

## **My Lovely Frankie**

By Judith Clarke  
Publisher: Allen & Unwin  
ISBN 9781760296339 SCIS: 1809052  
\$19.99

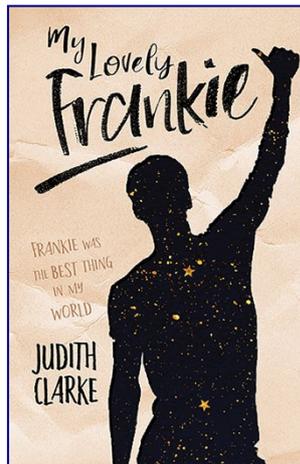
**SECONDARY  
BOOK OF THE  
MONTH**

*Blurb:*

'Frankie believed in Heaven quite literally, as if it was another lovely world out past the stars. And when he spoke the word "love", it seemed to spring free and fly into the air like a beautiful balloon you wanted to run after. But I couldn't tell my parents about Frankie, not properly. I told them I'd made friends with the boy in the room next to mine, and how he'd come from this little town out west. I couldn't tell them how he was becoming the best thing in my world. I couldn't tell anyone, I hardly admitted it to myself.'

In the 1950s, 'entering' the seminary was forever, and young boys were gathered into the priesthood before they were old enough to know what they would lose. Tom went to St Finbar's because he was looking for something more than the ordinary happiness of his home and school.

But then he discovered that being able to love another person was the most important thing of all. For Tom, loving Frankie made him part of the world. Even when Frankie was gone...



*Lamont Review:*

Tom was a young boy who had just entered the seminary to become a priest when he met Frankie.

Frankie saw the whole world through different eyes. He believed literally in Heaven, and he rejoiced in his lovely world and all the small things of beauty that he could see in the world around him. Tom and Frankie became best friends and to Tom, Frankie was the best thing in his whole world.

This is the story of one boy's journey of faith and love. Set in the 1950's, when expectations and society were very different from today, it is still a contemporary story.

Judith Clarke's story is warm, moving and so beautifully written that the words and characters will stay with you long after you put this book down.

In this world where our lives are so busy and we are all so connected by the internet and social media, it is a timely reminder that we all need a friend like Frankie to show us the wonder of the world around us, and not just what is on the screen in front of us.

I'm sure this book will be on the CBCA Shortlist next year, and it would make for a wonderful classroom discussion about the power of love, faith, bullying, friendship and the attitudes towards homosexuality and the Catholic Church in the 1950's.

It will be best suited to those in Year 9 and above.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## **Wreck**

By Fleur Ferris

Publisher: Random House

ISBN 9780143784319 SCIS: 1808906

\$19.99

### *Blurb:*

Tamara Bennett is going to be the first journalist to strictly report only good news. Finished with high school, Tamara is ready to say goodbye to her sleepy little town and part-time job at the local paper. O-weeks awaits, which means parties, cute boys and settling into student res with her best friend Relle. Things take an unexpected turn, however, when she arrives home to find her house ransacked and her life in danger. What is this mysterious note? And why does it mean so much to one of Australia's most powerful media moguls? Caught between a bitter rivalry and dangerous family secret, who can Tamara trust? Or should she trust herself?



### *Lamont Review:*

Fleur Ferris is a fantastic author of gripping YA crime suspense thrillers and *Wreck* might be her best work yet! She certainly draws on personal experience, both as a police officer and paramedic.

Our main character Tamara is about to enter university to study journalism, with high ideals of only ever writing good news stories. Alternate chapters are the story of William - set five years ago, when the superyacht belonging to his mega-rich media family capsized and his adored cousin Christian went missing, presumed dead. I can't give the story away except to say that Tamara's life changes instantly when she discovers a letter in a bottle while surfing. Could it really be from Christian?

Tamara is faced with an epic challenge - uncovering the true story with a whole empire working against her. It is an exceptional story that will resonate with teens of today as it asks questions of media power and control by the wealthy. It raises questions of trust, family and corruption and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Both the central characters, and storyline are exceptional.

Best suited to those 14 and older.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## **Pretty Girls Don't Eat**

By Winnie Salamon

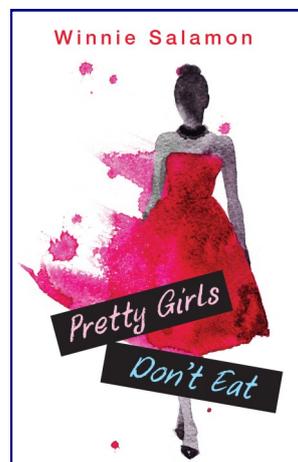
Publisher: Ford Street Publishing

ISBN 9781925272772 SCIS: 1822160

\$17.95

### *Blurb:*

Winter Mae Jones knows exactly what she wants. A career in fashion design. There's only one thing standing in her way. She's fat. And fat girls don't work in the fashion industry. So Winter decides to take matters into her own hands. She goes on a diet, which at first makes her feel fab and in control. It's only when things get out of hand that she comes to realise that, not only has she less control than she thought, but also that her weight has nothing to do with what's holding her back.



### *Lamont Review:*

Sixteen-year-old Winter is, and always has been, a larger sized girl, with a gorgeous Mum who makes her feel inadequate. Winter dreams of being a fashion designer, so she is over the moon when she lands a job at a local women's fashion boutique.

Mabel, the owner and fashion designer, is everything Winter wants to be - Mabel is totally cool with her large body, whilst Winter is struggling to find her contentment.

But after Winter starts her first real relationship with the wonderful Oliver, Winter starts obsessing over her weight - resorting to laxatives as a form of weight loss. This starts brilliantly, but turns nasty when Winter is rushed to hospital suffering from dehydration.

The roller coaster ride that Winter experiences after this is heartbreaking, and you see how terrible the condition can be, and how media and societal expectations to be thin can put added pressure on someone who may be already struggling.

This book cuts to the heart of this insidious disease, but it is also an empowering story, that will help those struggling with body issues, as well as giving others a better appreciation of the pressures that can exist for those struggling.

It is a particularly easy to read novel that will best suit teenage girls.

*Reviewed by Rob*

## **The Ones That Disappeared**

By Zana Fraillon

Publisher: Lothian/Hachette

ISBN 9780734417152 SCIS: 1808901

\$19.99

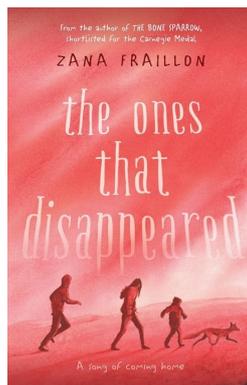
### *Blurb:*

A powerful and moving story of three trafficked children searching for freedom and hope.

Around the world, millions of people - including many children - are victims of human trafficking. These modern-day slaves often go unseen even in our own cities and towns, their voices silent and their stories untold. In this incredible book, Zana Fraillon imagines the story of three such children, Esra, Miran and Isa. The result is powerful, heartbreaking and unforgettable.

Esra, Miran and Isa work for the Snakeskin gang, tending to plants in the dark and airless basement of a house they are not allowed to leave. They've been told that they belong to the Snakeskins, but Esra knows that she belongs to no one - and she is determined to find freedom.

This is a SKELLIG for this generation; beautiful, magical and with Zana Fraillon's incredible talent for combining important global issues with extraordinary storytelling.



### *Lamont Review:*

Esra, Miran and Isa are three children whose parents were told they were being taken to a wonderful country for a better life. In reality, the children have been sold into slavery. Locked in the basement of a house where they must tend to drug plants, and where they are never allowed to leave, until one day they escape...

Zana Fraillon weaves a heart-breaking and powerful tale of the strength of the human spirit, despite all attempts to crush it. The children have unique personalities and their friendships with each other, and with the people they meet as they flee for their lives, are unforgettable.

The story has a mystical element throughout, but ultimately it is a story of hope, friendship, resilience, and freedom.

This is a perfect book to introduce the horrors of human trafficking and to open discussions about the millions of people who disappear around the world every year.

Best suited to readers in Year 8 and up.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

## **The Dream Walker**

By Victoria Carless

Publisher: Lothian/Hachette

ISBN 9780734417473 SCIS: 1808911

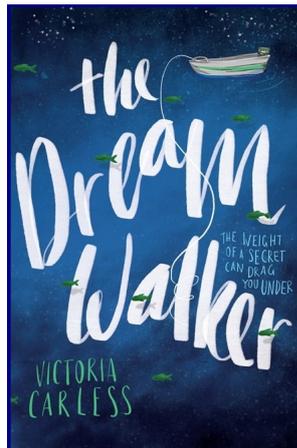
\$19.99

### *Blurb:*

Sixteen-year-old Lucy Hart has been counting the days till she can get the hell out of Digger's Landing - a small Queensland fishing hamlet home to fifteen families, a posse of mongrel dogs, and Parkers Corner Store (no apostrophe and nowhere near a corner).

But just like the tides Lucy's luck is on the turn, and as graduation nears her escape plans begin to falter; her best friend, Polly, is dropping out of school to help pay the bills, and Tom has been shipped off to boarding school, away from the flotsam of this place. And then there's Lucy's nightlife, which is filled with dreams that just don't seem to belong to her at all . . .

When the fish stop biting, like they did when her mum was still around, Lucy realises she isn't the only one with a secret.



### *Lamont Review:*

This is a wonderful story and you will be drawn to our main character Lucy. She has already endured so much with the death of her mother, only one year earlier. It is a death that she doesn't understand and one that has had a severe impact on both Lucy and her father, leaving Lucy struggling to communicate with him.

Lucy lives in the small fishing town of Digger's Landing, where everyone knows everything about everyone, and life is tough. Lucy just can't wait to get out of the place and head to the city. But her plans are falling apart! Both her best friends have deserted her, and she feels more alone than ever.

But it is her dreams that are causing her the most trouble. Are these 'dream walks' into the lives of others that now haunt her all linked, and what connection do they have to her dead mother, the lack of fish and the bad feelings towards her family?

This story touches on and deals with a real mix of social and family issues including family violence, grief, bullying, alcoholism and suicide. But it is also a story of friendship, love and hope. It has a very 'magical realism' feel to it, where the boundaries of dreams and reality merge together.

It is a fantastic read for all those who believe in the power of dreams, and is best suited to those 14+.

*Reviewed by Sam*

## That Stubborn Seed of Hope

By Brian Falkner

Publisher: University of Queensland Press

ISBN 9780702259692 SCIS: 1808903

\$19.95

### Blurb:

A collection of gripping short stories themed around fear and hope written by internationally acclaimed children's author Brian Falkner.

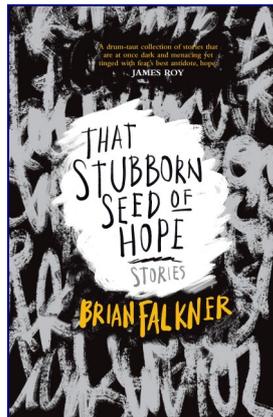
A boy helps his sister disguise her birthmark on her first day of school.

A seventeen-year-old awakens to find himself trapped in an elderly body.

A teenage girl discovers her boyfriend has a life-threatening virus the day after they share their first kiss.

A high school student tries to communicate to his hospitalised brother who is in a vegetative state.

Brian Falkner serves up bite-sized tales of fear – fear of rejection, fear of dying, fear of disease, fear of the unknown, fear of exclusion, fear of being caught and fear of embarrassment – showing how that stubborn seed of hope hungers our darkest moments.



### Lamont Review:

Brian Falkner has written some incredible short stories with fear as the common thread.

We experience the fear of dying in *The Kiss*, where the deadly Marburg virus has wiped out much of the world's population and sixteen year Samantha (and yes, she has a 'h' at the end of her name) decides to risk everything and kiss her boyfriend.

The fear of growing old is confronted in the body swapping story *I Am Seventeen*.

The fear of rejection and having no friends, set at a religious camp, in *Sins and Grief*.

But the one that has stayed with me is *The Smile*. A brilliant young Year 12 student doing first year neuroscience tries to communicate with his brother who, as the result of a motorbike accident, lies in a vegetative state. The results, while great, turn hopeless and truly frightening.

This is a great collection of short stories. I really enjoyed all of these stories, and they will be most enjoyed by those that aren't afraid of confronting some fears while reading. These stories are great for helping to get more reluctant readers interested as they are all sharp and to the point, they keep you on the edge of your seat, are ideal for all teenagers, and being short stories you can read a complete story very quickly.

Reviewed by Rob

## **Sky**

By Ondine Sherman

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781925399189 SCIS: 1822178

\$18.99

### *Blurb:*

Sometimes you have to lose everything to find yourself.

After her mother's death, Sky leaves her city life to move in with her aunt and uncle in a small Australian town. But the city isn't all that she leaves behind. Trying to fit in with her new friends means doing things she never dreamt she'd do.

Just as she thinks everything is starting to feel normal, Sky stumbles on a case of animal cruelty that forces her to make some tough decisions.



### *Lamont Review:*

When Sky's mother dies, she moves from Sydney to a small country town to live with her Aunt and Uncle.

Sky is devastated by her Mum's death, and is struggling to come to terms with her grief. Add to this trying to fit in at a new school, make new friends, and adapt to country life, and Sky is a mess.

When a school project about agriculture leads Sky to find a case of animal cruelty, she must decide if her new friends are worth giving up her beliefs for, or should she follow her heart?

Beautifully written, Sky's story will tug on your heart strings. This is about being true to yourself, fighting for what you know is right, and growing up.

Central themes of this book are family, love, loss, grief, animal cruelty, beliefs, and friendships.

A thoroughly enjoyable read, will be most enjoyed by girls in Year 9 and up.

*Reviewed by Michelle*

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