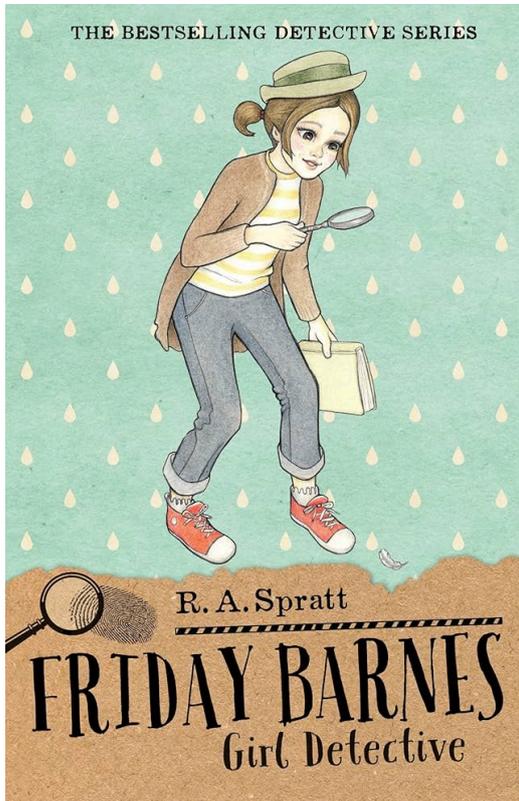




RECOMMENDED READS

Book recommendations from the
ALIA Schools team to accompany
the Engaging Readers webinar
featuring Jacqueline Harvey

JACQUELINE HARVEY RECOMMENDS...



When Friday Barnes solves a bank robbery, she uses the reward money to send herself to Highcrest Academy, the most exclusive boarding school in the country--and discovers it's a hotbed of crime!

Soon she's investigating everything from disappearing homework to the terrifying Yeti haunting the school swamp. But the biggest mystery yet is Ian Wainscott, the handsomest (and most arrogant) boy in school who inexplicably hates her. Will the homework be found? Can they ever track down the Yeti? And why is Ian out to ruin her?

Sometimes it's good to be wild.

Sometimes you have to be wild.

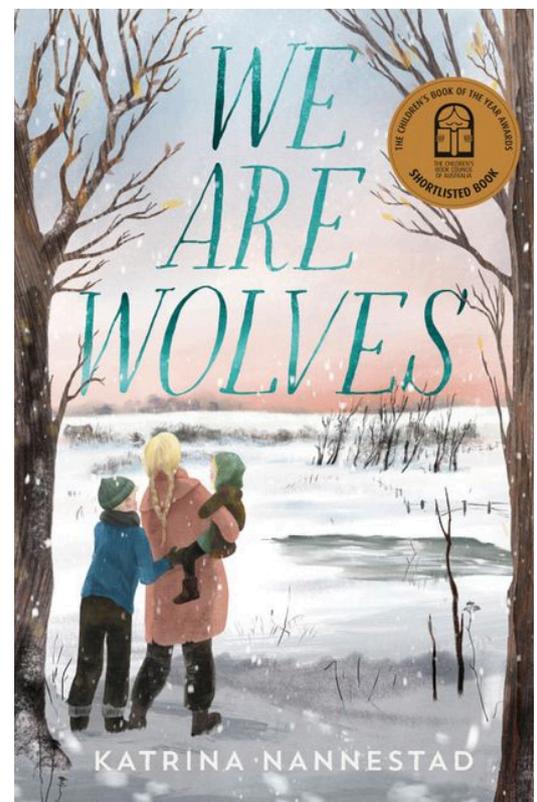
When the Russian Army marches into East Prussia at the end of the war, the Wolf family must flee. Liesl, Otto and their baby sister Mia find themselves lost and alone, in a blizzard, in the middle of a war zone.

Liesl has promised Mama that she will keep her brother and sister safe.

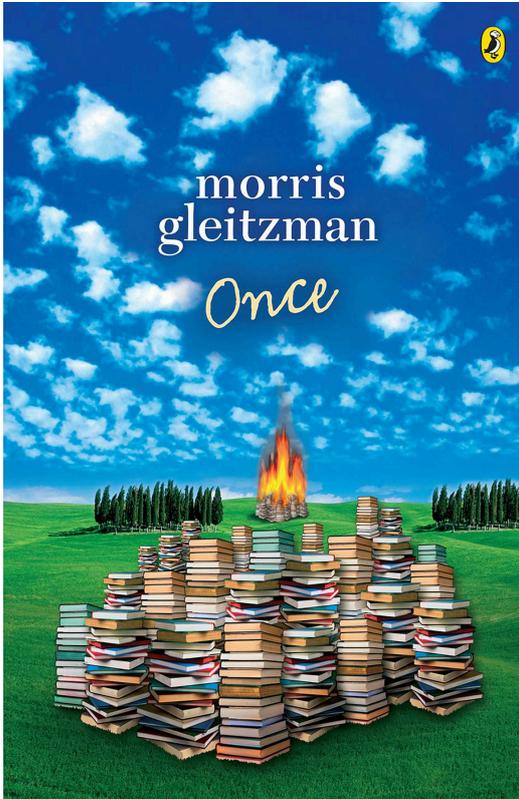
But sometimes, to survive, you have to do bad things.

Dangerous things. Wild things.

Sometimes to survive, you must become a wolf.



JACQUELINE HARVEY RECOMMENDS...



Everybody deserves to have something good in their life. At least Once.

Once I escaped from an orphanage to find Mum and Dad.

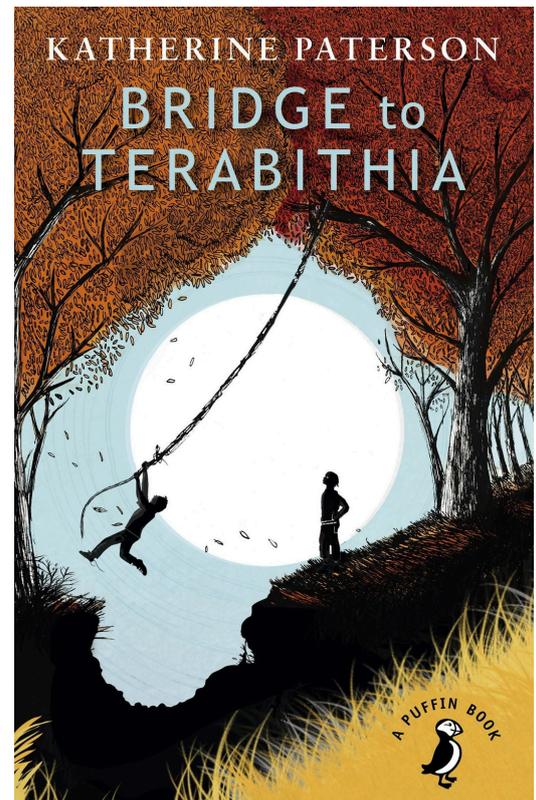
Once I saved a girl called Zelda from a burning house.

Once I made a Nazi with a toothache laugh.

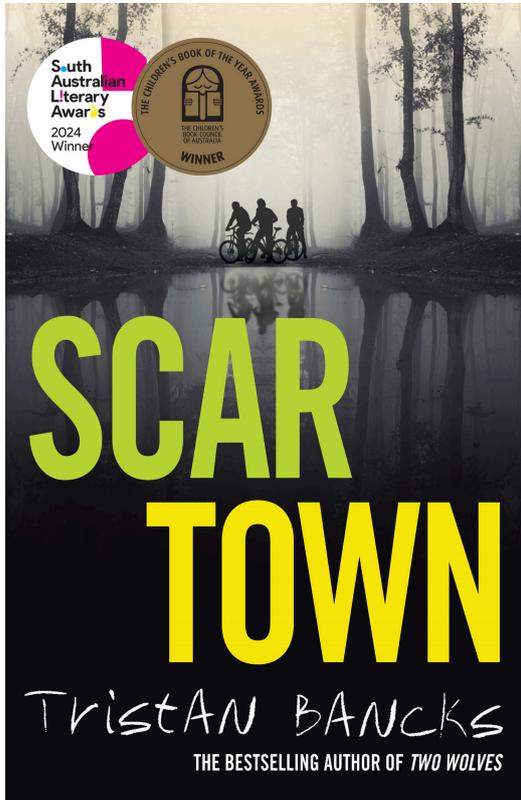
My name is Felix. This is my story.

Jess Aarons has been practicing all summer so he can be the fastest runner in the fifth grade. And he almost is, until the new girl in school, Leslie Burke, outpaces him. The two become fast friends and spend most days in the woods behind Leslie's house, where they invent an enchanted land called Terabithia.

One morning, Leslie goes to Terabithia without Jess and a tragedy occurs. It will take the love of his family and the strength that Leslie has given him for Jess to be able to deal with his grief



JACQUELINE HARVEY RECOMMENDS...



Twelve-year-old Will Haddon and his twin friends, Dar and Juno, find a safe full of money and human bones in an old house that's sticking out of a rapidly receding lake amid the worst drought in history. Their mission to identify the body reveals secrets that will rewrite the history of their town and the story of their lives.

When Will was five, his dad, a young cop, went missing just days before Old Scarborough was drowned beneath a man-made lake for a hydroelectric scheme.

Old Scarborough's residents were promised new houses, jobs, tourist dollars and a fresh start, but hardly any of it materialised. Neither did Will's dad.

And he's not the only person to go missing from this bad-luck town. Will, Dar and Juno are forced on a dangerous journey to discover the truth in a town that wants the past to stay buried.

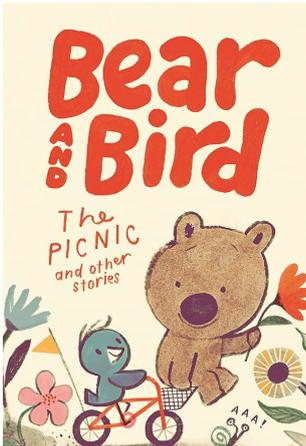
JACQUELINE'S BIO:

Jacqueline Harvey worked in schools for many years but has had a passion for storytelling since she was a child. She is the author of the popular Alice-Miranda, Clementine Rose, Kensy and Max and Willa and Woof series, which have sold almost two million copies in Australia alone.

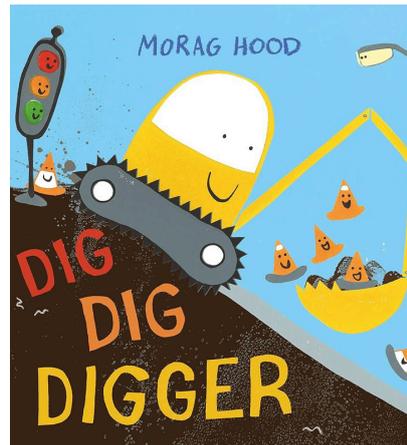


CONSTANT READER BOOKSHOP RECS

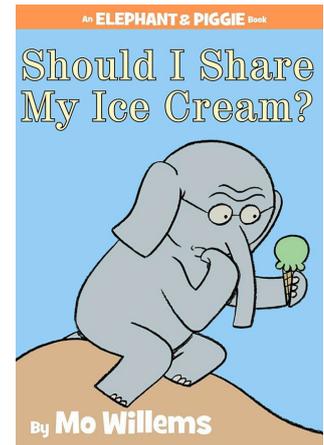
YEARS K-2



Sweet stories of friendship.

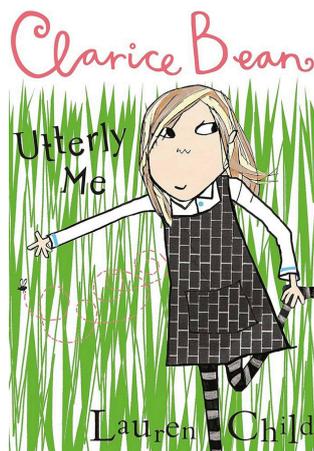


I love Morag Hood's books, they are all excellent.

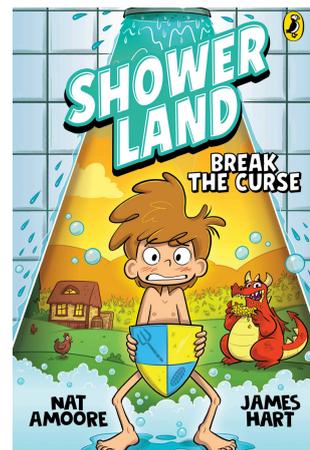


I've picked one title, but they are all amazing!

YEARS 3-4



Clarice is wonderful, she's an enduring favourite.



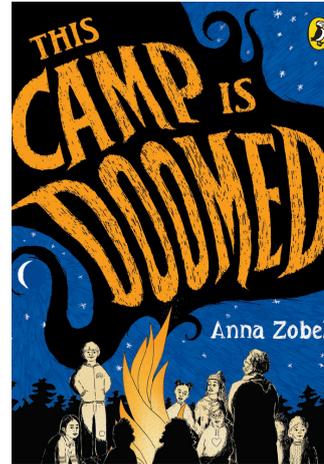
This series has been a huge hit with our kids book club.

CONSTANT READER BOOKSHOP RECS

YEARS 5-6

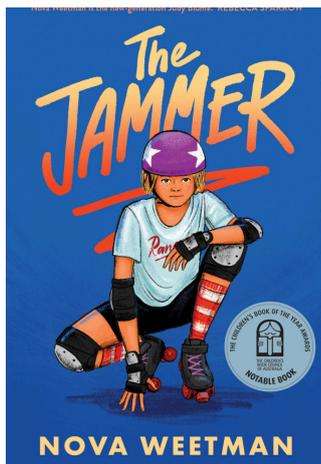


A fascinating multi-media novel, another book club hit for us.

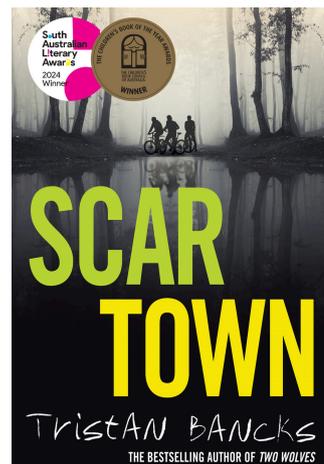


One of our favourites of the last couple of years.

MIDDLE GRADE



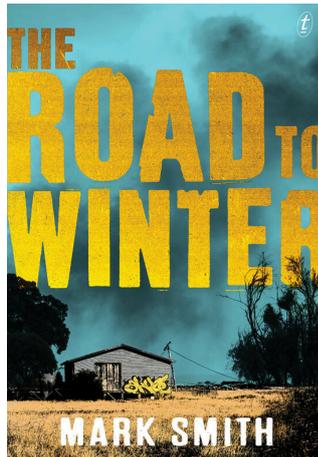
Nova Weetman is an incredible Aussie middle grade author.



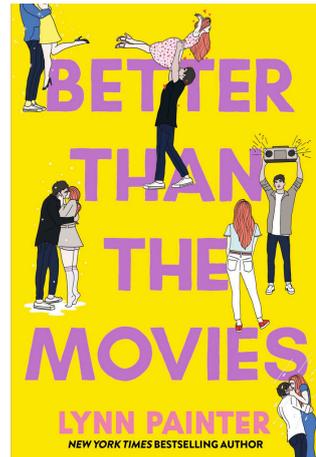
Tristan Bancks writes excellent crime/thrillers.

CONSTANT READER BOOKSHOP RECS

YOUNG ADULT



First in an excellent survival trilogy set on the north coast of NSW, reminiscent of *Tomorrow When the War Began*.



A sweet slice-of-life romance story.

The Constant Reader Bookshop is a village-style bookshop on the Lower North Shore in Sydney. They have been trading since May 1979, and recently expanded, opening the Kids shop in 2022.

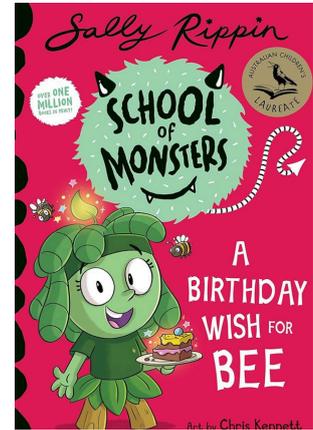
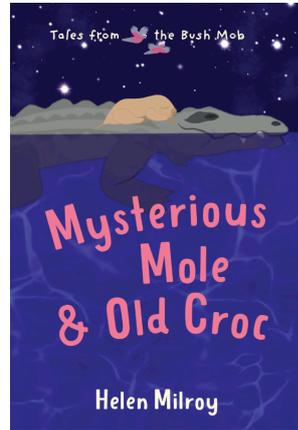
CONSTANT
READER



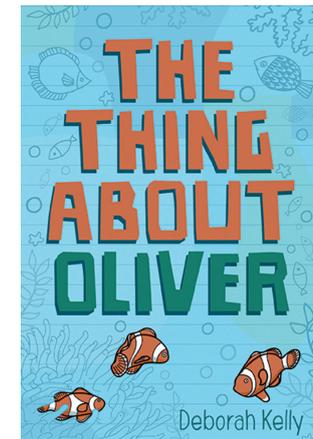
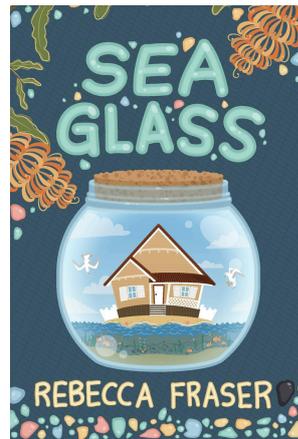
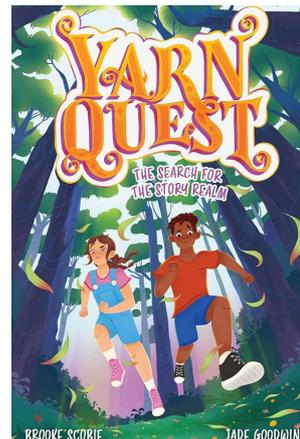
ALIA SCHOOLS

THE BOOK COW BOOKSHOP RECS

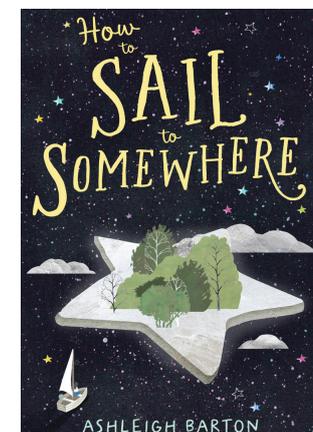
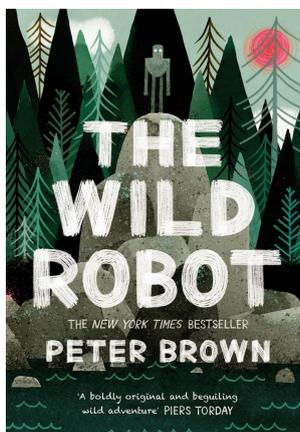
AGES 5+



AGES 8+

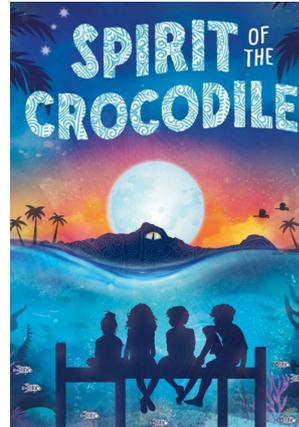
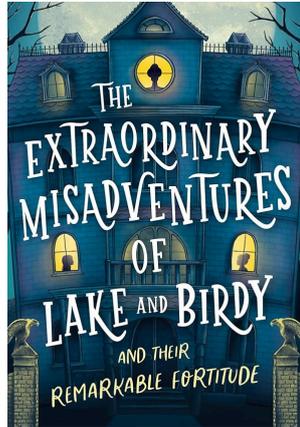
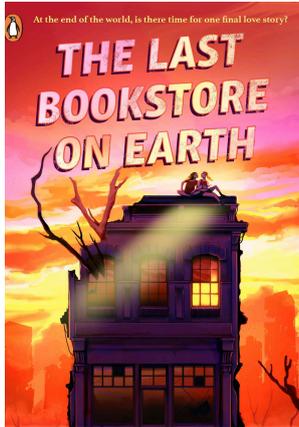


AGES 12+



THE BOOK COW BOOKSHOP RECS

AGES 14+



The Book Cow provided us with curated lists of books for reluctant readers, featuring so many titles we couldn't highlight them all! Visit the following QR codes for even more recommendations for reluctant readers.

AGES 5+



AGES 8+



AGES 12+



AGES 14+



The Book Cow are proud to be an independent and local bookseller in Canberra. With a love of all genres, they stock a great range of books from cookbooks, to crime, fiction and memoirs.



47 Jardine Street KINGSTON www.bookcow.com.au Ph 02 5100 2730

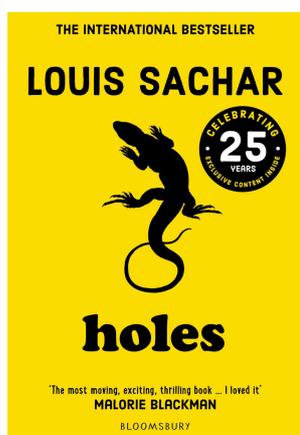
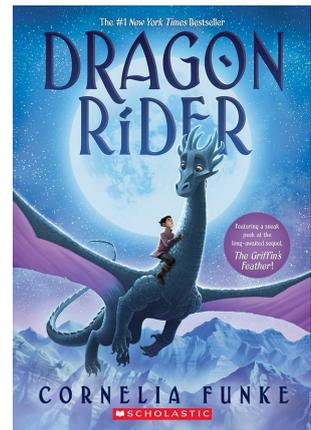
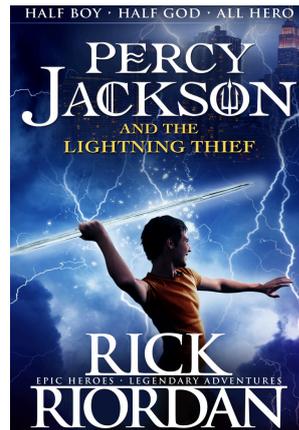
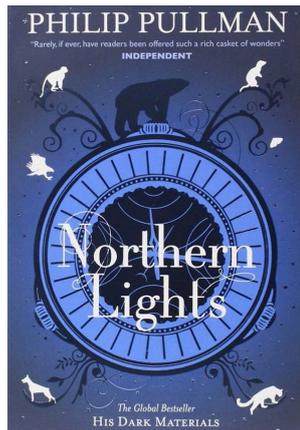
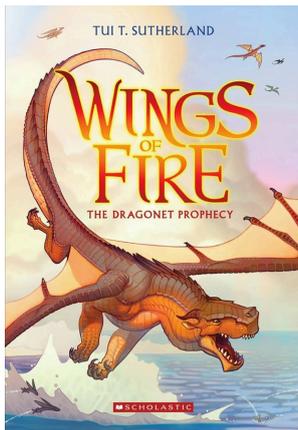
Canberra's newest, independent bookshop - selling pages for all ages



ALIA SCHOOLS

THE BOOKSHOP DARWIN BOOKSHOP RECS

The Bookshop Darwin provided us with a list of popular books that have all been tried and tested with readers over the years. While not an exhaustive list, you're bound to find a winner from this lot of titles.



The Bookshop Darwin is a locally owned, independent bookstore nestled in the Smith Street Mall in the heart of Darwin City. Come share our passion for reading, get lost in our aisles and escape into a world of books.

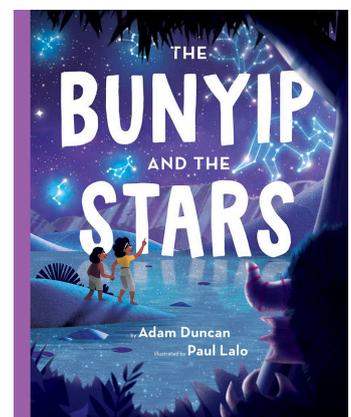
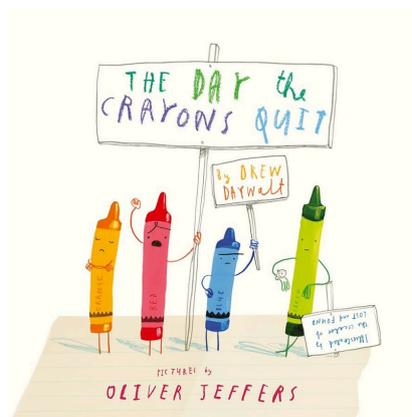
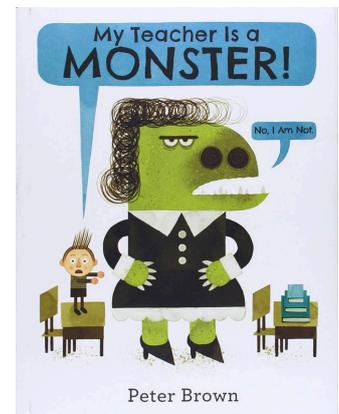
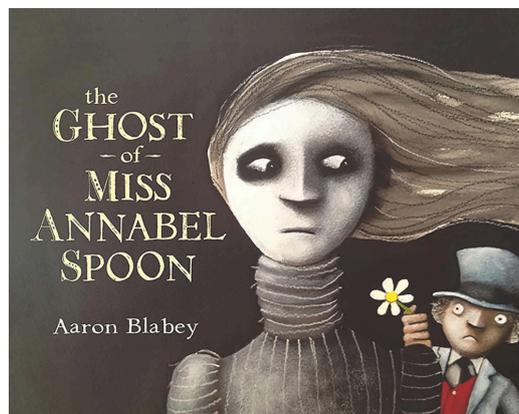
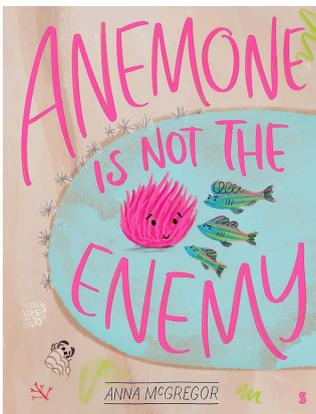
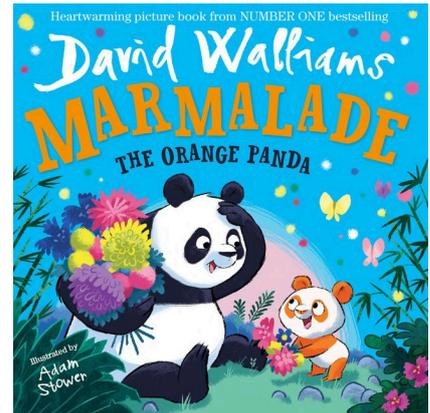
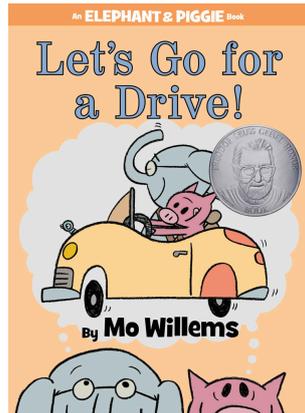
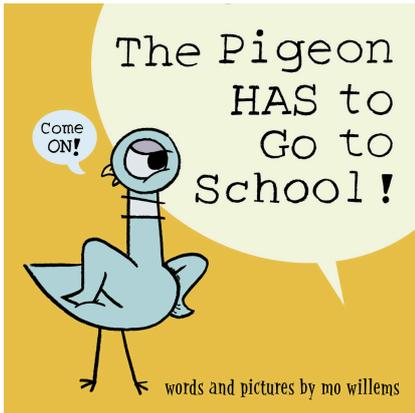


THE BOOKSHOP
DARWIN
GET LOST IN OUR WORLD OF BOOKS

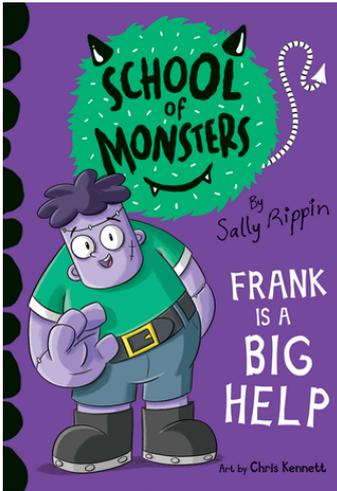


PICTURE BOOK PARTY

Picture books are fantastic for reluctant readers. They're accessible, bright, fun, and often surprisingly deep. While favourites such as Do Not Open This Book, Where's Wally, and literally anything Bluey will always be popular, here are some slightly more uncommon favourites in my collection. **SARAH**



PRIMARY PICKS

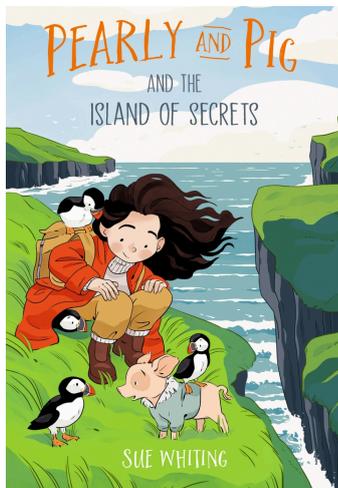
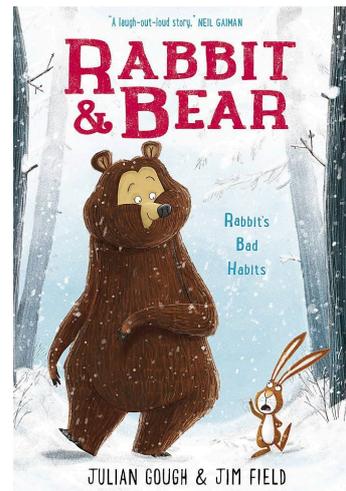


Year 1: A perfect series for emerging readers to build fluency and confidence. Funny characters who smell and stink and learn to regulate their feelings!

ROSIE

Year 2: A funny series with lovely illustrations about two friends. Perfect for building confident readers.

ROSIE

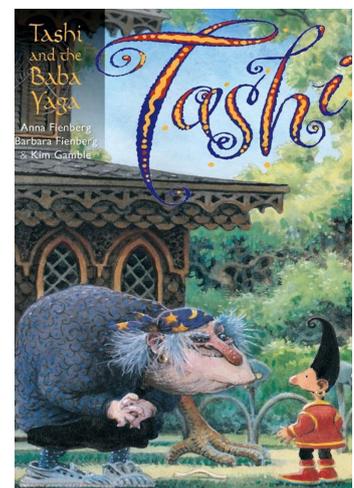


Year 3: Endearing characters and great for those readers who are overwhelmed by books with lots of description. Cute illustrations too.

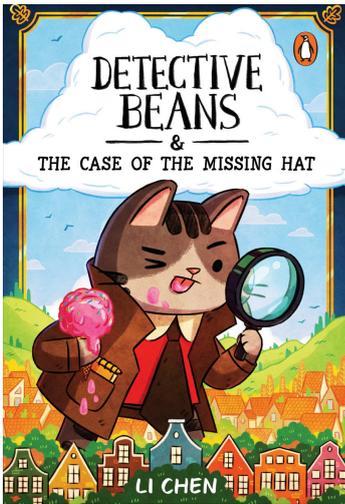
ROSIE

Years 2–4: it is important that readers encounter stories where boys are reflected as clever, courageous, and kind. Tashi does this beautifully through thrilling, fast-paced, fantasy themed adventures that retain a 'chapter book' feel despite their shorter length.

RACHAEL



PRIMARY PICKS

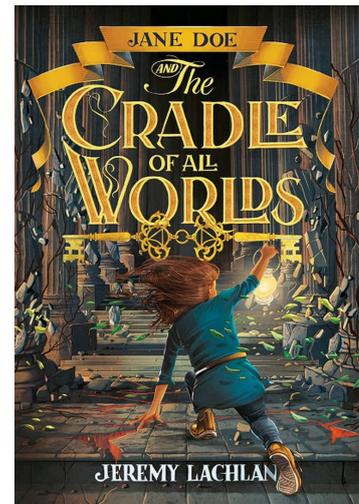


Year 4: A fun mystery that keep readers engaged in the story!

ROSIE

Year 5: Fast paced, fantasy, quest books that keep readers engaged as they move through the story with Jane Doe.

ROSIE

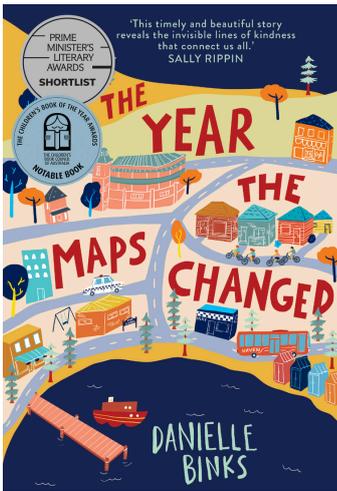


Year 6: the heart warming story of a girl looking for her place in the world following a family tragedy. Will hook. You in straight away.

ROSIE



MIDDLE GRADE GOODIES

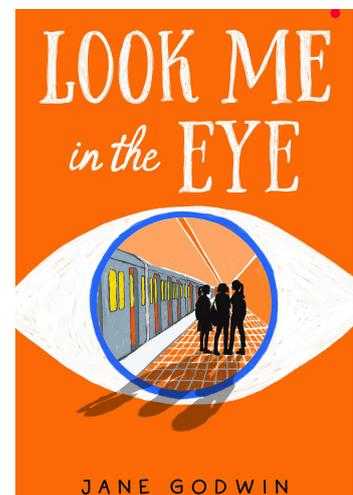


Perfect for middle school – this book focusses on refugees, families, relationships at school with friends and teachers and how one young person made a difference in their circle of influence.

HELEN

Anything by Jane Goodwin is great for this age bracket. I love that this book explores current topics of social media and weaves in the complexities of being a young teenager navigating high school.

ROSIE



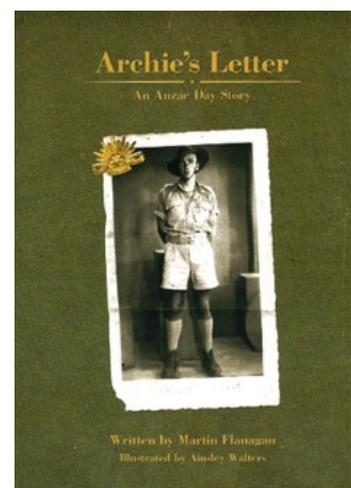
Action, adventure, hooks you in and then students read the rest of the books in the series.

CATHERINE B

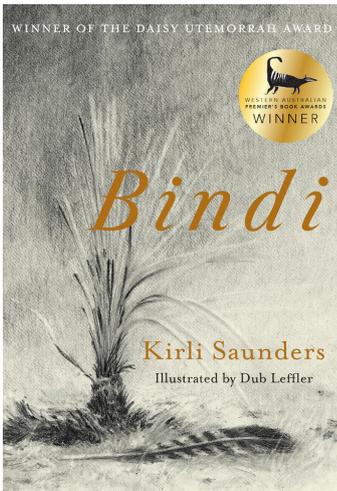


I get students to tell me what they think about the fish story (anyone who has read or seen "Long Road to the True North" know the story behind that). It is short and in picture book style so can be read in a period.

CATHERINE R



MIDDLE GRADE GOODIES

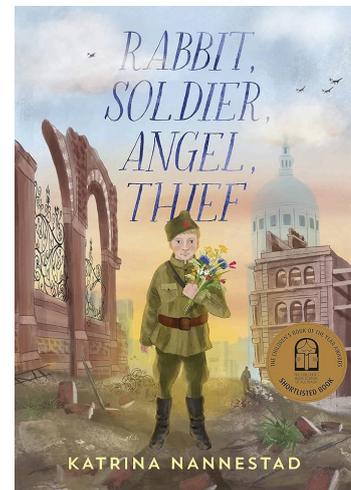


Written in multi texts (prose, poetry, dramatic script, etc.) Bindi is the indigenous heroine of this book. She rescues her horse and brings it to safety whilst the town is ravaged by bushfire. It explores her friendships and all that is important to her. So clever and a beautiful middle school read.

HELEN

An easy and engaging read. Perfect for those who enjoy history, but are daunted by complex storylines.

ROSIE

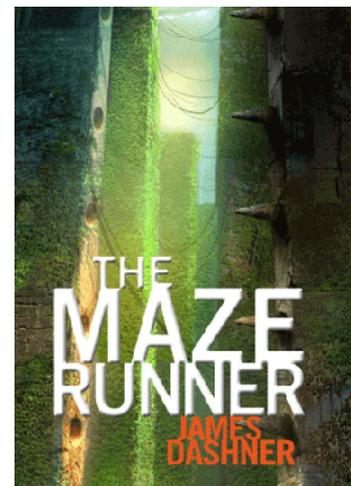


Tristan Bancks is very "what would you do in this situation" – great for middle-grade discussion! **CATHERINE B**



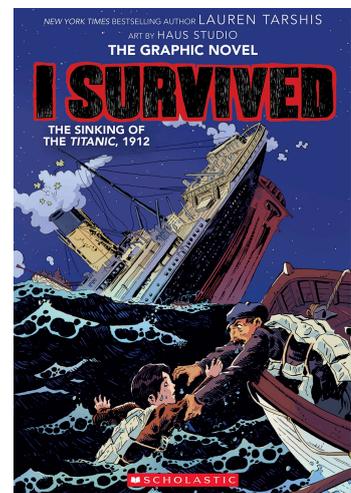
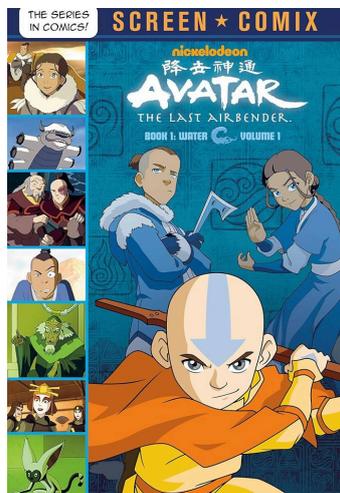
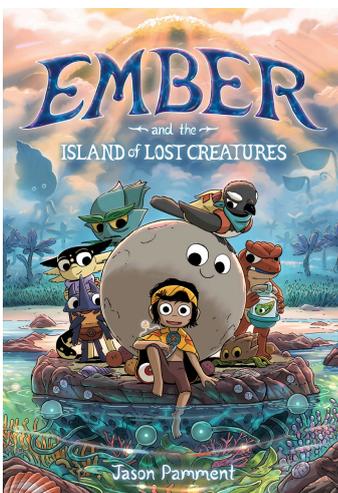
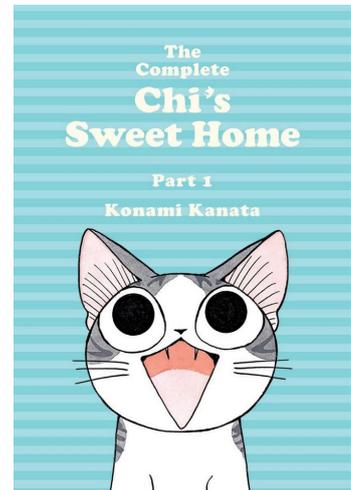
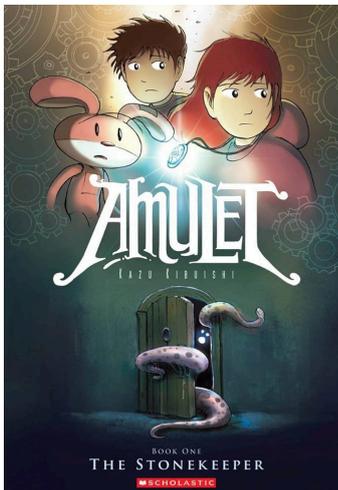
The Maze Runner is my go to for reluctant readers, particularly those drawn to action-packed stories with a gripping plot. Its straightforward language, emphasis on adventure, and vivid imagery is what makes the story easy to visualize and follow.

ELA



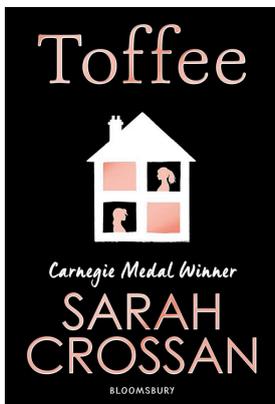
GRAPHIC GREATS

In my P-12 library in Melbourne's west, and surely in yours as well, graphic novels are by far the most popular format with a large portion of the student population. Longer than traditional comic books and packed with colour illustrations, graphic novels are a fantastic gateway into a love of literature for reluctant readers. Here are some recommendations, based entirely on what's most popular with my middle-grade students right now. **SARAH**

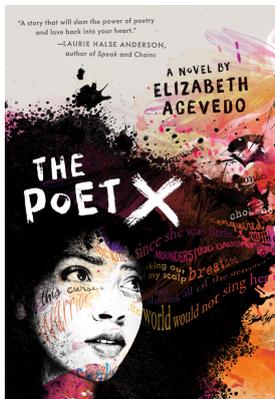


VERSE NOVELS

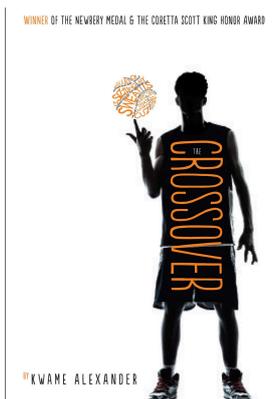
I'm a huge fan of verse novels for reluctant readers. SCIS often catalogues them as poetry (which I guess is technically correct!) but having them in the main fiction collection makes them more accessible. Readers are sometimes intimidated with the idea of reading poetry, but often find the less dense text on the page makes stories and characters more accessible. **CAROLINE**



Toffee, One and Moonrise by Sarah Crossan. I love the way Crossan focuses on big issues – homelessness, the death penalty, and making life changing choices as an adolescent with a real focus on characterisation. Year 7+.

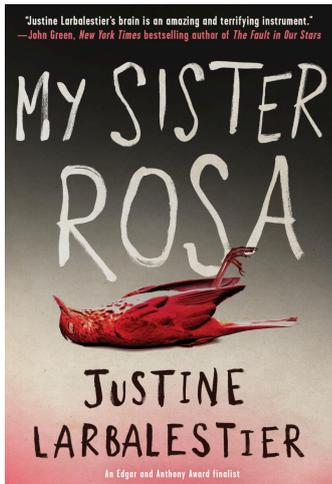


The Poet X and With the Fire on High by Elizabeth Acevedo. I love the way her writing distills the everything to the essence of what makes a great read. Year 7+.



The Crossover by Kwame Alexander. Sport, onomatopoeia, and friendship. What else could you want in a verse novel? Year 6+.

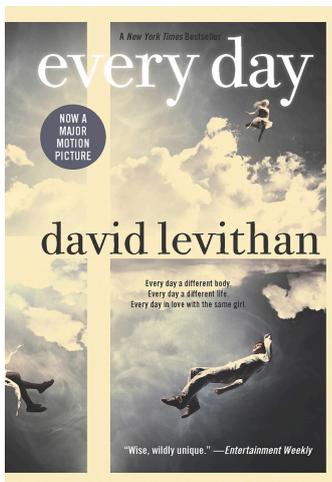
HIGH SCHOOL HITS



This is one I would present to older students (typically Year 9+) who indicate a preference for/interest in psychological thrillers.

Masterfully told in first person, present tense, there are twists you see coming and those you don't – a great example of how the narrator can shape the reader's view without them even realising. **EMMA**

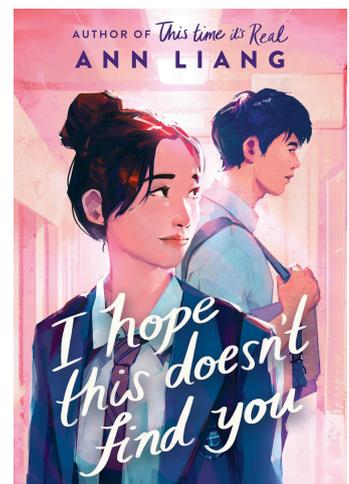
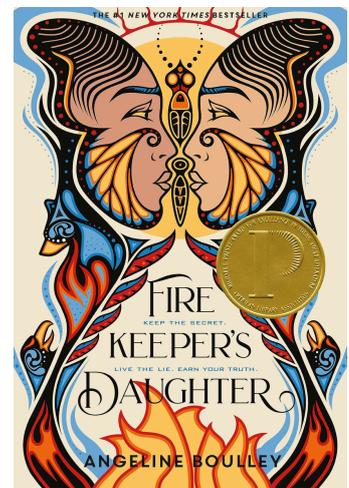
A young adult, coming of age, crime novel with a dash of romance. Looks big, but an easy read. **ROSIE**



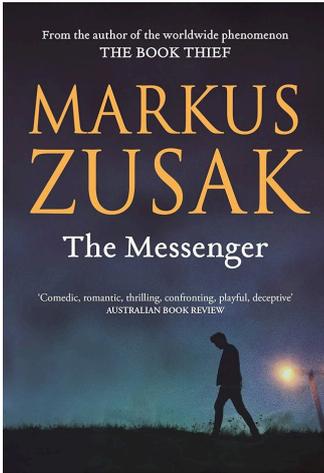
A person wakes up in the body of a different person every day...only one day they meet this girl and want to have that day again. Great for Year 9 – especially boys. **CATHERINE B**

Sadie is a perfect (but anxious) student who writes draft emails to people that upset or anger her as a way to channel her emotions. All is fine until her final year of high school when they are suddenly sent out, including to the boy she has sworn to hate. But it turns out he might just be the only person who appreciates the real Sadie. Years 7–9.

ANNA



HIGH SCHOOL HITS

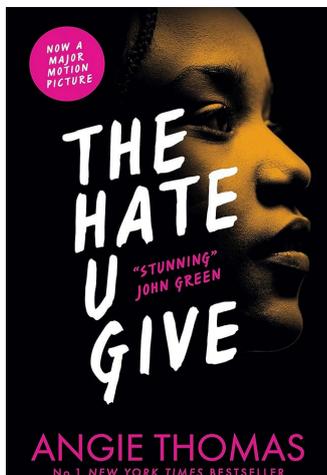
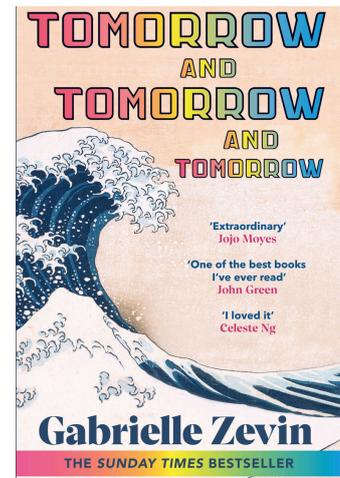


Coming of age in a small Australian town and the weird and wonderful things that happen to the protagonist. Year 10+.

ROSIE

Beautifully written, quirky topic (game development) and details the blurred boundaries and depth of love over time. Year 10+.

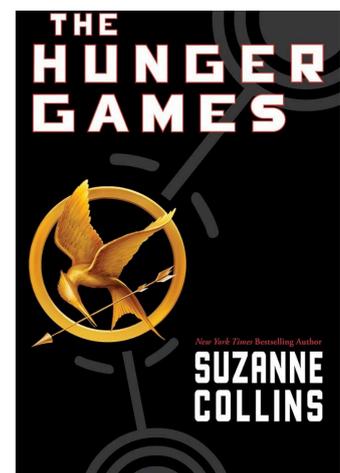
ROSIE



This one really gets them in their "teenage"!

CATHERINE

The intense, high-stakes narrative, fast-paced plot, strong protagonist, and dystopian setting quickly engage readers. The accessible writing style, vivid world-building, and emotional depth make it both easy to follow and hard to put down, appealing to teens who might not usually enjoy reading. **ELA**



WHO ARE WE?

The ALIA Schools team is made up of library staff with different qualifications from across the country, in every sector, and every age group. To help with your recommendations, here's a list of our demographics:

Anna: 7–12 Catholic school, Northern suburbs Melbourne

Caroline: K–12 independant non–denominational school, Northern Sydney

Catherine B: Post–secondary education, South Australia

Catherine R: P–12 Christian school, Western suburbs of Melbourne

Ela: K–12 Catholic school, Northern Sydney

Emma: Post–secondary education, South Australia

Helen: EC–12 independant non–denominational school, Central Queensland

Rachael: K–12 Catholic school, Greater Western Sydney

Rosie: K–12 independant non–denominational school, Northern Sydney

Sarah: P–12 public school, Western suburbs of Melbourne

Book reviews in the Jacqueline Harvey Recommends section are from goodreads.com. This booklet compiled in May 2025 to accompany the ALIA Schools webinar, Engaging readers: a novel approach with author and educator Jacqueline Harvey.



Visit the ALIA Schools website for school library resources, research articles, and even sign up for our newsletter!

