

The Boy and the Spy

By Felice Arena

Publisher: Puffin/Penguin

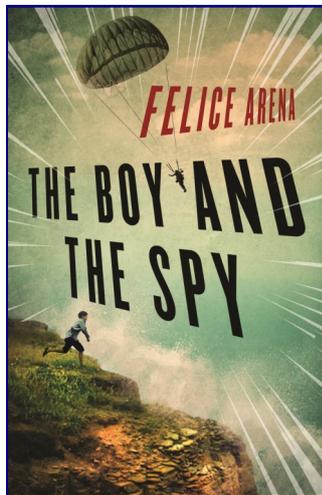
ISBN 9780143309284 SCIS: 1796787

\$16.99

PRIMARY FICTION
BOOK OF THE
MONTH

Blurb:

Life has never been easy for Antonio, but since the war began there are German soldiers on every corner, fearsome gangsters and the fascist police everywhere, and no one ever has enough to eat. But when Antonio decides to trust a man who has literally fallen from the sky, he leaps into an adventure that will change his life and maybe even the future of Sicily...



Lamont Review:

It's wonderful when an author changes direction with their style of writing and get it so totally right. Having spoken to Felice Arena, I know that his heart is in this story, and what a great story it is.

Antonio is an orphan 'Rota' boy, living in Sicily during the Second World War.

After pranking a German soldier, Antonio runs along the seaside clifftop, only to be trapped. He jumps into the Mediterranean Sea far below, and is saved by an American airman hiding out in a cave.

The story follows their journey and many adventures to try and find freedom.

This is a fantastic work of historic fiction, with themes of family and belonging, hardship and war, making it an ideal middle grade reader. It will also make an ideal group reader for upper primary, and even a Year 7 English novel, and has all the makings of a classic Australian children's book. I hope that you enjoy this book as much as I did!

Reviewed by Rob

Mammoth Mistake, Starring Olive Black

By Alex Miles

Publisher: Affirm Press

ISBN 9781925475548 SCIS: 1803096

\$14.99

Blurb:

Olive's latest movie has her character bringing a woolly mammoth back from time. But when Olive takes a chance to one-up her nemesis instead of being there for her BFF, she makes a real-life mammoth mistake of her own. Will she be able to make things right?



Lamont Review:

Olive and Rani are best friends. And even though Olive is a movie star, she is a very level headed one, and her fame has never interfered with their special friendship. Until now!

Olive is on the publicity circuit for her new movie 'Mammoth Mistake', with her very annoying and pushy co-star Sofia. Olive tries to ignore all that is going on with Sofia, and concentrate on helping her shy best friend, Rani, prepare her acceptance speech that she will be giving for her winning entry at the Art Show.

When Olive's two worlds collide, and she agrees to do an interview on the same night as the Art Show just to get back at Sofia, Olive finds herself in a situation that she never wanted to be in.

Can she be the best friend that she needs to be?

This is a wonderful story of true friendship, trust, and forgiveness. It has some very good lessons, and will be loved by middle primary girls.

Reviewed by Sam

Welcome Home, Harley: Little Paws 1

By Jess Black

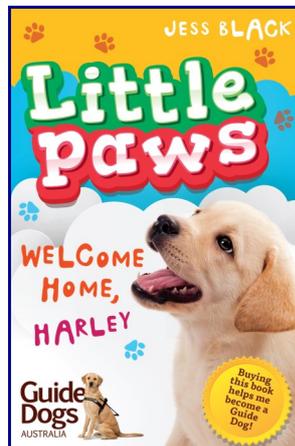
Publisher: Random House

ISBN 9780143781776 SCIS: 1796546

\$9.99

Blurb:

A fun, heart-warming series about the puppies that train to become Guide Dogs and the families who help raise them. Lexie and Tom Walker are super excited to meet their new eight-week-old puppy, Harley. Harley is extra special because she's a Guide Dog puppy in training! While Harley is gorgeous, she's also cheeky and good at causing trouble. In particular, she loves to chew things! It's up to Lexie and Tom, with their Puppy Raising Officer's help, to teach Harley some basic obedience so she can prove to everyone she is Guide Dog material.



Lamont Review:

This is a delightful new series that is sure to be loved by all dog lovers!

In this first story, we are introduced to the process of a family taking home a puppy to look after in preparation for the puppy to become a guide dog.

The Walker family have the job of looking after Harley. A beautiful, but extremely mischievous, golden Labrador who just loves to eat and chew everything.

It is the job of the family, including their children Lexie & Tom, to teach Harley some basic skills, and to plan their daily lives around looking after Harley. They are all excited and committed to giving her the best chance of becoming a guide dog, but they soon realise that it is an extremely hard role.

Emerging readers will thoroughly enjoy this new series, whilst also learning something along the way.

Reviewed by Sam

Meg's Big Mystery: Little Paws 2

By Jess Black

Publisher: Random House

ISBN 9780143781790 SCIS: 1799278

\$9.99

Blurb:

A fun, heart-warming series about the puppies that train to become Guide Dogs and the families who help raise them. Lachie Byrnes is proud to be helping raise Meg, a budding Guide Dog. After living with the Byrnes family for a few months, Meg has just started puppy preschool! Meg is very good at obeying commands - except sometimes sit and stay! But after a big day of training and activities, Meg becomes sick and has to be rushed to the Guide Dogs vet surgery. Lachie is determined to use his detective skills to find out what's wrong with his beloved puppy.



Lamont Review:

The second book in the Little Paws series features the Byrnes family, who have been looking after Meg for two months. She is a beautiful dog and has fitted perfectly into their lives.

Grade 5 student Lachie loves looking after Meg and has taken responsibility for her training, including at the formal puppy preschool training sessions. So when Meg suddenly becomes ill and has to spend nights at the vet away from him, he is determined to find out what has caused her illness.

The same week that Meg is sick, Lachie finds himself having to complete a scientific research project for school. Can he find out what happened to Meg and complete his project at the same time?

This book will be thoroughly enjoyed by emerging readers, and especially by dog lovers!

Reviewed by Sam

The Beast of Hushing Wood

By Gabrielle Wang

Publisher: Puffin/Penguin

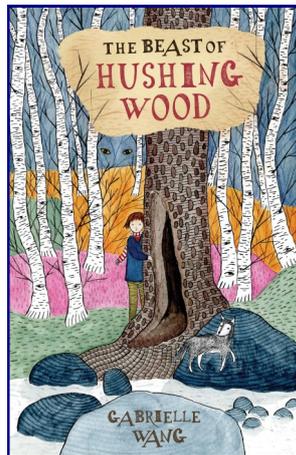
ISBN 9780143309178 SCIS: 1796541

\$16.99

Blurb:

Ziggy Truegood lives in a tiny town deep in Hushing Wood, where strange things are happening. The townspeople are fighting, Ziggy feels like something is hunting her, and her beloved woods have become dark and hostile. When exotic Raffi and his grandfather arrive in town, Ziggy finds herself strangely drawn to them. But are they there to save Ziggy, or are they the hunters?

Thought-provoking and engaging, Hushing Wood is a lovely blend of action, fable and magic realism.



Lamont Review

Set in the small and closed off community of Dell Hollow, Ziggy has always felt connected with the surrounding Hushing Woods. For others in the town, the woods are a scary place, but not for Ziggy. Until now!

The town and the woods are changing, and Ziggy is determined to find out why, even if this puts her in danger. She is convinced that it has something to do with the mysterious Raffi and his grandfather, who have arrived in town and are living in the woods, but proving this and finding out the truth about what is really happening in the town is not easy.

Gabrielle Wang has a very powerful way with words, and this is one book that fantasy lovers will find engrossing. It is full of 'spirit animals' and strange happenings and will have you questioning all the way through what is real and what isn't.

A great read for middle to upper primary students.

Reviewed by Sam

Wombat Warriors

By Samantha Wheeler
Publisher: University of Queensland Press
ISBN 9780702259586 SCIS: 1796520
\$14.95

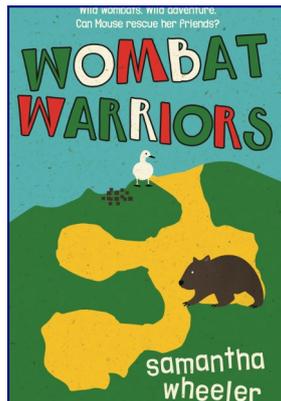
Blurb:

Mouse by name, mouse by nature.

Mouse is not prepared for her last-minute stay at Aunt Evie's. How will she cope at a new school without her parents around?

But before Mouse has even unpacked her suitcase, she makes a new friend – a wombat called Miss Pearl! Suddenly, being in a strange cottage doesn't seem so bad, especially when she can snuggle up with a wombat. Mouse soon learns that not everyone in the area loves wombats, including Aunt Evie's landlord, a sheep farmer who destroys them on sight.

Can Mouse find her voice in time to keep her furry friends safe?



Lamont Review:

Animal lovers are going to thoroughly enjoy this one!

When Queensland girl Mouse finds herself staying at her Aunt Evie's house in South Australia, she is nervous and anxious about fitting in. But with the help of Aunt Evie, her pet wombat and pet duck, and her unlikely friendship with Harry, the son of Aunt Evie's cranky landlord, Mouse starts to enjoy her time on the farm.

Mouse and Harry soon discover that they both have a love of wombats. But these animals are considered pests on farms because of the damage that they can do, and Harry's Mum is determined to rid her farm of them.

Can Mouse and Harry come up with a plan to save the wombats?

This is a wonderful story about fighting for what you believe in, growing up and finding your independence, but is also highlights the plight of our native animals.

Perfect for middle primary readers.

Reviewed by Sam

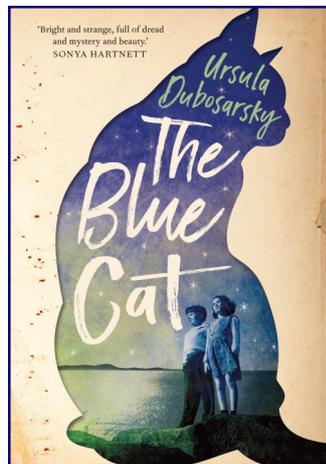
Teacher Notes are available for this title. They are available from our website www.lamontbooks.com.au.

The Blue Cat

By Ursula Dubosarsky
Publisher: Allen & Unwin
ISBN 9781760292294 SCIS: 1796554
\$19.99

Blurb:

A boy stood in the playground under the big fig tree. 'He can't speak English,' the children whispered... Sydney, 1942. The war is coming to Australia - not only with the threat of bombardment, but also the arrival of refugees from Europe. Dreamy Columba's world is growing larger. She is drawn to Ellery, the little boy from far away, and, together with her highly practical best friend Hilda, the three children embark on an adventure through the harbour-side streets - a journey of discovery and terror, in pursuit of the mysterious blue cat...



Lamont Review:

Columba and her friend Hilda live in Sydney. It is 1942, the world is at war, and it is starting to impact their everyday lives. There are now black out curtains at the windows, the constant threat of bombs from the Japanese, and also the arrival of refugees from Europe who are fleeing the war.

When Ellery arrives at school and cannot speak any English but still seems content, Columba is fascinated by him. The three children form an unlikely friendship and set out in search of the mysterious blue cat who has disappeared from the neighbourhood.

As is usual with Ursula Dubosarsky novels, this will leave your students wondering and enquiring about life in Australia during the war. It is a wonderful lead in to the topic of World War II and the impact that it had on ordinary people. This is perfectly suited to your Year 5 and 6 students both boys and girls.

Reviewed by Michelle