

The Secret Science of Magic

By Melissa Keil

Publisher: Hardie Grant Egmont

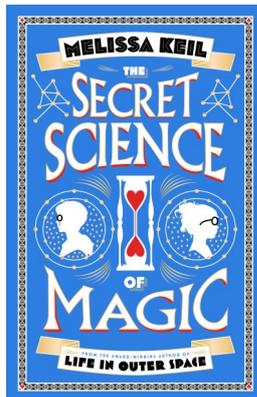
ISBN 9781760127763 SCIS: 1796566

\$19.99

**SECONDARY
BOOK OF THE
MONTH**

Blurb:

From award-winning YA author Melissa Keil comes this heartwarming contemporary novel about what it means to be extraordinary. Joshua is good at magic tricks, ignoring his homework, and not thinking about life after year twelve. He's not so good at talking to Sophia, the genius in his class who he's had a crush on for years. But with their time together in high school running out, he has to do something about it, soon – because if he's learned one thing, it's that timing is everything. Sophia is smart enough to know that geniuses like her can end up as socially inept recluses. In fact, maybe she's halfway there already, what with the panic attacks and her best (and only) friend Elsie drifting away. All Sophia can do is seek refuge in what she understands best: maths, science, logic. But there's no logical explanation for the odd, almost magical things happening around her. And there are some things no amount of study can prepare you for...



Lamont Review:

As soon as I started reading this I quickly remembered Melissa's other two wonderful stories, and why I loved them so much. Her writing is like a meal at a fancy restaurant - it asks to be devoured quickly but I just want to savour it and enjoy every piece. There are so many layers to her characters, but it is her work as a master wordsmith that makes me want to take it all in slowly and truly relish it - unfortunately I never succeed and always seem to read the whole thing in one go!

In *The Secret Science of Magic*, main characters Sophia and Joshua need to find each other and find love - but can they?

Sophia is a 17-year-old super smart maths prodigy who suffers from agoraphobia, which is threatening her relationship with her life long best friend, Elsie, and her chance of making new friendships.

Enter Joshua who has had a thing for Sophia since he turned 13. He is smart, and does wonderful magic tricks, but he doesn't really strive for anything.

Life is never a bed of roses, especially as their friendship begins, but I loved their journey and was left with a real hope for their future at the end.

Overall this is another brilliantly written contemporary YA romance, involving two unusual teens. I absolutely loved this, and I am sure you will too!

Reviewed by Rob

The Silent Invasion

By James Bradley

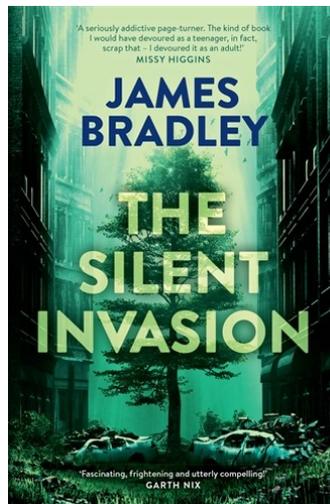
Publisher: Pan Macmillan

ISBN 9781743549896 SCIS: 1803061

\$9.99

Blurb:

It's 2027 and the human race is dying. Plants, animals and humans have been infected by spores from space and become part of a vast alien intelligence. When 16-year-old Callie discovers her little sister Gracie has been infected, she flees with Gracie to the Zone to avoid termination by the ruthless officers of Quarantine. What Callie finds in the Zone will alter her irrevocably, and send her on a journey to the stars and beyond.



Lamont Review:

Set in 2027, the human race has been invaded by an alien intelligence which alters humans, animals and plants. When Callie discovers that her sister has been infected, she decides to run away to the Zone in far north Queensland. So begins her journey to escape the Quarantine Officers...

A wonderful sci-fi adventure story that is the first book in a new trilogy.

I loved the story. There were great characters, and it was a nice change to read a futuristic sci-fi novel set in Australia. The surprise ending made me hope that Book 2 is not far away!

Best suited to readers in Year 8 and above.

Reviewed by Michelle

Remind Me How This Ends

By Gabrielle Tozer

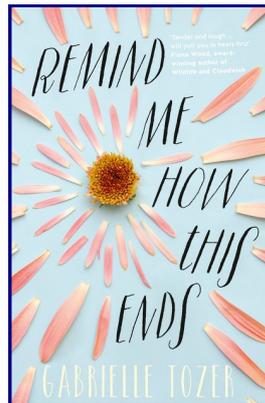
Publisher: Harper Collins

ISBN 9781460751688 SCIS: 1796575

\$17.99

Blurb:

A boy-meets-girl-again story from the award-winning author of *The Intern* and *Faking It*. 'Milo was a discoloured memory with blurred edges and a washed-out palette. Yet five minutes with him and everything came back to me in an instant.' Layla Montgomery's life fell apart at thirteen. After her mum died in a shock accident, Layla's grieving father packed their bags and forced her to leave behind everything she'd ever known. Milo Dark has been stuck on pause since the Year 12 exams. His long-term girlfriend moved 300 kilometres away for uni, his mates bailed for bigger things, and he's convinced he missed the reminder to plan out the rest of his life. As kids, Layla and Milo shared everything - their secrets, a treehouse and weekends at the river. But they haven't spoken since her mum's funeral. That is, until Layla shows up five years later in his parents' bookshop without so much as a text message. Pretty soon they're drawn into a tangled mess that guarantees someone will get hurt. And while it's a summer they'll never forget, is it one they'll want to remember?



Lamont Review:

Just wow! Australian YA author Gabrielle Tozer has taken her writing to another level with this amazing story of rekindled friendship turned romance.

It is gritty and real, with believable characters that you love early on and spend the rest of the book hoping that they work it and out and get together!

Neighbours and best friends growing up, Layla and Milo's lives changed abruptly at thirteen when Layla's Mum died after being hit by a car, and Layla's Dad decides they need to leave their small town. Milo remained in town, but after finishing Year 12, his life is stalling and he has no real aims for his future.

Then suddenly Layla is back in town, but their lives are so different. Slowly we piece together their history as they rediscover their deep friendship.

The end had a twist I didn't expect, but that only added to my respect for the author and her ability to craft an unforgettable story.

Altogether, a wonderful contemporary romance about finding your place, that will be loved by readers 15 years and up.

Reviewed by Rob

Defy The Stars

By Claudia Gray

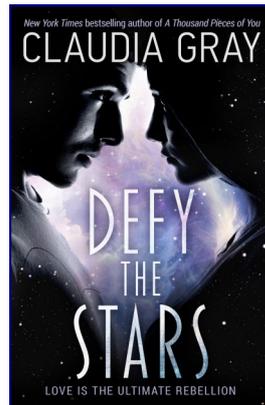
Publisher: Hot Key Books

ISBN 9781471406362 SCIS: 1803075

\$19.99

Blurb:

Noemi is a young and fearless soldier of Genesis, a colony planet of a dying Earth. But the citizens of Genesis are rising up - they know that Earth's settlers will only destroy this planet the way they destroyed their own. And so a terrible war has begun... When Noemi meets Abel, one of Earth's robotic mech warriors, she realizes that Abel himself may provide the key to Genesis' salvation. Abel is bound by his programming to obey her - even though her plan could result in his destruction. But Abel is no ordinary mech. He's a unique prototype, one with greater intelligence, skill and strength than any other. More than that, he has begun to develop emotions, a personality and even dreams. Noemi begins to realise that if Abel is less than human, he is more than a machine. If she destroys him, is it murder? And can a cold-blooded murder be redeemed by the protection of a world? Stranded together in space, they go on a whirlwind adventure through Earth's various colony worlds, alongside the countless Vagabonds who have given up planetary life altogether and sail forever between the stars. Each step brings them closer - both to each other and to the terrible decision Noemi will have to make about her world's fate, and Abel's.



Lamont Review:

Abel is a one of a kind robot warrior from Earth, and Noemi is a seventeen year old soldier from Genesis. They should be mortal enemies.

Circumstances force them together on an abandoned ship, and initially Noemi fears for her life. Abel's programming, however, forces him to obey her every command.

What follows is a truly amazing story of self-discovery, friendship, courage, love, and sacrifice.

Claudia Gray has excelled herself with this new novel. It is a must read for all sci-fi fans, but it is also full of adventure, romance and ethical questions about what makes us human. A fantastic read for Year 9 and up.

Reviewed by Michelle

Letters to the Lost

By Brigid Kemmerer

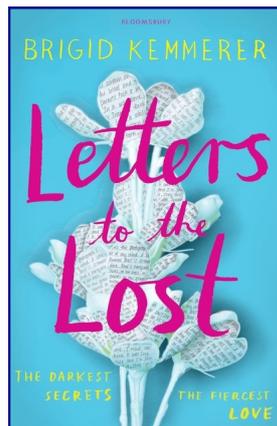
Publisher: Bloomsbury

ISBN 9781408883525 SCIS: 1803062

\$16.99

Blurb:

Juliet Young has always written letters to her mother, a world famous photojournalist--even after her mother's death, she leaves letters at her grave. It's the only thing that helps Juliet cope. Declan Murphy is the sort of guy you wouldn't want to cross. In the midst of his court-ordered community service doing landscaping at the local cemetery, he is holding inside ghosts of his own past. When Declan finds a haunting letter left beside a grave, he can't resist the urge to write back. Soon, he is sharing his pain with a perfect stranger and somehow he feels like he might be helping her too. Except they're not strangers, and when real life interferes with their secret life of letters, sparks will fly as Juliet and Declan discover truths that might tear them apart.



Lamont Review:

Two people who have lost so much in their lives accidentally find each other, when a letter Juliet leaves on her mother's grave is read by Declan, who is mowing the cemetery lawns as a part of his community based order.

They develop an enthralling relationship as their letters continue, and even when they discover who the other person is and how different their worlds are, that don't want to lose what they have.

This is an exceptional novel, written by the author of the hugely successful *Elemental* series, that delves deeply into the psyche of two troubled teens as they uncover secrets from their past and learn to cope in their emerging new lives, and move towards a possibly positive future.

I found this riveting, and highly recommend it to readers 15 and older. As is often the case, the cover may lead it to appeal to a more female audience, but that will be a shame.

Reviewed by Rob

William Wenton and the Luridium Thief

By **Bobbie Peers**

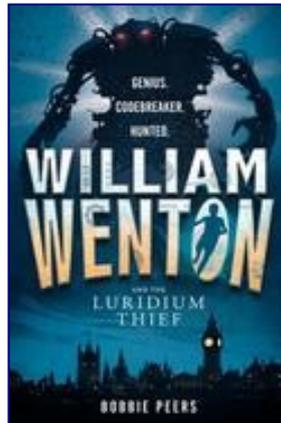
Publisher: Walker Books

ISBN 9781406371703 SCIS: 1801915

\$14.99

Blurb:

Packed full of magical code-breaking skills, wisecracking robots and a young hero who might just be too clever for his own good, this tech-savvy adventure is perfect for fans of Percy Jackson and Alex Rider. Twelve year-old code breaking genius William Wenton, is trying to make sense of his family's dramatic escape from their home in London. But when his extraordinary talent for cracking codes is suddenly revealed, William must face the danger that has been lurking around him for years.



Lamont Review:

Twelve-year-old William is always getting into trouble. Only William is a genius, so the trouble he finds is usually big trouble.

William and his family are in hiding after his grandfather mysteriously disappeared eight years ago. When William can't stop himself from cracking the Impossible Code at the Museum, his family's life is turned upside down, as killer robots come after them.

This is a wonderfully entertaining novel that fans of fantasy and sci-fi will love. Fast paced and funny, with great gadgets, wonderful characters, lots of code breaking, and complete with a secret academy, this is a great book for readers in Years 7 and 8.

Reviewed by Michelle

May Tang - A New Australian

By Katrina Beikoff

Publisher: Scholastic

ISBN 9781742990743 SCIS: 1796510

\$16.99

Blurb:

Born in the Year of the Snake, May Tang is like flowing water when she should have more fire. A dreamer, she will never be sensible and obedient like her elder sister Jie Jie or clever like her brother Peter, studying in Australia. But her parents are worried by rumoured events in China, and May finds herself on her way to a new life in Australia. It is so different that May wonders if she will ever be able to love this new country.



Lamont Review:

May is a daydreamer who is always being told off by her big sister, Jie Jie. She loves her friends, her grandfather and her Mum's dumplings.

May's older brother Peter is living in Australia because of his views about the Chinese Government. But when the terrible incidents in Tiananmen Square take place, May's family fear for their safety as well.

A decision is made for May and her Mum to move to Sydney to be with Peter. May is devastated by this decision, but knows she has no choice.

Eleven-year-old May is a character that Year 7 students who are starting a new chapter in their lives will relate to. She is determined to make the best of her new home, but finding new friends and fitting in when everything is so different is not easy for her.

Told with humour and compassion, this would be an ideal classroom novel about acceptance, differences, and all the amazing elements that make Australia such a wonderful melting pot of cultures.

Perfect for Year 7 girls.

Reviewed by Michelle

Dragons, Devils and Rebels

By Alison Lloyd & Illustrated by Terry Denton

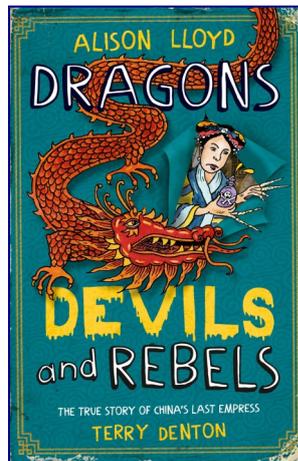
Publisher: Puffin/Penguin

ISBN 9780143309048 SCIS: 1796558

\$17.99

Blurb:

When an unknown girl marries the Emperor of China, can she take control and stay in power? Could you? Imagine you were faced with - Dragons, Emperors who had run China for two thousand years, Devils, strange foreigners invading with guns and ships, and Rebels, Chinese bandits and warriors with supernatural powers . . . Enter the dragon empire and explore the epic, true story of Empress Cixi. By the creators of Wicked Warriors and Evil Emperors.



Lamont Review:

This is an exciting new book by Alison Lloyd, following in the same format as her highly successful Wicked Warriors and Evil Emperors. Primarily non-fiction, but told in story form, it is filled with witty drawings, facts and anecdotes from the wonderful Terry Denton, and will keep middle year readers engaged for hours.

The timeline is the pseudo-rule of Empress Cixi, China's Last Empress, between the years 1835 and 1908. Her life was certainly fascinating, and considering she lived during a time when women were supposed to be seen and not heard, she lead a truly remarkable life.

Many students love to read non-fiction, and this format presents it in such an engaging way that you cannot help but learn something as progress through this entertaining journey.

This book is best suited to lower secondary and senior primary students, and is a whole lot of fun!

Reviewed by Rob

Flight Path

By David Hill

Publisher: Puffin/Penguin NZ

ISBN 9780143770527 SCIS: 1803064

\$17.99

Blurb:

A gripping novel for young adults that captures both the daring and the everyday realities of serving in the Air Force during the Second World War. Pete and Paul yelled together. 'Bandit! Nine o'clock! Bandit!' Jack spun to stare. There was the Messerschmitt on their left, streaking straight at them. Eighteen-year-old Jack wanted to escape boring little New Zealand. But he soon finds that flying in a Lancaster bomber to attack Hitler's forces brings terror as well as excitement. With every dangerous mission, he becomes more afraid that he'll never get back alive. He wants to help win the war, but will he lose his own life?



Lamont Review:

Wonderful New Zealand author, David Hill, has written a novel that gets right into the spirit of comradery and also the fear experienced by young men during war.

Flight Path is set towards the end of the second World War with our central character being an 18 year old New Zealand boy. We share his experiences as the person who sits in the nose of a Lancaster bomber, spotting and shooting at the enemy and dropping the bombs.

Jack is a wonderful character, and he develops good relationships with his fellow crew that become integral to each others survival as they complete more missions. He also develops a strong friendship with a local English girl.

This action packed adventure will have readers turning pages as the story intensifies as it progresses. The severity of war is depicted, as is the humanity that can shine through.

Flight Path is a great middle year novel that best suits a 12-15 year old reader. It will mostly be read by boys, but many girls will also love this story.

Reviewed by Rob