



## Fact Sheet

Monday 27 November 2006

*Literature, Language and Music*

### Some recent books for young people

<b>Title</b>	<b>Love Lessons</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>Jacqueline Wilson</b>
<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Doubleday</b>
<b>Book Review</b>	<b>Amazon</b>

Fourteen-year-old Prue and her sister Grace have been educated at home by their super-strict father all their lives. Their attempts to find out what being an ordinary teenager is like — buying nice clothes instead of wearing Mum's odd, hand-made garments, reading teenage magazines etc. — are greeted with fury by their Dad. But when he is hospitalised with a stroke, Prue suddenly discovers what it's like to have a little freedom.

Unable to cope, their mother enrolls them at the local comprehensive where, for the first time, they experience school life. Prue had never thought it would be so hard to fit in. The only person she can talk to is the young Art teacher, Rax. She and Rax bond over art lessons, and soon he asks her to baby-sit for him and his wife. This becomes a regular "date" and Prue can't wait for the ten minutes they have alone together when he drives her home. She wonders if Rax has the same feelings for her. But he can't act upon them, can he? Ages 12 - 16

<b>Title</b>	<b>The Last Virgin in Year 10</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>Rosanne Hawke</b>
<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Lothian Books</b>
<b>Book Review</b>	<b>Magpies</b>

Caz is a character you want to shake – hard. She is desperately in need of approval from Libby and Antoinette, the trendy, skinny girls in her year 10. She's terrified of being recognised as a Christian, is embarrassed by the ordinariness of her family and even downplays her quite vast musical talents.

It is predictable that she will ignore her better instincts for a secret assignation with cool surfer guy Byron ( her *Holy Grail* – the story is littered with Arthurian references) and find herself in a situation she is not emotionally ready to handle. It is a relief when her growing friendship with unaffected country boy Matthew proves her salvation in more ways than one. He may not be her *knight-in shining-armor*- initially but his view of her as a swan, gives her the strength to be herself.

The title alone will ensure a readership for this teenage novel about insecurities. While the bad girls are mere caricatures, and there are a number of themes for the reader to follow, the novel offers keen insights into what it is like to be under-confident and fifteen. The reader's frustration with Caz's blind stupidity is tempered but the realisation that she is an innocent who is so desperate for peer group acceptance that she is vulnerable to manipulation. Humour leavens the morality tale, as Caz at times bears a strong resemblance to a junior Bridget Jones, especially when she declaims over her boyfriend-less state: *I sigh inside my deep well of longing.*

The rather serious subject matter- sex and bullying- is handled lightly but the point is made that guys aren't the ribbon at the end of the race and that people should accept you for what you are. Ages 12 - 17

**Title** **Snot Henderson and the Orsom Towers Gang**

**Author** **D.G Harris**

**Publisher** **ABC Books**

**Book Review** **Reading time 5**

This positively-written story is about friendship and determination. Ben and his parents have to leave the drought-stricken country so his father can work in the city. They move into a building called Orsom Towers. Ben quickly meets some of the other kids who live in the building and have formed a gang.

The first challenge for the gang is to sort out a problem with the adult Management Committee whose chairman is a "bossy old coot". This is cleverly and subtly emphasised with the change of font in the chapters devoted to the committee. The subplots give depth to the story,, allowing readers to increase their vocabulary, learn about historical characters and realise that it is okay to make mistakes. The dispute between the gang and the committee escalates as the story progresses but it is not entirely a children versus adult conflict as some of the adults do support the gang. The kids are also very proactive as they are determined to prove that they are not the hooligans that some perceive them to be. And they do! Stay in tune for the next instalment. Ages 8 - 12

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