallace & Illustrated by James Hart

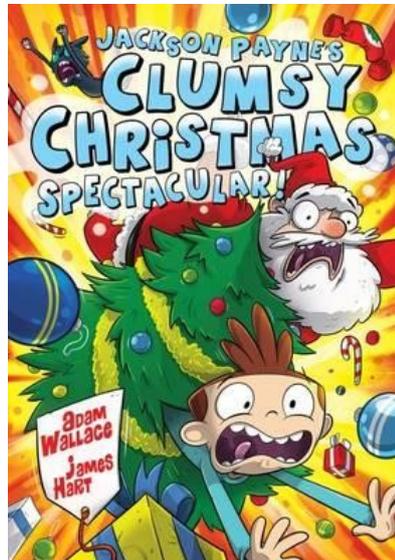
Publisher: Kruger Wallace Press

ISBN 9780994469328

\$12.00

### *Blurb:*

Jackson Payne is super clumsy, and he, wait for it ... hates Christmas!!! This is because he has ruined Christmas in the past, but this year he's decided to make it the most Christmassy Christmas EVER ... which could very possibly lead to disaster!



### *Lamont Review:*

Poor Jackson. He's been *Accidentally Awesome*, *Blunderingly Brilliant* and *Disastrously Daring*. Now he's being Clumsy at Christmas...

As usual, despite all his good intentions, Jackson just can't seem to anything right.

After his disastrous Christmas last year, Jackson first decides to ignore Christmas this year. But with everything Christmas happening around him, he changes his mind and decides instead to go all out this year. But in typical Jackson style, his idea of helping is not necessarily everyone else's!

Despite all the silliness, it is a fun story about celebrating Christmas with family and extending friendship and kindness to others.

Boys in particular who like a bit of funny humour will find this one a great read.

*Reviewed by Sam*

## **Ruby Wishfingers: Toad-ally Magic!**

By Deborah Kelly and illustrated by Leigh Hedstrom

Publisher: Wombat Books

ISBN 9781925139815

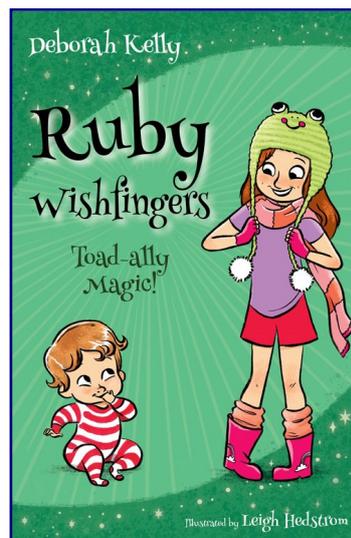
\$9.99

### *Blurb:*

Ruby is back - and so are her wishes! With a head full of plans for the holidays Ruby's fingertips already tingling with magic. That is, until Mum announces that Ruby's horrible little toad of a cousin is coming to stay.

But some problems can't just be wished away. Ruby's wish for her cousin to turn into a real toad breaks magic's most important rule. And when rules are broken, especially magic ones, there are always consequences.

Join Ruby and her little brother, Jellybean on another extraordinary adventure exploring a winter wonderland, experiencing life as a slimy toad and finding out what happens when magic falls into the wrong paws!



### *Lamont Review:*

Ruby is an ordinary girl who has an extraordinary gift!

Just imagine what it would be like if you could just wish for anything that you wanted! For Ruby, when her fingers are tingly, this is exactly what she can do. But once again, Ruby realises that it isn't as easy as it seems.

Although this story is about imagination and magic, the lessons that we can learn from it about being kind, thinking of and helping others, acceptance, having consequences for our actions and the importance of family relationships, are thoroughly evident throughout.

Junior to middle girls will enjoy this next instalment in the Ruby Wishfingers series, and I am sure many will be hoping that Ruby's magic might rub off on them! But remember, be careful what you wish for...

*Reviewed by Sam*