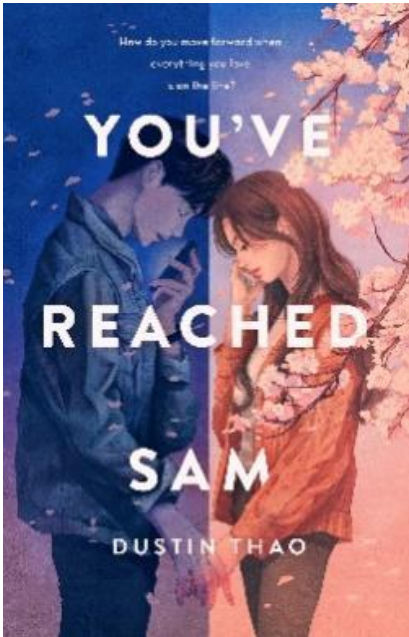


BSC Book Club's Book Recs!!!



You've Reached Sam - Justin Thao

Seventeen-year-old Julie has her future all planned out—move out of her small town with her boyfriend Sam, attend college in the city, spend a summer in Japan. But then Sam dies. And everything changes.

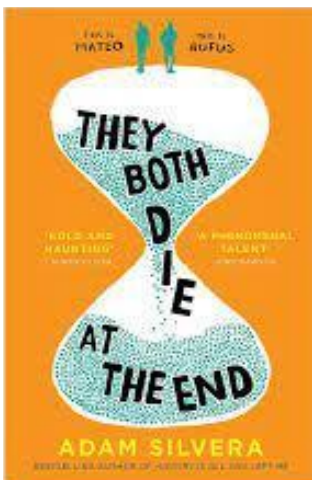
Heartbroken, Julie skips his funeral, throws out his things, and tries everything to forget him and the tragic way he died. But a message Sam left behind in her yearbook forces back memories. Desperate to hear his voice one more time, Julie calls Sam's cellphone just to listen to his voicemail.

And Sam picks up the phone.

In a miraculous turn of events, Julie's been given a second chance at goodbye. The connection is temporary. But hearing Sam's voice makes her fall for him all over again, and with each call it becomes harder to let him go. However, keeping her otherworldly calls with Sam a secret isn't easy, especially when Julie witnesses the suffering Sam's family is going through. Unable to stand by the sidelines and watch their shared loved ones in pain, Julie is torn between spilling the truth about her calls with Sam and risking their connection and losing him forever.

Our Thoughts – Romance that gives messages about grief, death and letting go of loved ones. We very much enjoyed this as it is very good.

Rating – 4 stars



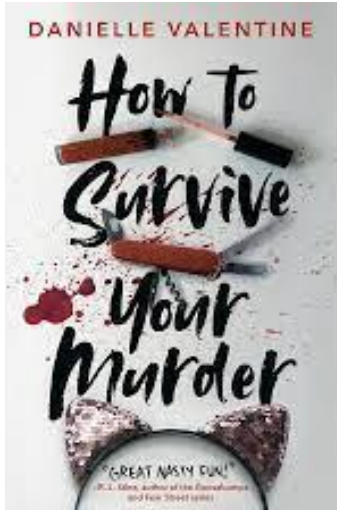
They Both Die at the End - Adam Silvera

On September 5, a little after midnight, Death-Cast calls Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio to give them some bad news: They're going to die today.

Mateo and Rufus are total strangers, but, for different reasons, they're both looking to make a new friend on their End Day. The good news: There's an app for that. It's called the Last Friend, and through it, Rufus and Mateo are about to meet up for one last great adventure—to live a lifetime in a single day.

Our Thoughts – This is an amazing book that transports you into the world of Mateo and Rufus, though being told from both characters perspectives we get to know both of them. We care for the characters and this book is impossible to put down. The importance of having a friend that understands you is shown in this groundbreaking book where the main characters don't survive the end.

Rating – 4.5 stars



How to Survive Your Murder - Danielle Valentine

Alice Lawrence is the sole witness in her sister's murder trial.

And in the year since Claire's death, Alice's life has completely fallen apart. Her parents have gotten divorced, she's moved into an apartment that smells like bologna, and she is being forced to face her sister's killer and a courtroom full of people who doubt what she saw in the corn maze a year prior.

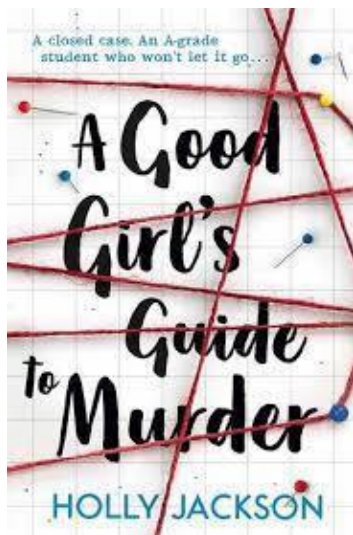
Claire was an all-American girl, beautiful and bubbly, and a theatre star. Alice was a nerd who dreamed of becoming a forensic pathologist and would rather stay at home to watch her favourite horror movies than party. Despite their differences, they were bonded by sisterhood and were each other's best friends.

Until Claire was taken away from her.

On the first day of the murder trial, as Alice prepares to give her testimony, she is knocked out by a Sidney Prescott look-alike in the courthouse bathroom. When she wakes up, it is Halloween morning a year earlier, the same day Claire was murdered. Alice has until midnight to save her sister and find the real killer before he claims another victim.

Our Thoughts – Plays into all classic horror movies. This was such an entertaining young adult horror novel. Some YA books read young, but this one definitely has some all-ages appeal.

Rating – 4 stars



A Good Girl's Guide to Murder - Holly Jackson

The case is closed. Five years ago, schoolgirl Andie Bell was murdered by Sal Singh. The police know he did it. Everyone in town knows he did it.

But having grown up in the same small town that was consumed by the murder, Pippa Fitz-Amobi isn't so sure. When she chooses the case as the topic for her final year project, she starts to uncover secrets that someone in town desperately wants to stay hidden. And if the real killer is still out there, how far will they go to keep Pip from the truth?

Our Thoughts – A good girls guide to murder is a bold change to murder mysteries, by making the murder have happened over 5 years ago, with the police declaring it a cold case. This book cannot be put down. It has you guessing who the murderer could be the whole book and it is one of the best murder mystery books.

Rating – 5 stars



Liars - Jack Heath

THE TRUTH APP is the latest craze in the town of Kelton. It listens to everyone around you and tells you if they're lying.

When the app goes viral, its teenage creator, Jarli, becomes famous overnight. But being a celebrity can be dangerous. Especially when you've just exposed everyone's deepest, darkest secrets.

Now everyone is out to get Jarli. Kids at school. Teachers. The police. Even his own family. And the secret network of criminals based in Kelton have just added Jarli to their hit list.

The TRUTH doesn't always set you free

Our Thoughts – Although Liars is a five book series it is very readable, every book has its own twist as the readers struggle to find out who this mysterious “viper” is, Jack Heath ends the series very well and all of his books are very enjoyable

Rating – 3.5 stars

Hangman - Jack Heath

A 14-year-old boy vanishes on his way home from school. His frantic mother receives a disturbing ransom call. It's only hours before the deadline, and the police have no leads.

Enter Timothy Blake, codename Hangman. Blake is a genius, known for solving impossible cases. He's also a sociopath - the FBI's last resort.

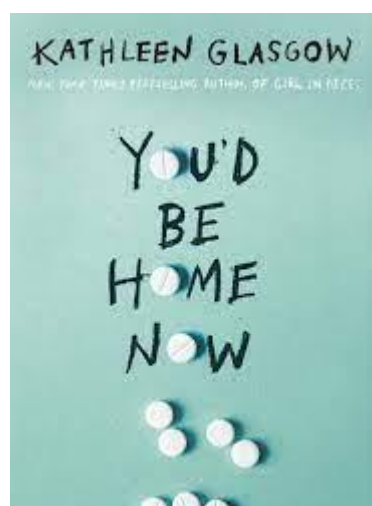
But this time Blake might have met his match. The kidnapper is more cunning and ruthless than anyone he's faced before. And Blake has been assigned a new partner, a woman linked to the past he's so desperate to forget.

Timothy Blake has a secret, he is a cannibal and he will do anything to keep it hidden.

And he also has a price. Every time he saves a life, he takes one.

Our Thoughts – Again I cannot fault Jack Heath, the suspense is nail biting, and we all want Timothy Blake to be alright, not only does he tell the story from a Cannibal's perspective, but we are also all rooting for him. Jack Heath makes us feel empathy as he tells a story of addiction in a whole new way.

Rating – 4.5 stars



You'd Be Home Now - Kathleen Glasgow

For all of Emory's life she's been told who she is. In town she's the rich one--the great-great-granddaughter of the mill's founder. At school she's hot Maddie Ward's younger sister. And at home, she's the good one, her stoner older brother Joey's babysitter. Everything was turned on its head, though, when she and Joey were in the car accident that

killed Candy MontClaire. The car accident that revealed just how bad Joey's drug habit was.

Four months later, Emmy's junior year is starting, Joey is home from rehab, and the entire town of Mill Haven is still reeling from the accident. Everyone's telling Emmy who she is, but so much has changed, how can she be the same person? Or was she ever that person at all?

Mill Haven wants everyone to live one story, but Emmy's beginning to see that people are more than they appear. Her brother, who might not be cured, the popular guy who lives next door, and most of all, many ghostie addicts who haunt the edges of the town. People spend so much time telling her who she is--it might be time to decide for herself.

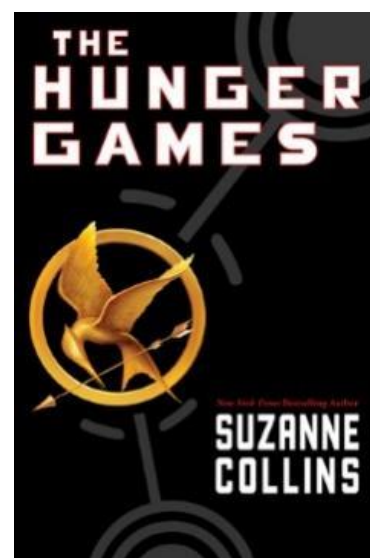
Our Thoughts – This book tells a story of addiction from the addict's sibling is a very innovative way to write a book, it helps us understand what life is like for addicts and how hard it is to quit, especially when peer pressure comes into play. This book breaks the stigma around addicts and is a great read.

Rating – 3.5 stars

The Hunger Games - Suzanne Collins

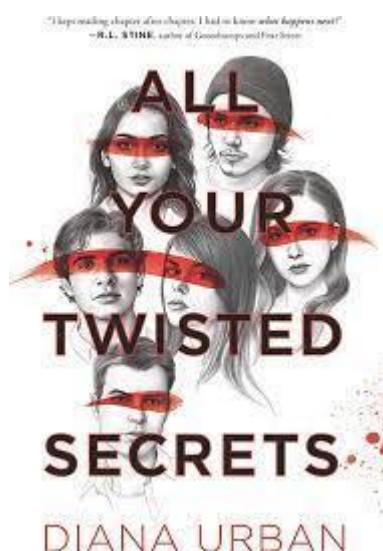
In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV.

Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she steps forward to take her sister's place in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead before—and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weight survival against humanity and life against love.



Our Thoughts – The hunger games is an amazing series and it is beloved by all ages and we can all see why. Suzanne creates a world for us to immerse ourselves into, there are no words to describe how good this book is and it is a must read.

Rating – 5 stars



All Your Twisted Secrets - Diana Urban

Welcome to dinner, and again, congratulations on being selected. Now you must do the selecting.

What do the queen bee, star athlete, valedictorian, stoner, loner, and music geek all have in common? They were all invited to a scholarship dinner, only to discover it's a trap. Someone has locked them into a room with a bomb, a syringe filled with poison, and a note saying they have an hour to pick someone to kill ... or else everyone dies.

Amber Prescott is determined to get her classmates and herself out of the room alive, but that might be easier said than done. No one knows how they're all connected or who would want them dead. As they retrace the events over the past year that might have triggered their captor's ultimatum, it becomes clear that everyone is hiding something. And with the clock ticking down, confusion turns into fear, and fear morphs into panic as they race to answer the biggest question: Who will they choose to die?

Our Thoughts – This book is so suspenseful, chapter after chapter more and more secrets were revealed about all the characters, it is a very easy read with no dull parts, it shows how much students affect the people around them.

Rating – 4.5 stars

Cinderella is Dead - Kalynn Bayron

It's 200 years after Cinderella found her prince, but the fairy tale is over. Teen girls are now required to appear at the Annual Ball, where the men of the kingdom select wives based on a girl's display of finery. If a suitable match is not found, the girls not chosen are never heard from again.

Sixteen-year-old Sophia would much rather marry Erin, her childhood best friend, than parade in front of suitors. At the ball, Sophia makes the desperate decision to flee, and finds herself hiding in Cinderella's mausoleum. There, she meets Constance, the last known descendant of Cinderella and her stepsisters. Together they vow to bring down the king once and for all—and in the process, they learn that there's more to Cinderella's story than they ever knew . . .



This fresh take on a classic story will make readers question the tales they've been told, and root for girls to break down the constructs of the world around them.

Our Thoughts – It has a bit of a slow start but once you get going it is really engaging, and a great read.

Rating – 4 stars



They'll Never Catch Us - Jessica Goodman

A thriller about two sisters vying for the top spot on their cross-country team--the only way out of their stifling small town. But their dreams are suddenly thrown into peril when a new girl threatens to take away everything, they've worked for... until she disappears.

Stella and Ellie Steckler are only a year apart, but their different personalities make their relationship complicated. Stella is single-minded, driven, and keeps to herself. Cross-country running is her life, and she won't let anything get in the way of being the best.

Her sister Ellie is a talented runner too, but she also lets herself have fun. She has friends. She goes to parties. She has a life off the course.

The sisters do have one thing in common, though: the new girl, Mila Keene. Both Stecklers' lives are upended when Mila comes to town. Mila was the top runner on her team back home and at first, Ellie and Stella view her as a threat. But soon Ellie can't help but be drawn to her warm, charming personality. After her best friend moved away and her first boyfriend betrayed her, Ellie's been looking for a friend. In a moment of weakness, she even shares her darkest secret with Mila. For her part, Stella finds herself noticing the ways she and Mila are similar. Mila is smart and strong--she's someone Stella can finally connect with. As the two get closer, Stella becomes something she vowed she'd never be: distracted.

With regionals approaching and college scouts taking notice, the pressure is on. Each girl has their future on the line and they won't let friendships get in their way. But then, suddenly, Mila goes out on a training run and never returns. No one knows what happened, but all eyes are on the Steckler sisters

Our Thoughts – this book is an amazing read, it will keep you guessing for the whole time, only being one book not a series it is surprising how much we get to know the characters, all of the characters grow throughout the book and the end is very surprising. The author does a good job of making us misthink about the murderer. This is an amazing book and is definitely worth the read.

Rating – 4 stars



***You'll Be the Death of Me* - Karen M. McManus**

Ivy, Mateo, and Cal used to be close. Now all they have in common is Carlton High and the beginning of a very bad day.

Type A Ivy lost a student council election to the class clown, and now she has to face the school, humiliated. Heartthrob Mateo is burned out--he's been working two jobs since his family's business failed. And outsider Cal just got stood up.... again.

So when Cal pulls into campus late for class and runs into Ivy and Mateo, it seems like the perfect opportunity to turn a bad day around. They'll ditch and go into the city. Just the three of them, like old times. Except they've barely left the parking lot before they run out of things to say...

Until they spot another Carlton High student skipping school--and follow him to the scene of his own murder. In one chance move, their day turns from dull to deadly. And it's about to get worse.

It turns out Ivy, Mateo, and Cal still have some things in common. They all have a connection to the dead kid. And they're all hiding something.

Now they're all wondering--could it be that their chance reconnection wasn't by chance after all?

Our Thoughts – This book goes in twists and turns by having the story told from all three peoples' perspective while also having parts of the school gossip YouTube channel, you can know what the school is thinking without actually being there. The storyline (like all of Karen M. McManus' books) is amazing and this book is worth the read.

Rating – 4 stars

One Of Us is Lying - Karen M. McManus

Pay close attention and you might solve this.

On Monday afternoon, five students at Bayview High walk into detention.

Bronwyn, the brain, is Yale-bound and never breaks a rule.

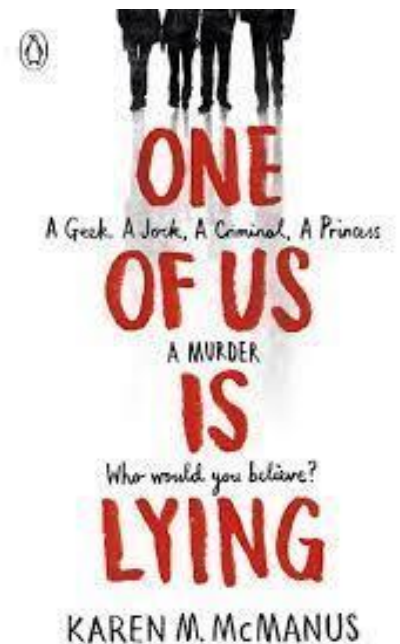
Addy, the beauty, is the picture-perfect homecoming princess.

Nate, the criminal, is already on probation for dealing.

Cooper, the athlete, is the all-star baseball pitcher.

And Simon, the outcast, is the creator of Bayview High's notorious gossip app.

Only, Simon never makes it out of that classroom. Before the end of detention Simon's dead. And according to investigators, his death wasn't an accident. On Monday, he died. But on Tuesday, he'd planned to post juicy reveals about all four of his high-profile classmates, which makes all four of them suspects in his murder. Or are they the perfect patsies for a killer who's still on the loose?



Everyone has secrets, right? What really matters is how far you would go to protect them.

Our Thoughts – the most popular of Karen M. McManus' books and you can see why. We have read this book so many times and it is always amazing, the way that it is told from the four suspects perspective, and you still suspect them all is truly outstanding. This is an amazing book which deals with the themes of depression, child abuse and drugs while being a happy read.

Rating – 4.5



Two Can Keep a Secret - Karen M. McManus

Echo Ridge is small-town America. Ellery's never been there, but she's heard all about it. Her aunt went missing there at age seventeen. And only five years ago, a homecoming queen put the town on the map when she was killed. Now Ellery has to move there to live with a grandmother she barely knows.

The town is picture-perfect, but it's hiding secrets. And before school even begins for Ellery, someone's declared open season on homecoming, promising to make it as dangerous as it was five years ago. Then, almost as if to prove it, another girl goes missing.

Ellery knows all about secrets. Her mother has them; her grandmother does too. And the longer she's in Echo Ridge, the clearer it becomes that everyone there is hiding something. The thing is, secrets are dangerous--and most people aren't good at keeping them. Which is why in Echo Ridge, it's safest to keep your secrets to yourself.

Our Thoughts – this is an amazing book after finishing reading it, we just sat there and thought for a minute, shocked by the last sentence. All the plot twists were organized so perfectly, and we never saw any of it coming. Every single one of Karen's books is just so unique and different from the others, but still so mysterious and drama-filled in the same way.

Rating – 4 stars

Whisper Duology - Lynette Noni

"Lengard is a secret government facility for extraordinary people," they told me.

I believed them. That was my mistake.

There isn't anyone else in the world like me.

I'm different. I'm an anomaly. I'm a monster.

For two years, six months, fourteen days, eleven hours and sixteen minutes, Subject Six-Eight-Four – 'Jane Doe' – has been locked away and experimented on, without uttering a single word.

As Jane's resolve begins to crack under the influence of her new – and unexpectedly kind – evaluator, she uncovers the truth about Lengard's mysterious 'program', discovering that her own secret is at the heart of a sinister plot ... and one wrong move, one wrong word, could change the world.

Our Thoughts – This book is amazing, it had you liking then hating all of the characters and then liking then hating them again. It is written wonderfully, and it takes you on an emotional rollercoaster. It is an outstanding book and a must read

Rating – 5 stars

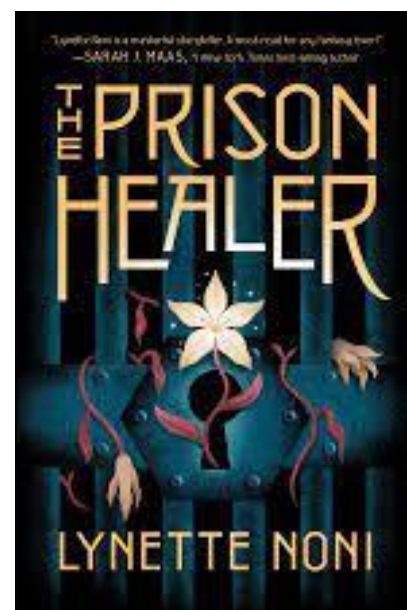
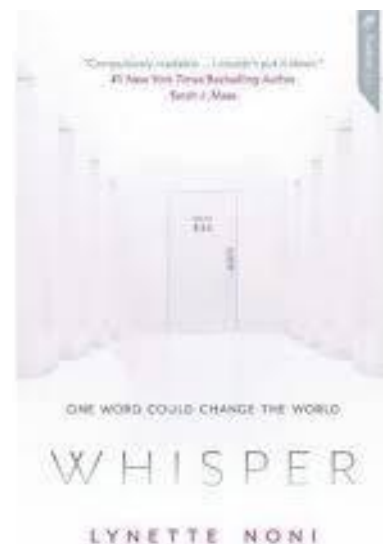
Prison Healer Series - Lynette Noni

Seventeen-year-old Kiva Meridan has spent the last ten years fighting for survival in the notorious death prison, Zalindov, working as the prison healer.

When the Rebel Queen is captured, Kiva is charged with keeping the terminally ill woman alive long enough for her to undergo the Trial by Ordeal: a series of elemental challenges against the torments of air, fire, water, and earth, assigned to only the most dangerous of criminals.

Then a coded message from Kiva's family arrives, containing a single order: "Don't let her die. We are coming." Aware that the Trials will kill the sickly queen, Kiva risks her own life to volunteer in her place. If she succeeds, both she and the queen will be granted their freedom.

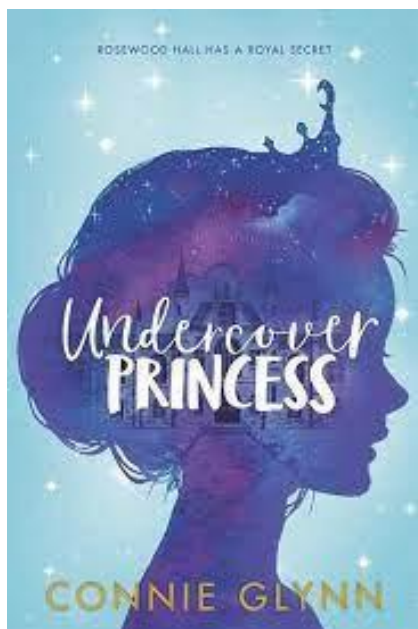
But no one has ever survived.



With an incurable plague sweeping Zalindov, a mysterious new inmate fighting for Kiva's heart, and a prison rebellion brewing, Kiva can't escape the terrible feeling that her trials have only just begun.

Our Thoughts – The world-building was incredible. There were strong characters, strong storytelling and most importantly, the story flowed with no hiccups, making it easy for the reader to follow.

Rating – 4.5 stars



***Rosewood Chronicles* - Connie Glynn**

Ellie Wolf is the crown princess of Maradova, who wants nothing more than a chance at an ordinary life. When fate puts Lottie and Ellie in the same dorm room at the prestigious Rosewood Hall, there's only one solution: for the girls to swap identities, and live the lives they've always dreamed of.

Our Thoughts – It is very good for readers of the LGBTQIA+ community. It's based around royalty and is sort of like princess switch love triangles, and is a must read.

Rating – 4 stars

***Medoran Chronicles* - Lynette Noni**



With just one step, sixteen-year-old Alexandra Jennings's world changes—literally.

Dreading her first day at a new school, Alex is stunned when she walks through a doorway and finds herself stranded in Medora, a fantasy world full of impossibilities. Desperate to return home, she learns that only a man named Professor Marselle can help her... but he's missing.

While waiting for him to reappear, Alex attends Akarnae Academy, Medora's boarding school for teenagers with extraordinary gifts. She soon starts to enjoy her bizarre new world and the friends who

embrace her as one of their own, but strange things are happening at Akarnae, and Alex can't ignore her fear that something unexpected... something sinister... is looming.

An unwilling pawn in a deadly game, Alex's shoulders bear the crushing weight of an entire race's survival. Only she can save the Medorans, but what if doing so prevents her from ever returning home?

Will Alex risk her entire world—and maybe even her life—to save Medora?

Our Thoughts – In our opinion this series is much better than Harry Potter, the characters develop much better and work together as a team, she gives a backstory on why the villain is so evil and she makes them so evil that we want to jump into the book and kill them ourselves, the magic in the book is not represented by wands and spells but by special abilities. A great read with a strong female main character and my favourite book series

Rating – 5 stars

Nevermoor Series - Jessica Townsend



A cursed girl escapes death and finds herself in a magical world but is then tested beyond her wildest imagination

Morrigan Crow is cursed. Having been born on Eventide, the unluckiest day for any child to be born, she's blamed for all local misfortunes, from hailstorms to heart attacks—and, worst of all, the curse means that Morrigan is doomed to die at midnight on her eleventh birthday.

But as Morrigan awaits her fate, a strange and remarkable man named Jupiter North appears. Chased by black-smoke hounds and shadowy hunters on horseback, he whisks her away into the safety of a secret, magical city called Nevermoor.

It's then that Morrigan discovers Jupiter has chosen her to contend for a place in the city's most prestigious organization: the Wondrous Society. In order to join, she must compete in four difficult and dangerous trials against hundreds of other children, each boasting an extraordinary talent that sets them apart - an extraordinary talent that Morrigan insists she does not have. To stay in the safety of Nevermoor for good, Morrigan will need to find a way to pass the tests - or she'll have to leave the city to confront her deadly fate.

Our Thoughts – This wacky, wonderful and enchanting book is part of an intriguing series that will make you want to read more and more. Every chapter ends on a cliffhanger, as we follow Morrigan and her new life in Nevermoor.

Six of Crows - Leigh Bardugo



Ketterdam: a bustling hub of international trade where anything can be had for the right price—and no one knows that better than criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker. Kaz is offered a chance at a deadly heist that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams. But he can't pull it off alone. . . .

A convict with a thirst for revenge

A sharpshooter who can't walk away from a wager

A runaway with a privileged past

A spy known as the Wraith

A Heartreder using her magic to survive the slums

A thief with a gift for unlikely escapes

Kaz's crew is the only thing that might stand between the world and destruction—if they don't kill each other first.

Our Thoughts – The first 80 pages or so are quite hard to get through, but once you get past it and have a feel for the Grishaverse, it gets good. The character and world building in this story is amazing. It is phenomenal that Bardugo made such well developed characters, each with an interesting backstory. Each and every character's perspectives were enjoyable to read.

Rating – 4.5 stars

***Ace of Spades* - Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé**

An incendiary and utterly compelling thriller with a shocking twist that delves deep into the heart of institutionalized racism, from an exceptional new YA voice.

Welcome to Niveus Private Academy, where money paves the hallways, and the students are never less than perfect. Until now. Because anonymous texter, Aces, is bringing two students' dark secrets to light.

Talented musician Devon buries himself in rehearsals, but he can't escape the spotlight when his private photos go public. Head girl Chiamaka isn't afraid to get what she wants, but soon everyone will know the price she has paid for power.

Someone is out to get them both. Someone who holds all the aces. And they're planning much more than a high-school game.

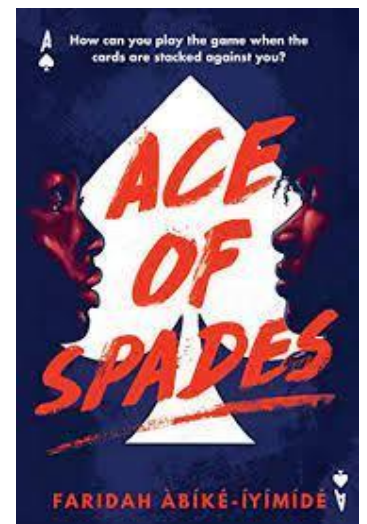
Our Thoughts – This is an amazingly heart-breaking book, it deals with a big topic, racism and it puts us in the shoes of the characters. This book is very full on it talks about the racism in the world today and how much emotional turmoil people of colour go through. Nonetheless it is an amazing book.

Rating – 5 stars

***Faceless* - Alyssa Sheinmel**

When Maisie Winters wakes up, she's in the hospital.

The last thing she remembers is running through the hills of her neighborhood one misty morning. Slowly, she puts the pieces together.



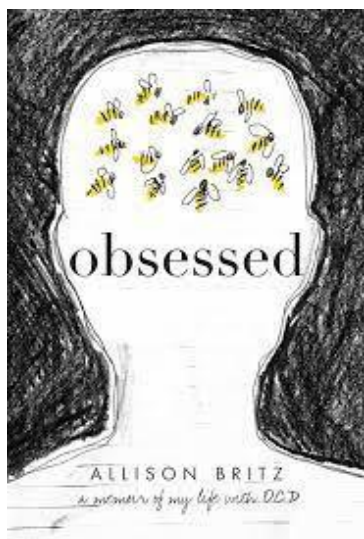
Before she could make it home, a storm gathered. Lightning hit a power line and sparks rained down, the hot-burning electrical fire consuming her. Destroying her face. Where her nose, cheeks, and chin used to be, now there is...nothing.

Maisie's lucky enough to qualify for a rare medical treatment: a face transplant. At least, everyone says she's lucky. But with someone else's features staring back at her in the mirror, Maisie looks—and feels—like a stranger. The doctors promised that the transplant was her chance to live a normal life again, but nothing feels normal anymore. Before, she knew who she was—a regular girl who ran track and got good grades, who loved her boyfriend and her best friend. Now, she can't even recognize herself.

New York Times bestselling author Alyssa Sheinmel has created a gripping and gorgeously written tale of identity and love. This is a story of losing yourself and the long, hard fight to find your way back.

Our Thoughts - It tells the story of a girl's life ruined by a treacherous accident that changed her whole life. We were on the edge of our seats on the end of each page, and we couldn't put the book down. If you read it, you wouldn't either.

Rating – 3.5 stars



Obsessed - Allison Britz

A brave teen recounts her debilitating struggle with obsessive-compulsive disorder—and brings readers through every painful step as she finds her way to the other side—in this powerful and inspiring memoir.

Until sophomore year of high school, fifteen-year-old Allison Britz lived a comfortable life in an idyllic town. She was a dedicated student with tons of extracurricular activities, friends, and loving parents at home.

But after awakening from a vivid nightmare in which she was diagnosed with brain cancer, she was convinced the dream had been a warning. Allison believed that she must do something to stop the cancer in her dream from becoming a reality.

It started with avoiding sidewalk cracks and quickly grew to counting steps as loudly as possible. Over the following weeks, her brain listed more dangers and fixes. She had to avoid hair dryers, calculators, cell phones, computers, anything green, bananas, oatmeal, and most of her own clothing.

Unable to act “normal,” the once-popular Allison became an outcast. Her parents questioned her behaviour, leading to explosive fights. When notebook paper, pencils, and most schoolbooks were declared dangerous to her health, her GPA imploded, along with her plans for the future.

Finally, she allowed herself to ask for help and was diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder. This brave memoir tracks Allison's descent and ultimately hopeful climb out of the depths.

Our Thoughts - Allison's journey is gripping and agonising at the same time. Readers willing to share Allison's evident pain and humiliation may gain insight into a troubling disorder, but it's the joy of her slow recovery that we savoured.

Rating – 4 stars

Heartstopper - Alice Oseman

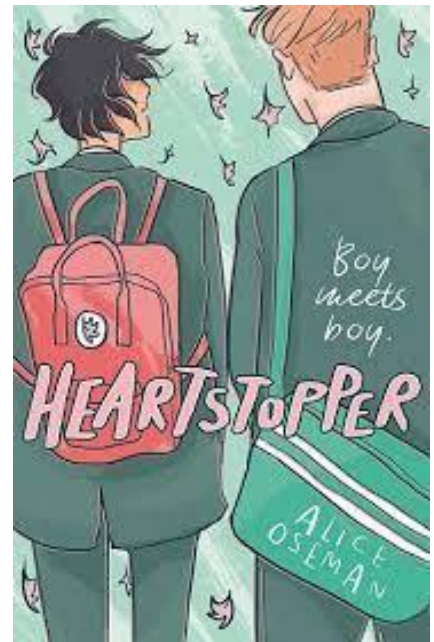
Charlie, a highly-strung, openly gay over-thinker, and Nick, a cheerful, soft-hearted rugby player, meet at a British all-boys grammar school. Friendship blooms quickly, but could there be something more...?

Charlie Spring is in Year 10 at Truham Grammar School for Boys. The past year hasn't been too great, but at least he's not being bullied anymore. Nick Nelson is in Year 11 and on the school rugby team. He's heard a little about Charlie - the kid who was outed last year and bullied for a few months - but he's never had the opportunity to talk to him.

They quickly become friends, and soon Charlie is falling hard for Nick, even though he doesn't think he has a chance. But love works in surprising ways, and sometimes good things are waiting just around the corner.

Our Thoughts – Heartstopper is a sweet read that gives us an insight into Nick and Charlie's world. It represents the LGBTQ+ community in a delightful way and gives hope to us all. This book is truly a must read.

Rating – 5 stars



Five Feet Apart - Rachael Lippincott

Can you love someone you can never touch?

Stella Grant likes to be in control—even though her totally out of control lungs have sent her in and out of the hospital most of her life. At this point, what Stella needs to control most is keeping herself away from anyone or anything that might pass along an infection and jeopardise the possibility of a lung transplant. Six feet apart. No exceptions.

The only thing Will Newman wants to be in control of is getting out of this hospital. He couldn't care less about his treatments, or a fancy new clinical drug trial. Soon, he'll turn eighteen and then he'll be able to unplug all these machines and actually go see the world, not just its hospitals.

Will's exactly what Stella needs to stay away from. If he so much as breathes on Stella she could lose her spot on the transplant list. Either one of them could die. The only way to stay alive is to stay apart. But suddenly six feet doesn't feel like safety. It feels like punishment.

What if they could steal back just a little bit of the space their broken lungs have stolen from them? Would five feet apart really be so dangerous if it stops their hearts from breaking too?



Our Thoughts - It is exceptionally well written and the story flows perfectly. The writing is articulate, chatty and vivid. I loved everything about each and every character. The conversational repartee is top notch. The writers knew precisely when to give a little more and exactly when to hold back.

Rating – 4 stars

The Knife of Never Letting Go – Patrick Ness

Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him -- something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too. With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature; a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.



Our Thoughts – This novel is a slow read at the start but once you are a hundred or so pages in, it starts getting enthralling. The main character Todd speaks in an accent so the whole book is written in the accent (think Hagrid from Harry Potter) but overall, a good read.

Rating – 3.5 stars



Withering by Sea -Stella Montgomery

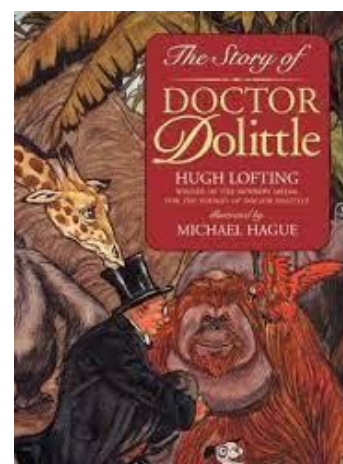
High on a cliff above the gloomy coastal town of Withering-by-Sea stands the Hotel Majestic. Inside the walls of the damp, dull hotel, eleven-year-old orphan Stella Montgomery leads a miserable life with her three dreadful Aunts. But one night, Stella sees something she shouldn't have... something that will set in motion an adventure more terrifying and more wonderful than she could ever have hoped for.

Our Thoughts – A beautifully written novel fit for avid young readers and follows the journey of a 13-year-old in the face of adversity.

Rating – 4 stars

Doctor Doolittle - Hugh Lofting

The Story of Doctor Dolittle follows John Dolittle and his misadventures with a crew of animals that he befriends. After learning he can speak to animals and he transitions from human medicine to veterinary practice, he loses most of his income and human patients.



Our Thoughts – Amazing book, very engaging and there is always something happening.

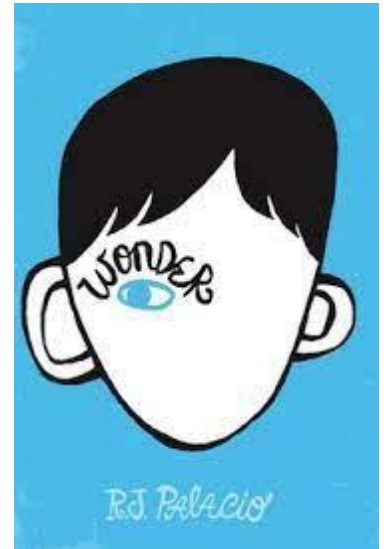
Rating – 4.5 stars

Wonder -R.J Palacio

I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse.

August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. Wonder, begins from Auggie's point of view, but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others.

Our Thoughts – Wonder is a book that shows growth in all characters even the stereotypical bully has a turnaround at the end of a book, it shows how much we are influenced by our parents and how many people, especially adults need to be more caring of people with disabilities.



The Cheat Sheet - Sarah Adams

Is it ever too late to leave the friend-zone?

Hi, my name is Bree Camden, and I'm hopelessly in love with my best friend and star quarterback Nathan Donelson (so is half of America, judging by the tabloids and how much the guy dates). The first step is admitting, right? Except, I can never admit it to him because he clearly doesn't see me in that way, and the last thing I want is for things to get weird between us.

Nothing but good old-fashioned, no-touching-the-sexiest-man-alive, platonic friendship for us! Everything is exactly how I like it! Yes. Good. (I'm not crying, I'm just peeling an onion.)

Our friendship is going swimmingly until I accidentally spill my beans to a reporter over too much tequila, and now the world seems to think me and Nathan belong together. Oh, and did I mention we have to date publicly for three weeks until after the Super Bowl because we signed a contract with...oops, forgot I can't tell anyone about that!

Bottom line is, now my best friend is smudging all the lines and acting very un-platonic, and I'm just trying to keep my body from bursting into flames every time he touches me.

How am I going to make it through three weeks of fake dating Nathan without anything changing between us? Especially when it almost-sort-a-kinda seems like he's fighting for a completely different outcome?

Send help.
XO Bree

Our Thoughts - We love the simple yet wonderful plot. Adams writes in a beautiful sympathy. This story is relatable, honest and hilarious. The main characters are beyond witty and simply human. It is a wonderful book that you must read.

Rating – 4 stars

***Murder Most Unladylike* – Robert Stevens**

1934. When Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong set up a secret detective agency at Deepdean School for Girls, they struggle to find a truly exciting mystery to investigate. (Unless you count the case of Lavinia's missing tie. Which they don't.)

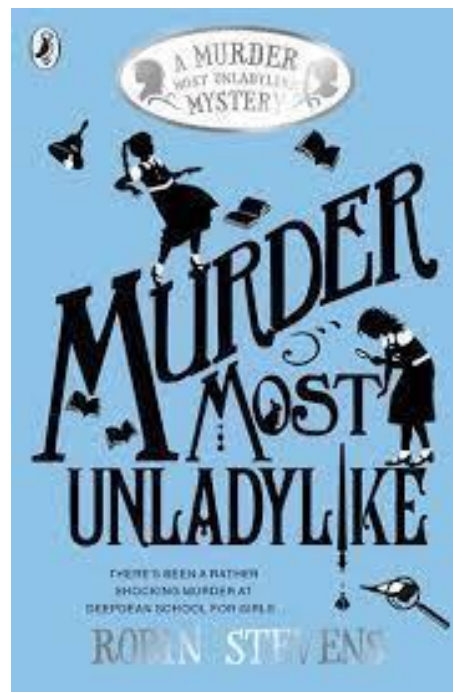
But then Hazel discovers the body of the Science Mistress, Miss Bell - but when she and Daisy return five minutes later, the body has disappeared. Now the girls have to solve a murder, and prove a murder has happened in the first place before the killer strikes again (and before the police can get there first, naturally).

But will they succeed?

And can their friendship stand the test?

Our Thoughts – It is an amazing novel and it is so unpredictable.

Rating – 4.5 stars



***Maze Runner* - James Dashner**

If you ain't scared, you ain't human.

When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his name. He's surrounded by strangers—boys whose memories are also gone.

Nice to meet ya, shank. Welcome to the Glade.

Outside the towering stone walls that surround the Glade is a limitless, ever-changing maze. It's the only way out—and no one's ever made it through alive.

Everything is going to change.

Then a girl arrives. The first girl ever. And the message she delivers is terrifying.

Remember. Survive. Run.

Our Thoughts – Maze Runner is an amazing book, every page you turn there is a new adventure, a whole new dystopian world is created, and it is an amazing read. When we were reading this book, my heart was pounding and I was literally sitting on the edge of my seat. This is a must read series.



Rating – 4 stars

Keeper of The Lost Cities – Shannon Messenger

Twelve-year-old Sophie Foster has a secret. She's a Telepath—someone who hears the thoughts of everyone around her. It's a talent she's never known how to explain.

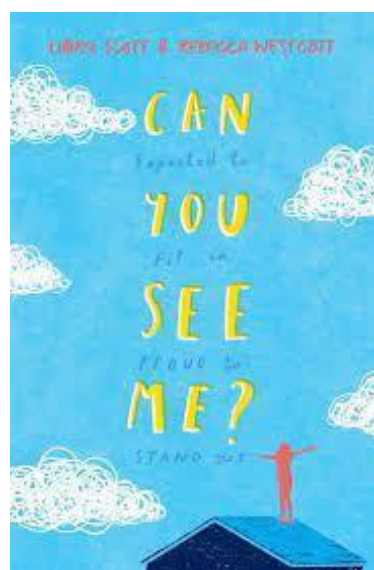
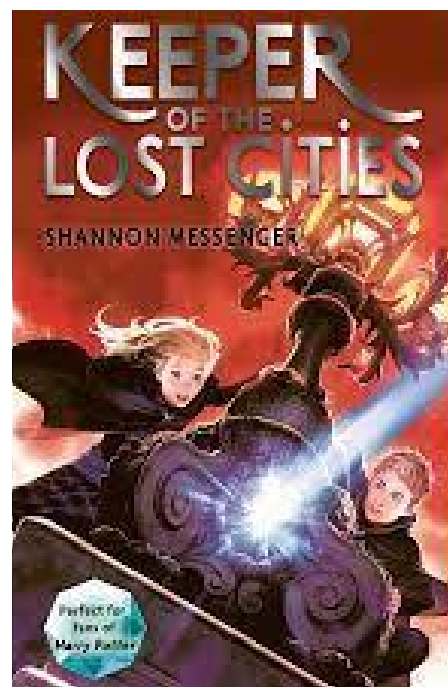
Everything changes the day she meets Fitz, a mysterious boy who appears out of nowhere and also reads minds. She discovers there's a place she does belong, and that staying with her family will place her in grave danger. In the blink of an eye, Sophie is forced to leave behind everything and start a new life in a place that is vastly different from anything she has ever known.

Sophie has new rules to learn and new skills to master, and not everyone is thrilled that she has come "home." There are secrets buried deep in Sophie's memory—secrets about who she really is and why she was hidden among humans—that other people desperately want. Would even kill for.

In this page-turning debut, Shannon Messenger creates a riveting story where one girl must figure out why she is the key to her brand-new world, before the wrong person finds the answer first.

Our Thoughts – Keeper of the Lost Cities is a very long series; it is currently 9 books and still going. We think that one of the things we like least about it is that the main character Sophie has little character development until later on in the series. It can drone on at times, but we have really enjoyed reading the series, there is a plot twist at the end of every book and you learn to like and hate the characters. We would 100% recommend this to everyone

Rating – 3.5 stars



Can You See Me – Libby Scott

Things Tally is dreading about sixth grade:

- Being in classes without her best friends
- New (scratchy) uniforms
- Hiding her autism

Tally isn't ashamed of being autistic -- even if it complicates life sometimes, it's part of who she is. But this is her first year at Kingswood Academy, and her best friend, Layla, is the only one who

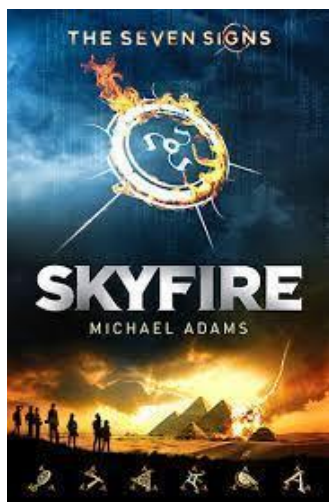
knows. And while a lot of other people are uncomfortable around Tally, Layla has never been one of them . . . until now.

Something is different about sixth grade, and Tally now feels like she has to act "normal." But as Tally hides her true self, she starts to wonder what "normal" means after all and whether fitting in is really what matters most.

Inspired by young co-author Libby Scott's own experiences with autism, this is an honest and moving middle-school story of friends, family, and finding one's place.

Our Thoughts – This is a really good book. The book has no faults except it is spectacularly sad. Excellent book for all, including students, teachers, parents and siblings. We loved the authenticity of Libby Scott's perspective. We liked the diary entries that explain autism. We enjoyed reading and understanding Tally's challenges at home and school as well as the lessons and messages throughout the book.

Rating – 4.5 stars



The Seven Signs – Michael Adams

Enter the DARE awards... make your dreams come true!

The seven winners of the inaugural DARE awards are thrust together on a life-changing journey, to cross seven continents in seven days. But on the eve of their adventure, they receive The First Sign. Before they can solve the puzzle of the mysterious symbols, a deadly attack throws one of them into a terrifying fight for life. Soon, all seven are battling an epic seven-day countdown to destruction. Can they stand together and solve The Seven Signs before their time is up?

Seven teenagers. Seven signs. Seven days to save the world

Our Thoughts – This is an extremely readable book series, although there are seven books, they are all relatively short most being 100-300 pages long, all the characters are quite interesting and the ending is unpredictable, we really enjoyed this book series as it is different from other series and is fun to read.

Rating – 4.5 stars



Ink Series – Alice Broadway

There are no secrets in Saintstone.

From the second you're born, every achievement, every failing, every significant moment are all immortalized on your skin. There are

honourable marks that let people know you're trustworthy. And shameful tattoos that announce you as a traitor.

After her father dies, Leora finds solace in the fact that his skin tells a wonderful story. That is, until she glimpses a mark on the back of his neck...the symbol of the worst crime a person can commit in Saintstone. Leora knows it has to be a mistake, but before she can do anything about it, the horrifying secret gets out, jeopardizing her father's legacy...and Leora's life.

In her startlingly prescient debut, Alice Broadway shines a light on the dangerous lengths we go to make our world feel orderly--even when the truth refuses to stay within the lines. This rich, lyrical fantasy with echoes of Orwell is unlike anything you've ever read, a tale guaranteed to get under your skin...

Our Thoughts – This book series is a thought-provoking dystopian series which is easy to get into and provides a deep insight of society and entrenched prejudices within communities. It explores themes of identity, purpose and justice while following a relatable and driven protagonist.

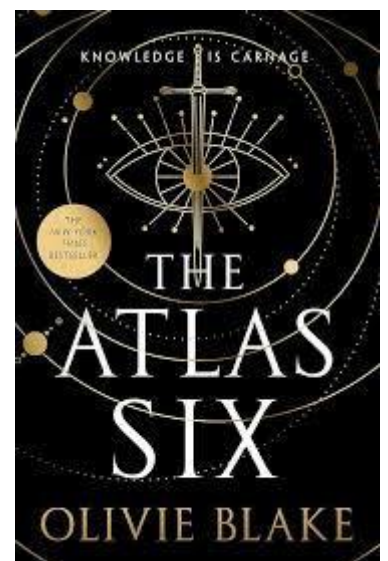
Rating – 4 stars

The Atlas Six – Olivie Blake

The Alexandrian Society, caretakers of lost knowledge from the greatest civilizations of antiquity, are the foremost secret society of magical academicians in the world. Those who earn a place among the Alexandrians will secure a life of wealth, power, and prestige beyond their wildest dreams, and each decade, only the six most uniquely talented magicians are selected to be considered for initiation.

Enter the latest round of six: Libby Rhodes and Nico de Varona, unwilling halves of an unfathomable whole, who exert uncanny control over every element of physicality. Reina Mori, a naturalist, who can intuit the language of life itself. Parisa Kamali, a telepath who can traverse the depths of the subconscious, navigating worlds inside the human mind. Callum Nova, an empath easily mistaken for a manipulative illusionist, who can influence the intimate workings of a person's inner self. Finally, there is Tristan Caine, who can see through illusions to a new structure of reality—an ability so rare that neither he nor his peers can fully grasp its implications.

When the candidates are recruited by the mysterious Atlas Blakely, they are told they will have one year to qualify for initiation, during which time they will be permitted preliminary access to the Society's archives and judged based on their contributions to various subjects of impossibility: time and space, luck and thought, life and death. Five, they are told, will be initiated. One will be eliminated. The six potential initiates will fight to survive the next year of their lives, and if they can prove themselves to be the best among their rivals, most of them will.



Most of them.

Our Thoughts – A riveting story. Riddled with plot twists, betrayals and alliances. Escape reality and explore the secrets of the Alexandrian society and its members. Not everything, or everyone, is as they seem. Perfect for readers who enjoy a good mystery. Blakely conveys the ins and outs of rivalries and friendships between each character, their thoughts and emotions after each new development.

Rating – 4.5 stars



Gone – Micheal Grant

In the blink of an eye, everyone disappears. Gone. Except for the young. There are teens, but not one single adult. Just as suddenly, there are no phones, no internet, no television. No way to get help. And no way to figure out what's happened.

Hunger threatens. Bullies rule. A sinister creature lurks. Animals are mutating. And the teens themselves are changing, developing new talents--unimaginable, dangerous, deadly powers--that grow stronger by the day.

It's a terrifying new world. Sides are being chosen, a fight is shaping up. Townies against rich kids. Bullies against the weak. Powerful against powerless. And time is running out: on your birthday, you disappear just like everyone else...

Our Thoughts – For fans of dystopian novels, this is a perfect addition to the genre. with a melancholy feel lent by the age of the characters, that manages to not undercut the brutality of this story, or take away from the horrors of this new world, for fans of the genre it is a must read, and for those who aren't it is a perfect point to jump in.

Rating – 4.5 stars

Edited by Leia Marwick, Lakshithaa Ravindran, Liam Enticott

As a team we all recommended these books, but we know we may have missed some of your favourites, if you have any recommendations, please contact steven.peacock@education.vic.gov.au and we will put them in the next issue.