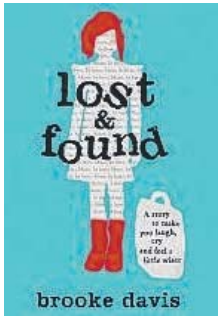




great reads

HEARTBREAKING, FUNNY DEBUT NOVEL A WINNER

LOST & FOUND
BROOKE DAVIS
HACHETTE, RRP \$27



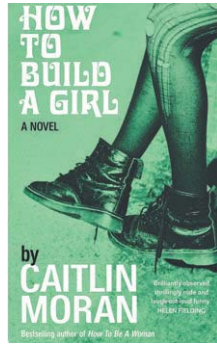
Millie Bird is seven when her mother abandons her in a department store. Death is something she understands too well; she has a book recording the 27 dead things she has encountered in her short life, a list that includes her father. Agatha Pantha

hasn't left her home in the seven years since her husband died. She sits at the window, yelling nasty comments at passers-by. Karl, who's 87, touch types everything — once it was love letters on his wife's skin, and now his fingers move in constant memory of her. When his son takes him to a home, he wonders when he stopped mattering, and when he stopped doing things, rather than just remembering them. And so he does the bravest thing he's ever done and walks out. When these three lost souls find each other, all the rules get broken. This debut novel from the West Australian author sparked a bidding war, selling to 25 countries. It deserves every bit of that hype. Everything about the characters and the writing feels exactly right, and the result is a book that's heartbreaking and funny and brilliant. **CH**

Verdict: beautiful

TEENAGER'S ROCKY ROAD TO REINVENTING HERSELF

HOW TO BUILD A GIRL
CAITLIN MORAN
EBURY PRESS, RRP \$33



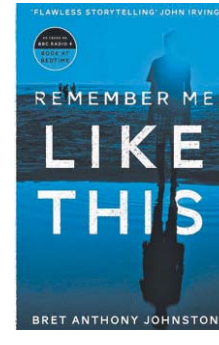
Johanna Merrigan is 14, unhappy, overweight, has one friend and is desperate to be kissed. She lives with her Irish family — four siblings, a mum with post-natal depression and a dad who wants to be a famous musician — on a council estate in Wolverhampton. She

comes to realise that if she's not the person she wants to be, she should rebuild herself. Because this is Caitlin Moran, this transformation has not a politically correct moment in it. There is no quest to lose weight. And the book opens with our heroine masturbating in bed beside her sleeping little brother. Johanna, as part of her campaign of reinvention, renames herself Dolly Wilde and sets her sights on a career as a music writer. Opportunities come her way, and she embraces it all — the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, and the smoking, alcohol and offensive language. The lessons she has to learn are hard. Again, being Moran — author of the nonfiction bestseller *How To Be A Woman* — they are also very funny and absolutely true. Johanna/Dolly stole my heart. **CH**

Verdict: joyous

A FAMILY'S STRUGGLE TO UNDERSTAND TRAGIC LOSS

REMEMBER ME LIKE THIS
BRET ANTHONY JOHNSTON
HACHETTE, RRP \$30



Four years after the disappearance of 11-year-old Justin, the Campbell family struggles to keep his memory alive. Hopes have faded and they are exhausted by survivor guilt. Laura volunteers at the local Marine Centre, recording

observations of a rescued dolphin, to occupy her sleepless nights. Troubled adolescent Griff's budding romance is threatened by self doubt, while Eric labours to provide the kind of strength seen in his own father. An unexpected breakthrough brings hope, but their fragile happiness is threatened by the news that the man who took their son has been bailed to await trial in their tight-knit Gulf community. The approaching Shrimporee festival, now dedicated to Justin, will be a turning point. As the holiday crowds flock to the fair, the family's desire for revenge and closure will be resolved one way or another. This is not a police procedural but a moving account of a family facing the unthinkable. Johnston mines the interior lives of his characters and maps the complex range of their reactions. **MS**

Verdict: unforgettable