

CBCA Book Discussion Group – Books Read in 2013



Friday Brown by Vikki Wakefield

Age: 15+ *Friday Brown* is a gothic novel, set in an unnamed Australian city and an outback ghost town. It tells the story of seventeen year old Friday's journey to find herself after the death of her mother. A sense of impending doom develops throughout the first-person narrative as Friday becomes embroiled in the lives of a dysfunctional gang of street kids led by the charismatic Arden. *Friday Brown* is Wakefield's second novel and was a CBCA Honour Book in the Older Readers Book of the Year Awards in 2013.



Into that forest by Louis Nowra

Age: 12+ This colonial fairy-tale tells the story of Hannah and her friend Becky, who find themselves lost in the Tasmanian wilderness after a boating accident kills Hannah's parents. The girls are rescued by two Tasmanian tigers and in the ensuing years become tigers themselves until their eventual rescue and 'domestication'. Told in 76 year old Hannah's broken English, this is a heart-breaking tale of survival and belonging, set towards the end of the 19th century. *Into that forest* is acclaimed playwright and author Nowra's first young adult novel and was a Notable Book in the CBCA Older Readers Book of the Year Awards in 2013.



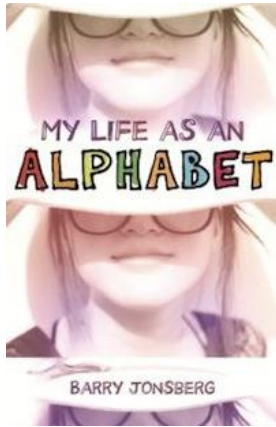
Creepy and Maud by Dianne Touchell

Age: 15+ Touchell's debut novel *Creepy and Maud* is an unorthodox romance between two social misfits. Related by the two main characters through unevenly alternating 1st person monologues, Creepy and Maud learn that they are not the only ones with problems when they start communicating via notes placed on their bedroom windows. The book covers some difficult subjects such as ostracism, self-harm and dysfunctional families with sensitivity. Black humour is used to alleviate the often disturbing situations in which the characters find themselves. *Creepy and Maud* was shortlisted in the CBCA Older Readers Book of the Year Awards in 2013.

See Book of the Year Short List – 2013

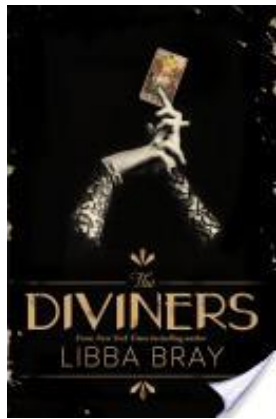
<http://cbca.org.au/Shortlist2013.htm>

An enthusiastic group of twelve met to share and discuss the 2013 CBCA Book of the Year Short List on 24 April. Most attendees prepared talks about particular titles and/or read a picture book to the group which made for an informative and entertaining evening. While no-one had yet read all the shortlisted books, we were still tempted to predict which ones might be chosen as Books of the Year. Here are our predictions: Older Readers - *Sea hearts*; Younger Readers - *Children of the king*; Early Childhood – *Too many elephants in this house*; Picture Book of the Year – *The coat*; Eve Pownall Award for Information Books – *Portrait of Spain for kids*. Some of us wondered why *Sophie Scott goes south* by Alison Lester was not on the Eve Pownall for Information Books short list, especially since there were only five books in this category.



***My life as an alphabet* by Barry Jonsberg**

Age: 10+ *My life as an alphabet* tells about the life of 12 year old Candice McPhee in twenty six chapters each based on a letter of the alphabet. As Candice says, she can't write about herself without including everyone who is important in her life: her parents, her dead sister Sky, Rich Uncle Brian, her friend Douglas Benson from another Dimension, her lazy-eyed teacher Miss Bamford and her pet Earth-Pig Fish. Candice is aware of the sadness of those around her and sets about solving everyone's problems with often hilarious results. All loose ends are neatly wrapped up by the end of the book including the appearance of Candice's unresponsive American pen pal Denille.



***The diviners* by Libba Bray**

Age: 14+ *The diviners* is the first of four books in a new series by American author Libba Bray. Set in Roaring 20s New York, the main plot follows seventeen-year-old Evie O'Neill as she helps her uncle Will, curator of the Museum of American Folklore, Superstition, and the occult, find the killer behind a mysterious series of murders. Evie's New York pals, who include a dancer, a numbers runner, a musician and a pick pocket, are drawn into the investigation and we discover that they all possess special abilities. There are many sub-plots full of memorable characters and witty banter in this historical, paranormal thriller.



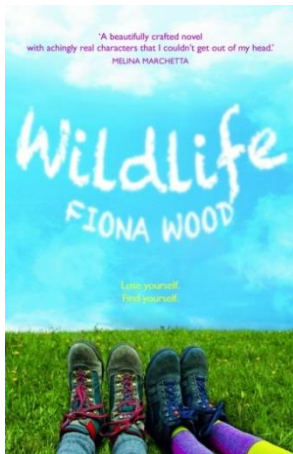
***New Guinea moon* by Kate Constable**

Age: 13+ *New Guinea moon* is a coming-of-age story about sixteen-year-old Julie who falls out with her mother and is sent to spend the summer holidays in New Guinea with her father whom she hasn't seen since she was three. Set in 1974 when the country is on the threshold of independence, Julie witnesses the uncomfortable divide between the expat community and the local people. As a result of her experiences which include romance, a tragedy and a mystery, Julie decides what she really wants out of life. Kate Constable's *Crow country* won the CBCA Book of the Year: Younger Readers in 2012.



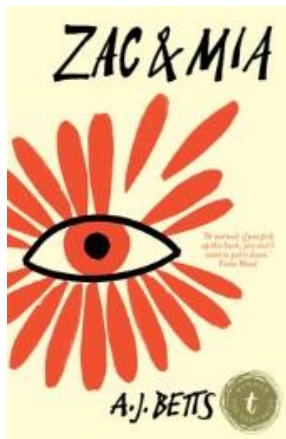
***The zigzag effect* by Lili Wilkinson**

Age: 13+ *The zigzag effect* is a mystery story set in a haunted Melbourne theatre. Sage takes a part time holiday job with The Great Armand and soon makes friends with the magician's assistant Bianca and begins a romance with the stage hand, Herb. When Armand goes missing, Sage uses her keen observation and photography skills to solve the mystery of the theatre ghost and find Armand. Lili Wilkinson uses the opportunity to explore the world of professional magic putting the spotlight on the importance of magician's assistants. *The zigzag effect* is described by one reviewer as 'like a Nancy Drew novel for girls of the 21st Century'.



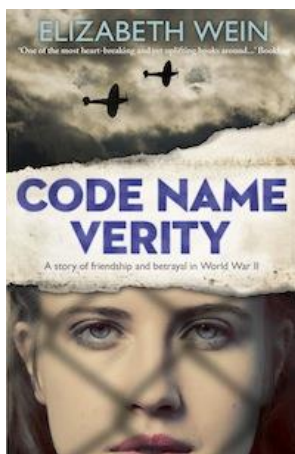
Wildlife by Fiona Wood

Age: 14+ *Wildlife* is a coming-of-age novel set at a school's outdoor education camp in the Victorian bush. The narrative switches between Sibylla's first-person point of view and the journal entries of Lou, a character from Wood's *Six impossible things*. While Sibylla embarks on a romance with popular Ben, new girl Lou is secretly mourning the death of her boyfriend Dan. As events unfold Sibylla questions her friendships and what is really important in her life. In a *Sydney Morning Herald* review, Wood is praised for 'a realistic portrayal of genuine, intelligent female lead characters that readers will truly barrack for and view as positive role models'.



Zac and Mia by A. J. Betts

Age: 13+ *Zac and Mia* is a novel written from dual perspectives about two 17 year old teenagers who have cancer and the connections they make with each other, their friends and family members as they undergo treatment. This is a novel about illness, mortality, family, hope and courage and according to Australian Books and Publishing is a stand-out novel for 2013. *Zac and Mia* won the Text Prize for Young Adult and Children's Writing in 2012 and is being published internationally in 2014.



Code name Verity by Elizabeth Wein

Age: 15+ American author, Elizabeth Wein, has used her knowledge as a pilot and her historical research skills to produce a story that explores the unlikely friendship between two young women during World War II. In the first part of the story Julia Wallace Beaufort-Stuart, a British spy, is being interrogated by the Gestapo in France and is given several weeks to write what she knows before being taken to a prison camp. Maddie Brodat, a Jewish pilot with the Air Transport Auxiliary, narrates the second part of the story while she is in hiding in France with a Resistance family. All is not what it seems in this puzzle of a novel. *Code name Verity* has won several awards including the Edgar Award and the Printz Honour Book. *Rose under fire*, a companion book, was published this year.

