

**Wardragon**



By Paul Collins  
 Ford St  
 ISBN: 978-1-876462-58-1  
 RRP \$22.95

*Wardragon* is book four in the Jelindel Chronicles series. It picks up the story with the reawakening of the omnipotent Wardragon, an all-powerful alien mailshirt that has the capacity to create a symbiotic relationship with its wearer.

From there we follow mage Jelindel and her two companions, the slightly shifty Zimak and Jelindel's protective partner Daretor, on a quest to defeat the force that is slowly draining magic from their world.

Author Paul Collins draws his characters with a mixture of affection and objectivity. The supporting cast, as well as the three central characters, maintain a balance between the superhuman and the believable. Jelindel, in particular, is a protagonist that holds readers' interest with her intelligence and determination. As well as creating strong characterisations, Collins also manages to slip in dashes of humour while maintaining an action-packed pace. His world is familiar yet engaging, with a great many imaginative elements that make Q'zar feel three-dimensional.

*Wardragon* is a novel for those who can't get enough of the speculative-fiction quest genre. It will doubtless satisfy those who have followed the tale of the Wardragon so far and bring in new readers keen for a serve of swords and sorcery.

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**The sweet life (Girlfriend fiction 7)**



By Rebecca Lim  
 Allen and Unwin  
 ISBN: 978 1 741 755312  
 RRP: \$ 14.95

Janey has just lost her mother and thinks that she is all alone in the world until she discovers a letter that leads her to find her extended family. They are of course wealthy and live in the midst of cosmopolitan Europe.

Before long, Janey finds herself on a plane heading for Rome and family that she has never met and sharing a room with her 15 year old cousin. Putting a 15 and 16 year old in the same room, expecting them to be friends and confidants is a sure way of exposing all kinds of teenage angst.

This is a predictable tale that doesn't challenge the intellect but offers light relief. If the names of Mary-Kate and Ashley and Hannah Montana resonates with your readers then this might just tickle their fancy. Setting the story in Rome does add a little something to the drama.

**Lucy Zeezou's goal**



By Liz Deep-Jones  
 ISBN: 978 1 741 662 771  
 RRP: \$17.95

Australia is known around the globe for being a sport loving nation and this is the perfect book for girls who love football (or soccer to the uninitiated).

Football is the one sport played by more countries than any other and in Australia the take up rate of football by children is greater than all other codes of football put together and the number of girls playing football is on the climb.

Lucy Zeezou wants to play football but she is a girl caught in the middle of two worlds. Her family are famous for two things in Italy, football and fashion, and they are prime paparazzi fodder. Lucy's mother, who is Australian, wants her to be a model for the family's fashion label. And while her father is captain of Milan's premier football team, he agrees that her future is on the runway and not on the pitch. So Lucy goes underground, playing football on the sly. Moving to Sydney means that Lucy will need to find a new team and come clean about who she is and what she wants to do with her life.

This is a fast paced and clever novel that will appeal to a wide young female audience with a mix of the catwalk and sport. While not quite in the league of *Bend it like Beckham*, it is a good read and Lucy is a realistic characterisation.

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*Wardragon*  
 Paul Collins

A sorceress  
 A swordsman  
 A thieving larrikin  
 ...and their deadliest foe,  
 the omnipotent Wardragon.

RRP \$23.95

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**Everything good will come**



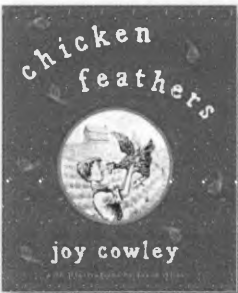
By Sefi Atta  
Spinifex Press  
ISBN 978 1 87 675666 6  
RRP: \$26.95

This is an international prize winning novel by Nigerian born author Sefi Atta. Powerful language and evocative characterisations allow this narrative to develop a certain eloquence and dignity in tone as it tells a story of one young woman's coming of age.

It is 1971 and Nigeria is under military rule and 11 year old Enitan Taiwo is becoming impatient as she waits for school to start. Her mother, who has turned to religion after the death of her son and Enitan's brother, is cautious about the relationship that is forming between Enitan and the new girl next door, Sheri. The story follows the paths of the two young girls, investigating their relationship and that of the people around them as one manipulates the traditional system while the other openly attempts to defy it.

This novel is a creative reflection of an era in the country's history that was violent and constricting. Placing a female protagonist at the heart of the tale adds to the dramatic tension and interest. By including stark and direct cultural descriptors, Atta does well to introduce an otherwise relatively unknown society to western readers.

**Chicken feathers**



By Joy Cowley  
Illustrated by David Elliot  
Puffin  
ISBN: 978 0 14 330390 9

The arrival of a sibling seems to be a relatively common theme in children's fiction. The added twist of the mother having 'complications' has also been tried and tested. It is the location and the backdrop of the tales that separates one from the other and this particular tale is pastoral in tone.

From two of New Zealand's most celebrated authors and illustrators, Chicken Feathers is a warm and witty tale about a boy called Josh and his pet hen Semolina. The relationship between the two is exceptionally special and young readers who enjoy the love of any pet will be able to understand and relate to the bond between the two.

Josh lives on a chicken farm, and in return for giving Semolina prawn crackers, the hen tells Josh all the farmyard gossip. Of course Josh is the only one that can understand and hear her talk so when there is a fox loitering, his warnings go unheeded.

One could say that there is the odd splattering of *Charlotte's web*, *Milly Molly Mandy* and *The animals of Farthing Wood* within the narrative. However, even if you find this a retelling of a common theme, the story is crisp, bright and enjoyable and the illustrations that are dispersed throughout are well executed. This is a traditional (one could say conservative) children's tale that comes as welcome relief for those who are tired of trend-orientated fiction that is currently littering children's book shelves.

**The Lucy family alphabet**



By Judith Lucy  
Penguin  
ISBN: 978 0 670 07132 6  
RRP: \$29.95

Judith Lucy is a name well known to many Australians. A stand up comic, actress, radio personality and panelist, people either love her or hate her. With a grating voice and 'funny' looks, she is not what you would call a TV natural, while her voice grinds across airwaves. However it is her wit and ability to laugh at herself that is the quality for which she has scored herself a devoted following.

This book is about her family. It draws humour from their faults and the strains of the relationships between them. Judith finds out quite late in life that she is adopted and that the life that she thought was hers was in fact not quite as it appeared.

This seems to have been a cathartic exercise for Lucy, each page challenging the ghosts of her adoptive parents. While she may have loved them, she certainly did not seem to have liked them and the reader is left wondering that had she not found out that she was adopted, would she have been so harsh on her parent's memory.

But there is dry humour throughout. While the reader may feel at times that she tries too hard to get a gag on every page, it was only listening to her at the Bryon Bay Writers Festival that **this** reader realised that Judith Lucy is as she reads. Her humour is constant and cruel; usually self deprecating and blunt. It is a fun read.

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**Everything Good Will Come**

by Sefi Atta

An international prize-winning novel, *Everything Good Will Come* is a powerful and eloquent story of a young Nigerian woman's coming of age. Eleven-year-old Enitan is tired of waiting for school to start. Will her mother, who has become deeply religious since the death of Enitan's brother, allow her to be friends with the new girl next door, Sheri Bakare? The two girls' paths traverse this novel, as one manipulates the traditional system and the other attempts to defy it.

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