



Losing It

Julia Lawrinson

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To avoid Losing It in the bushes with some random guy in a heavy-metal T-shirt after too many tequila shots, four best friends make a bet: to lose it before schoolies week – and preferably in a romantic, sober way that they won't regret.

What follows is a sometimes funny, sometimes awkward, but always compelling comedy of errors as Abby, Mala, Bree and Zoe each try to find their Mr Right . . . or at least get laid.

A hilarious and thought-provoking novel by the award-winning author of *Bye, Beautiful* and *The Push*.

Losing It Details

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Author : Julia Lawrinson

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From Reader Review Losing It for online ebook

Shirley Marr says

To be honest, the idea of this book did not initially set my pants on fire. A virginity pact novel? What? Is this going to be like *American Pie*? Maybe it had something to do with the pre-publicity which proclaimed "Get ready for some teachers and librarians to hate it!" What? Is this the 1950s? How about proclaiming it as "Contains excellent character development! Get ready for people who enjoy quality Aussie YA to love it"?

The novel is about four teenage girls who as the title suggests, attempt to "lose" their virginity with a sense of their own control and empowerment before "schoolies" (an Australian rite of passage celebration for Year 12 school leavers). The novel is told from each of the girls's POVs in turn and recounts their own separate experiences leading up to the promised time when they reveal all to each other.

To me, sensationalist tactics that focus on the seemingly luridness of a book suggests that the major drawcard is shock factor and I'd hate to say it, but I imagined a one-gimmick-wonder. Don't quiet, quality novels speak for themselves? So thirty-odd pages in, I was surprised that my alternate-proclamation came true when I started marveling at how wonderful the character voice in the first volume was. I found myself falling for the funny charm and down-to-earth Aussie realism. So I'd say that the novel's *true* strength are the four girls. They're all equally wonderful, real flesh and blood characters that are different enough to have an interesting story each, but not so different that they become stereotypes. If this were *American Pie*, it would have like, a Geek Girl, a Foreign Exchange Student, a Cheerleader and... God knows what, I'm too scared to speculate. So I love the fact that the girls are called the GeeGees. For Geek Girls. They're all Geeks - yay! But it's more a label placed on them, there's more to them than a name, and it's delightful.

But this book is not without it's difficulties. The blurb mentions a "comedy of errors" and unfortunately for me, this is when things go unfortunately *American Pie* for me, in a contrived, face-palm and gross-out comedy way. I also found that the ending - when the errors are realised - is resolved and ended much too neatly and easily. I mean, this novel does not shy away from taking very *definite* opinions on strong topics like religion and culture, so why would everything pan out so perfectly?

I ended up liking this book. Especially, the subtle ways in which events and certain people would overlap in each of the recounts, but ultimately, that is what this book is - four separate accounts that come together in the end without enough emotional substance to truly bind them together. It's perhaps another case of "does there need to be separate POVs?" I feel that if any of the sections were to be removed, it wouldn't feel as if you were missing "part of a puzzle". So while this novel has sex galore, infatuations and even a touch of romance - for me, it lacks a strong single heartbeat. Back on the topic of virginity movies... I wish it had the heart of *"The 40-Year-Old Virgin"*.

Oh one final thing - I have one word: TRIGA.

This book is worth reading for this ONE character.

This review also appears here on my blog Books on Marrs

...

Meanwhile... earlier on the ranch...

Review to come :)

Btw, that totally is NOT a dirty reference I am making :D

Melina says

Losing it is a story of four girls who make a pledge to lose their virginity before schoolies. The story, told in four different parts, charts their year as they dodge the obstacles of driving tests, parents, older brothers and questions of sexuality to 'Do It'

To be honest, I didn't like this book. I've read a lot of reviews on it which rave about how great it is to see female sexuality and teenaged sexuality treated so well, and it is a very sexually liberated book. However, throughout the whole book it felt like the characters were two dimensional, defined by only a few things – one of which was always their virginity. Zoe is boy-mad, scattered and a virgin! Mala is boy-crazy, has over protective immigrant parents and is a virgin! Abby has overly christian parents, a difficult brother and is a virgin! Bree is beautiful and cool and is a virgin!

The idea that there was something essentially wrong with girls who hadn't had a sexual experience by the time they finished high school, also annoyed me. While it's a convenient set up for the book, there's something really wrong with the idea that a girl must make the choice to have a sexual experience during her high school years, or she might get drunk and loose on schoolies and 'do' someone she regrets. Virginity is seen as an inconvenience or a burden, something which has to be 'got rid of' so that you can enter womanhood. And these (apparently) very smart girls, known as the Geek Girls, all automatically buy into that, without one of them saying – oh wait a minute, I can make my own choices about my body without anyone dictating to me what I need to do to become a woman!

Then there's the slightly unbelievable part where not one of the girls has any regrets about becoming sexually active, even when it goes a bit pear shaped or they don't have any kind of romantic feelings for the other person involved. I realise that this is the truth for some people, but I find it a little hard to believe that not one of them had any regrets at all.

There's also the very convenient plot point, where the girls promise each other that they will keep any of their sexual exploits secret. Of course, by doing this they remove a vital support network (good thing none of them had any regrets then, since they had no one to turn to if they wanted to talk about it) and set up a painfully obvious plot twist.

Being sexually liberated doesn't mean that girls have to lose their virginity early. It doesn't mean that there's something wrong with those who choose to wait until they're older or something wrong with those who choose to find a partner that they have a connection with or even (gasp!) love. By having all four of the girls in this book participating in sexual activities without hesitation or regret, it makes it look like this is the only acceptable way to behave – that girls should be so sexually liberated that they're not allowed to have feelings that a) sex at that age may not be for them b) sex with people they don't love may not be for them or c) sex might actually have consequences. I'd hate to think a teenaged girl would come to this book and think that she's 'wrong' when she thinks about sex, because she doesn't meet the 'sexually liberated' style that is the only way portrayed in this book.

This review first appeared at Adventures of a Subversive Reader

Josephine says

I ended up skimming through this because the writing and the characters didn't engage me. I was also disappointed to see how the pact played out - and Matty's role throughout the story. This had a lot of potential but it fell flat for me.

Reynje says

You say “*Virginity Challenge*”, I think *cliché-ridden teen comedy film featuring at least one gross-out scene and more double entendres than you can shake a stick at*.

Right or wrong, what immediately comes to my mind is the tired formula of a group of teens and their various misadventures on a “hilarious” quest to lose their virginity before [insert momentous high school event here].

But Julia Lawrinson’s *Losing It* is not a cheap laugh at a string of sex jokes. While it definitely has its funny moments, this is a deeper look at four characters and the personal motivations and relationships that factor into their decisions.

To be honest, I think a large part of my enjoyment of this book was because it caused a few flashbacks to “Reynje: The Teen Years”. I was a GeeGee. (No, not a horse, a Geek Girl). And the interactions between Lawrinson’s characters had me quietly chortling and feeling a bit nostalgic for my own high school shenanigans. (Because, confession: I actually liked high school.)

In the GeeGees, Lawrinson has created a diverse cast of teenage girls – a cross-section of backgrounds and cultures that’s fairly representative of high schools in Australia. Year Twelve students Zoe, Bree, Mala and Abby enter into a challenge to lose their virginity during the year, keeping their experiences (or lack of) secret until the final reveal at Schoolies. (It’s taking all my willpower not to make a lame Schoolies pun here). The book is divided into sections, with the spotlight rotating from each character in turn as they relate what is essentially their final transcript of events. There’s some cross over between the viewpoints, and it’s interesting to see the events and characters from other perspectives, and the layers of context that develop as a result.

I found Abby and Mala’s narratives the most interesting. (Oh Mala, honey. Let me give you a hug.) In their respective cases, Lawrinson does an excellent job of communicating very complex family dynamics in an understated and effective manner.

However, while the circumstances of each character’s story are different, I didn’t find the voices particularly striking. The manner in which they all relate their version of events has a similar tone, which slightly lets down the concept of multiple narrators.

Losing It is a very frank book, and it addresses the subject of teen sexuality in an upfront manner that manages to be sincere without always taking itself too seriously or talking down to its audience. Lawrinson presents a range of scenarios and character motivations, without screaming: “LOOK! OVER HERE! AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR TEENS!” Rather, she’s honest and sympathetic and has created a story that (in my opinion) will resonate with its intended audience.

That ending, however? Yeah no. Not buying it. The neatness and the ease of acceptance with which the stories wraps up is a bit too tidy for me to believe. I appreciate the focus on the strong friendships, but I’m

pretty sure that in real life there would be more emotional fisticuffs going on before the group hug.

Overall, Losing It is funny, brash and pretty realistic. It's not as gritty as Heartbreak High, but not as soapy as Home and Away (view spoiler).

Steph Bowe says

Books with suggestive titles/covers make me feel awkward when purchasing them or taking them out at the library. How on earth people buy or borrow those romance books with half-naked people on the cover is entirely beyond me. Every time I see someone with a Kindle the only logical conclusion is that they are reading a book too embarrassing to reveal the cover to anyone else. Fortunately they have self-serve check-outs at the library near where I live now. I love self-serve check-outs. Every time I go to the supermarket, I feel like I'm living in the future. It's sensational.

After having read an extract from the beginning of Losing It, I wasn't particularly interested in reading it, to be entirely honest with you. But still! I picked it up! That first part is probably my least favourite of the whole book. Third-person scenes book-end the novel, with four separate sections filling the space between - a short story from each of the main characters, at various points through the year. And I very much love multiple narrators, and I think this method of story-telling worked very well. Each of the four friends were unique and endearing and imperfect, and pretty stupid at various points, and I think the realism of each of them and their voices was what kept some out-there ridiculous plot twists from turning the book unbelievable. The first story, Zoe's, was undoubtedly the funniest, and I loved that the most academically smart of the girls was also the most obnoxious.

I did read this immediately after I read The Reluctant Hallelujah, however, and I have established weirdness in books is almost always a good thing to me. So maybe it will too much weird for you? You won't find out till you read it, though, because I would ruin it if I told you! It is pretty hilarious, and I would hate to spoil it.

Shortly after reading Losing It, I was doing my usual 'wasting time on the internet, shouldn't I be writing or doing something important with my life?' thing, when I read this quite wonderful post by another author, Foz Meadows, entitled 'Why YA sex scenes matter.' And this is definitely something I want to write more on*, later, but I thought I'd touch on this now, since it is super relevant to this book. But this is a big thing that I loved about Losing It, despite the fact that it was at times uncomfortably weird, was that it represented four very different experiences of teenage sexuality, realistically and non-judgementally. The novel was not a vehicle for the author to express her views - it was entertaining and involving and well-written - but it still depicted everything in a positive but not saccharine manner. So that makes me happy. Not all sex scenes in YA novels should be wedding-night-with-a-vampire, guys.

So age recommendation - girls, fourteen and over? It's a novel about a virginity pact. I think we've gathered eleven-year-olds won't really like it. And the girls do a bit of drinking of alcoholic beverages in the first and final scenes. I plan on writing about this, as well - what is appropriate in YA and what isn't. I plan on writing about everything. While the sex in this book is older teenage subject matter, it's all dealt with in a very tactful manner and there aren't any damaging sort of values going on. I wouldn't be concerned about younger teenagers reading it, really. I get more worried about violence in books, that freaks me out. This novel is lovely and honest and hilarious and leans towards the ridiculous at times, but it's got a big heart. So there.

*Who knows when I'll write a proper post about this? I am very hesitant about expressing definite views on things, because I am so wary of offending people now and aware that my own views are bound to change. I

had a lot more confidence to just say 'I believe this! I know everything!' when I was slightly younger. Maybe this is what growing up does to you? You have to endlessly think about things? You are never quite sure? Gosh, adulthood is terrible.

Bree T says

Abby, Mala, Bree and Zoe are the Geek Girls at their exclusive private high school where they're mostly there on scholarships. They bonded almost right away and have been friends ever since. Now, about to go in to year 12, the talk is suddenly about virginity and the losing of it.

Bree comes up with an idea – in order to avoid losing their collective virginity in drunken fumbles on the beach or behind a seedy club on schoolies week at the end of the year like a high proportion of their fellow students, she thinks they should make a pact to all 'lose it' during the year. Their terms, their choice, fully sober and not with someone that they won't run from screaming in the morning. That way they'll have no regrets about one of the most important moments in their young lives.

After an hour of debate they agree to make it a bet where nothing will be revealed between the friends regarding their success or failure with 'losing it' until they are actually at schoolies. Agreed were the following rules:

Has to take place before schoolies (8.5 months away)

They all had to lose it or at least make a genuine attempt

Absolute secrecy both with each other and everyone else, including any/all of the boys

Results to be written up in a diary-style confession

Big reveal at schoolies

The rules set the girls go their separate ways attempting to each fulfill the bet. They learn a lot about themselves, each other and what it is to really lose it.

I've implemented something recently that I call 'Weekend Windback' where each weekend I try to read books that have been languishing on my TBR pile for some time and this one was one of those reads. It came out early this year and I bought it almost right away because I'd heard good things about it at a Penguin Teen Aus promo event in late 2011 where they profiled their up coming releases for the first 6 months of 2012. However it ended up on the shelf and even though I read plenty of good reviews for it, I hadn't had the chance to get to it. I decided to make it one of my first WW books.

After the first chapter outlining the making of the bet, the book then divides into 4 sections, each narrated by one of the girls. First up is Zoe. Zoe enjoys more freedom than her friends, raised by a single mother under the guise of trust is given until there is a reason for it not to be. She makes her choice for who she thinks the best candidate will be and sets about getting what she wants. Abby is the daughter of good Christians, her quiet life disrupted by the return of her rebellious older brother, who left home some years ago and has been a very distant figure ever since. Abby and her parents are both stunned by how changed he is when he returns and Abby is distracted from the bet by thoughts of the time she almost lost her virginity to a boy from her Christian youth group. Mala is suffocating under her family's strict rules and constant hovering presence. She has been fooling around with her cousin since they were young and she thinks that he would be perfect and that they're destined to be together until she's devastated when he tells her that "Aussies just don't do that". And the last of the group is Bree, an ice queen with a parade of gym-junkie boyfriends but who is still searching to find out who she really is.

This book is quirky and fun and I think it's an excellent example of a situation where revolving first person

narrative works. The girls all have individual voices and you're not chopping back and forth between them – you get Zoe's story starting from the bet onwards, then Abby, then Mala, then Bree. Each section focuses on their attempts to lose their virginity and there's relatively little interaction between the friends other than brief scenes. This way you get to know each girl and her situation well and you get to experience their journeys separately and individually which ends up being sort of funny when you get through a couple and realise exactly where the author is going with this 'game' and what is going to happen at the end when they all share their stories.

I don't know anyone who made a pact to lose their virginity but I feel like the stories coming out of this book are mostly realistic, especially on the awkwardness of first time sex and negotiating things like contraception, trying to get alone time and exploring sexuality. I actually found Mala's story most interesting – she's of an ethnicity not specifically named and her parents are extremely strict. She barely gets any time alone to socialise, let alone see boys. The only time she does see boys is at family functions and she's all related to them. At quite a young age, she had been fooling around with her cousin, exploring different things and she's totally in the dark about the fact that in Australia, first cousins don't date or marry (one of the girls claims it's against the law but it actually isn't. According to the Attorney-General's department, you cannot marry an ancestor or descendant (ie a parent, grandparent, child, brother or sister) You can however legally marry an aunt, uncle, niece, nephew or cousin in Australia) however culturally "it's not illegal...just frowned upon" whereas in Mala's culture, it seemed quite the norm, even favoured. This was a hard adjustment for her to make as it seemed that she felt that Mo had been the one for her ever since she was little.

The ending is a little predictable and a touch unbelievable but this is still an enjoyable story. I like Julia Lawrinson's style, she has a few more books and I'm definitely interested in reading them.

Ashley says

had to sleep on my opinion of this one, but here it goes.

I originally picked up this title in a Booktopia Easter weekend sale and as it's been sitting on my shelf fairly untouched for the past two years, I thought it was about time I picked it up. My tastes have changed a bit since I got it, and a book about four girls who challenge each other to lose their virginities before 'schoolies' week wasn't something I was keen on.

I was wrong. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It consists of four stories of girls exploring their sexualities bookended by the creation of the challenge at the start and the culmination of the challenge at the end. The stories take place in chronological order of the challenge-induced sexual activity, and they also look at the friendship dynamic up to their final year of school. It has characters from different family structures, ethnic backgrounds and sexualities. I originally thought that the narrative voices would be too similar, but that wasn't the case at all, with each character reading so completely differently.

This is the bit where I talk about the issues I had.

Firstly, there was some really glaring editing issues. This book was initially published in 2012, and I got this copy in 2016, so I would have thought that perhaps things like that would have been cleaned up already. Secondly, I started thinking about half-way through that this book was set in Western Australia, and I got confirmation of that right at the end when they mentioned both Scotch College and PLC in the same sentence, and I still had to double check by googling the author. It's extremely clear that this book has been edited for an Eastern States audience. The target audience at the time of publication would have started high school in Year Eight, not year Seven, which explains some later discrepancies in terms of character age at

the start of HS (Mala being 13, for instance). In WA, we also call the week-long celebration at the end of school 'leavers', which is another reason it took me so long to figure out. So yeah, my main issues with this book is that the editing made it far more accessible to the Eastern States rather than, you know, the people in the state where it's set. But I'll leave that for now and go back to things that I like.

Overall, I thought this was a really heartwarming story about friendship and exploring sexuality. I don't think I could say I'd have enjoyed this book more when I was in high school, but I definitely think I would have benefited from having read this earlier in my life. There are some trigger warnings for both rape and incest, but these aren't explicit and they're only suggested at in terms of side characters (but they're still there). I enjoyed this far more than I thought I would, and I'm looking forward to picking up more of Lawrinson's work in the future.

Nadia King says

I have to admit I thought the premise of Losing It by Julia Lawrinson sounded dubious. Four high school friends challenge themselves to lose their virginity before the end of Year 12. This could have been trivial, possibly nonsensical but Lawrinson gives readers a sensitively told and compassionate look into the girls' complicated and at times, heartbreaking lives. Without giving away spoilers, watch out for the character, Matty who is a wonderful minor although pivotal character in the book. Losing It is a sometimes funny, and sensitively written story about finding yourself and losing your virginity. A heartwarming YA read about friendship and relationships.

Sinead says

While I think it's nice and naive when it comes to high school girls and it is a quick read, it was a bit cringe worthy. I personally think most of the situations the characters were in were over dramatic and all of them were really one dimensional when it came to character development and backstory.

Christy Ngo says

When I first got this book, I actually liked the cover (red cover with the hearts). I thought it was going to just a YA contemporary read. Well, it wasn't exactly what I expected.

While reading the first few chapters, I grew interested in the 4 girls who are actually quite different. I finished the books in half a day and I really enjoyed reading it.

I liked the way the book was written. It was as though I was actually reading 4 stories of 4 girls which made me being able to feel connected to the girls.

I'm not sure if I would recommend this book to younger teens though (being from a very traditional family).

I would recommend parents to read the book first before making a decision to have your teenager read it. :)

Antonia Gregory says

Well I totally wasn't expecting that. As soon as I found out the trend that was going on I became bored. I like

the fact that this book is about development and not drama and gossip. These girls are relatable but the ones I felt like I understood the most were Zoe and Mala, I found myself bored by abby and Bree. Possibly because I thought abby needed to grow a backbone and Bree needed to be more true to herself. I understood how she felt and why she decided to cover everything up under her ice goddess persona. I myself act reserved but not for the sake of covering up a secret. As for abbey i think she is just a bit of a push over and all throughout her part of the story i was screaming at her to stand up to her parents. It wasn't until she started acting like a brat that I thought she was acting like a normal human should. I don't like the pressure these girls were under to do well in school and grades and mala's nana pi**ed me off so much. It's like these aussy parents are just using their kids as trophies to show off to other parents. I know all parents do that but it was just too extreme in this book. I guess they are scholars students after all so I shouldn't really be complaining, and I also know nothing about aissy culture. But its because i know what that pressure feels like and the reminder of it bothered me but also made the book more relatable. Zoe and Mala were my favourites by far. In reality I don't think anyone would be as gutsy or wreck-less as they were but I admired their girl balls and found their sex obsessed nature realistic and admittedly relatable. In fact the whole book was so simple that I found it more enjoyable . I like the idea of separate stories that all come together as one in a big reveal. This was like one of those chick flicks you need for a good laugh and I totally enjoyed it. There were plenty if things that just seemed too dramatic or coincidental to happen in real life but without them the book wouldn't have been as interesting. Matty for example is a guy i can hardly imagine being real, there is no way he could keep certain things to himself instead of bragging to other guys and he just pi**ed me off in general. Being nice but then a typical male at the same time. I suppose thats more realistic than the fantasy angels, vampires and werewolf guys in most YA fiction. The opening was hilarious and had me hooked onto zoe's story. All throughout I was on the same emotional roller coaster as these girls. The ending was a bit flat but it wasn't disappointing, heart wrenching or devastating at all. I feel like more emotion could have been expressed in the ending but as I said before this was like a chick flick and not a moving story. I am slightly older than the girls in this book so I've already been there and can understand them completely. I would definitely recommend this to girls my age but I'm not to sure about recommending it to girls also in their last year of school. It might give them bad ideas or help them make sensible decisions about sex and relationships. I don't think that early teen girls should be reading this simply because you have to be mature enough to understand what exactly these girls are going through and grasp the full effect of the story. However to the young curious mind this could be an emotional thriller that gives a somewhat realistic but brief overview of sexuality without giving too much explicit information.

Amanda says

Losing It is set in a fictional suburb in Australia. The story opens with four friends, Bree, Mala, Zoe and Abby, sitting in Mala's bedroom. They're drinking the vodka that they managed to sneak in and talking about boys and sex, of course! Together they are the Geek Girls, also know as the GeeGees and they wear their name with pride. All four of them attend St Michael's Anglican College on scholarships and they have been friends since year seven. They're now in their final year of high school and the talk turns to losing their virginity and Schoolies, the end of year party that usually takes place on Queensland's Gold Coast.

Bree comes up with a challenge, they should all attempt to have sex this year so that they don't end up doing it with a random guy while drunk at Schoolies. They all agree and come up with some rules including not discussing it until Schoolies at the end of the year.

The book then splits into five parts, one part for each of the girls and one for their week at Schoolies. First up we have Zoe, she introduces us to the rest of the girls, Mala is her best friend out of the bunch and their home lives couldn't be more different. Zoe lives with her mum who trusts her and doesn't keep close tabs on her, Mala lives with her parents, brother and grandmother and has to ask permission to go anywhere and is often

escorted to the bus stop by her brother or cousin. Abby is the socially conscious one in their group, she's also shy and mysterious. Bree is the cool, popular, gorgeous one and the other three often wonder why she stuck with them instead of joining the rest of the popular kids at school.

Zoe is upfront, intelligent and not afraid to go out and get what she wants. She sets her sights on Matti, they've been friends for years but she's never seen him as anything more. Her chapter really made me laugh, her plan to have sex involves the back seat of her Yaris and I loved her totally unsubtle way of communicating.

Next up we have Abby, her parents are Christian. Lately she's realised she no longer believes what they do but she can't tell them because her older brother, Zeke, told them he no longer believed and her father was never the same. Zeke tormented Abby for years until he finally left home. Since he left, Abby has felt lighter and like she can breathe again. Out of the blue, Zeke announces he's returning home and his situation turned out to be awkward and sad. She had a moment a few years back with a boy from her Christian Youth Group but they never went as far as having sex.

Mala's parents are really strict but unbeknownst to them, she used to fool around with her cousin, Mo, when they were children. She had no idea that this is not something that is socially accepted in Australia until Mo tells her to tell her friends. Her plan involves sneaking a boy into her bedroom while her dad is out for the night.

And lastly we have Bree, she enjoys going to the gym and often hangs around with the guys that frequent her gym, Zoe's always jealous as she has a thing for guys with muscled arms (me too, Zoe!) Bree's story was really touching and I felt for her so much.

So, I've been vague intentionally because I really don't want to spoil this book for anyone. Even if I've mentioned the set up, it doesn't mean they went through with it as planned and it was fun waiting to see who would do it and who wouldn't.

Julia has managed to capture a very realistic and honest look at the lives of four teenage girls. After only a few pages I was already going through my memories of being a teenage girl and a lot of her points really hit home for me. When I was in high school, there were a few of us in our group that had already had sex but there were two girls who hadn't and there was definitely a bit of competition between them because neither wanted to be the last one, not that it really mattered, but it obviously did to them. It didn't help that they'd set their sights on the same guy!

I think this would be a great book for all teenage girls (and guys) to read. I believe that kids should be able to talk and think about sex and not be told that it's bad because let's face it, teens are going to do whatever they like, so they should have plenty of information to help them out.

I thought the ending was a great way to wrap up the story and I was glad when they all 'fessed up and it was hilarious to read their reactions to one particular person. I know it seemed like a neat way to tie it all together but I know similar situations have happened and while the obvious response would be anger or jealousy, I think these girls have a great friendship.

I haven't read any of Julia's other books but I do have a copy of *The Push* and I plan on buying her other books because I absolutely adore the way she writes and I'm sure her other books are just as excellent.

Losing It is a funny, sweet story that takes a real look at what it's like to be a teenage girl in Australia. It was refreshingly different and I would recommend it firstly to all teenagers as well as fans of realistic fiction.

While I'm here I have to mention the cover, I think it's fun and cute, I love the colours and the matte finish.

but it makes me think of a couple trying to get pregnant rather than a book about girls wanting to have sex.

Losing It was sent to me from by the wonderful people at Penguin Australia.

ALPHAreader says

Meet Bree, Zoe, Abby and Mala – the GeeGees (aka ‘Geek Girls’). The GeeGees quickly banded together as the outcast scholarship kids at prestigious SMAC (aka ‘St. Michael’s Anglican College), and ever since then they have been inseparable.

Bree is the glamazon of their group – she turns boy’s heads but has a reputation as an ice queen.

Abby is a sweet Christian girl – but don’t be fooled, because it’s the quiet ones you’ve got to look out for.

Mala is the dutiful daughter who is slowly being suffocated by her lovingly over-protective family.

And Zoe is trying to control her insatiable love of men’s muscly arms, and trying to keep her jealousy of Bree in check.

All four girls are currently still in possession of their V-plates (aka ‘virginity’) but all that’s about to change... Schoolies week is, statistically speaking, the time in a young girl’s life when she is most likely to pop her cherry. But losing it on a sandy beach surrounded by boozing teenagers and empty bottles does not sound overly romantic. So the GeeGees have made a pact to lose ‘it’ before Schoolies.

Four girls.

One challenge.

Potential catastrophe.

Game on.

‘Losing It’ is the new YA novel by Australian author Julia Lawrinson.

For some readers, ‘Losing It’ will be a head-nodding, cathartic and hilarious read that will either trigger memories of your own befuddling experience, or act as a ‘what not to do’ as you navigate the treacherous terrain of virginity. And then for a few other readers, ‘Losing It’ will no doubt be a special glimpse into the secret world of girls ... and all our neurotically romanticized ways.

When we meet the GeeGees – Bree, Abby, Mala and Zoe – they are formulating a plan to avoid a dreaded Schoolies week cherry-popping;

‘Okay,’ Zoe said. ‘Here’s a better idea. Why don’t we still have the rules, but also say that nobody’s forced to participate if they don’t want to.’

‘What’s the point of that?’ Bree said. ‘We may as well just leave it to chance.’

‘Well, no,’ Zoe said. ‘It could be a challenge, instead of a bet.’

‘What’s the difference?’ Bree asked.

‘A bet is something juvenile, shallow, something you do with no thought. A challenge, on the other hand, is something you rise to, so to speak –’ she ignored the giggles – ‘something that has a moral element, something that implies that you’re overcoming the thing that is holding you back, that you’re a new and better person by the end of it.’ Zoe raised her fist in the air. ‘It’s about freedom – freedom to become somebody different!’

‘You sound like you’re talking about a new political movement, not getting laid,’ laughed Mala.

From there we follow the girls' individual journeys through year twelve, on their missions to lose 'it'.

We meet Zoe – a science geek with an inconvenient penchant for muscle-bound jocks. For a few years now Zoe has been quietly stewing over the fact that her best friend, Bree, seemingly turned into a glamazonian hottie over night ... leaving the rest of the GeeGees to pale in comparison. Zoe is especially frustrated at having to watch Bree parading around with her gym buddies – handsome older guys with bulging pectorals and drool-worthy arms. In a fit of frustration Zoe turns to Matty, honorary brother-like GeeGees member and Zoe's science partner. It's not love, it's not even lust... and the back of a Yaris is hardly the place to get amorous. But a girl's gotta lose what a girl's gotta lose – and Zoe is hell-bent on losing her V-plates while she's trying to get her P-plates.

Abby is a good Christian girl whose faith in love was rocked when her Youth Group sweetie got cold feet and chose abstinence over her virginity. Abby is struggling to get close to anyone since her first romantic disaster, and she doubts she'll even be in the virginity competition. Putting a further dampener on her cherry-popping is the reappearance of her terrible, atheist older brother, Zeke. He's back from the wheatbelt and he has a few revelations to share with the family...

Mala is a good, dutiful daughter with an impossible crush on her cousin, Mo. From an early age she knew that Mo was the one for her – but what's acceptable in the old country is considered incest in Australia... and Mala has to put aside her romantic notions about the beautiful and dark-eyed Mo.

Finally, Bree is the St. Michael's Anglican College resident ice queen. All the girls want to be her, and all the boys want to get in her pants... but nobody knows what really makes Bree tick. The St. Michael's boys don't interest her, and she envies her friend's crushes and flirtations – their enviable lust leaves Bree feeling like a late-bloomer. But all that changes when she has a revelation at the gym one day.

First off, I should say that 'Losing It' is not Julia Lawrinson writing a lengthy and raunchy advocacy of promiscuity. The GeeGees are not entering into this 'competition' for one-upmanship or to participate in any of those rainbow party type shenanigans that 'Today Tonight' so likes to scare parents with. The girls enter into the 'competition', rather blindly, simply because they want to get the task of losing their virginity over and done with ... and since they are not thrilled with the statistic that predicts they'll most likely lose it at Schoolies week, they decide to do the deed beforehand. Now, if you're tut-tutting and shaking your head at this naiveté, then never fear!... Lawrinson explores the myriad of ways that all four girls realize the pitfalls of their plan.

I really liked the fact that Lawrinson didn't preach in this book. Readers, and the GeeGees, all have to come to the realization that losing your virginity to a competitive timeline is probably not the smartest move. All of the girls have mini-breakthroughs about themselves in the course of 'Losing It'... but Lawrinson doesn't shove these life lessons down reader's throats. She doesn't make situations too easy on her female characters either. Like Abby, who thought she had her brother all figured out until he shocked her with his reappearance. Or Bree, who everyone else has all figured out until we read her point of view and realize how wrong they are. This really is Lawrinson inviting readers into the secret world of girls (whether to commiserate or learn a little something) and she doesn't pull punches or write an easy way out for her protagonist's tricky situations. I liked that, a lot.

Really, all of the girl's individual stories were juicy enough to warrant a book all to themselves. I really wished some girl's stories had been longer (or stand alones) in particular, Bree & Abby's – whose revelations (both personal and familial) really intrigued me, and by the end of the book I was wishing we'd been able to spend more time with those two girls in particular. I would have especially liked to read the fallout and ramifications of their situations...

I also wish the book had focused more on the GeeGees friendship group. We don't really get many scenes

with the foursome – and for that reason it felt like their talked about camaraderie was missing, not really shown. In the beginning I was concerned that the ‘losing it’ competition was made in spite – that these girls weren’t really close friends and the comp was a bit of sabotage by some of the girls in the group. But as the novel progresses and we read each of their perspectives, we do come to understand that the girls do care about each other and value their friendship. I just think that might have been a bit clearer though, if we had more scenes with the GeeGees hanging out together. On the other hand, each of the girls has secondary characters that become big players in their individual stories... science geek, Matty, was a particular favourite!

Funny and endearing, Julia Lawrinson has written an unflinching and hilarious journey through the momentous time in four girl’s lives when they decide to lose ‘it’, on their own terms.

Kai says

Review posted at **Amaterasu Reads**

Everything started with a dare Bree suggested: lose your virginity before the schoolies. The GeeGee's (Geek Girls with scholarships) Abby, Mala and Zoe agreed with their friend, and all hell broke loose. Split into four parts, the story revolves around the conquests of Bree, the gorgeous, popular cool geek everyone likes, Abby, the conservative Christian girl, Mala, the girl who's obsessed with boys just because she can't be near them, and Zoe, raised by a single mom and was used to being independent and speaks out her mind. Lives begin to unravel, secrets that have long been kept come out and all four of these girls' journey into becoming a woman were filled with heartaches, pain, confusion and some of the most hilarious moments they will ever encounter in their life. Because losing it isn't as easy as they thought it would be.

It's all about that three letter word, and Julia Lawrinson tells it like it should in this story about four best friends and a pact that lead to a lot of hilarious and enlightening moments for all of them. Some people might think how shallow this novel is because of what it discusses but let me tell you, it's not. Julia Lawrinson explores sexuality and one's virginity through The GeeGees plan in a very good way. They realize that maybe losing it in a bet isn't the best way to do it. And this book is not just about sex, as it explores what's beyond the bet and shows us the different lives of the girls and the dilemmas and struggles they face as teens.

The book makes you take a second look not just at the mechanics of friendship, but the individuality of each characters. Through the competition, you get to examine what goes on between the ties that bond these girls. Envy, spite, secrets, this book has it all. You get to take a peek inside their lives and their families. Bree's story drew me out of my comfort zone as I try to understand her, and Abby's life colliding with religion and values and family dynamics intrigued me the most. There's a nice balance among all four stories and if that wasn't enough another interesting character is added, Matty, the geeky friend and the one caught in the middle of it all, who I really liked!

Losing It is not just a coming of age tale, but a venture into womanhood and what sex really means for teens today, much less for girls. The readers get to see the good, the bad and oftentimes, the ugly side of things with a good dose of humor. A lot of the younger kids these days think they are open minded, but this book can help further explain to teens a lot of things about their sexuality and the consequences of doing it just for the sake of losing it. What I liked most about this book is that it's edgy without being preachy. You take the lessons from each of the girls through their story unfolding right before your eyes and not one lesson is forced upon you.

You either hate this book or you love it, no in between. The theme of this book is far too important and

relevant to read half heartedly. For some it might be a quick trip back in time when they finally lost it and for some it might be a guide to what and what not to do when you finally want to lose it. Julia Lawrinson's real and unflinching novel is a perfect read for today's teens. Sweet and funny, with catastrophic moments and a lesson or two we can all learn from, Losing It is an enjoyable read. Quite different, eye opening and refreshingly new. I'm gonna have to stick around and check Julia's other books because I loved this one!

Celine says

Review originally posted in: <http://forget8me8not.blogspot.com.au/...>

Cover:

Such a cute cover! When I first saw the cover, I thought those hearts were balloons but after reading the book, I found out that they are not actually balloons!

Story:

4 girls, end of year 12. Losing It.

I never thought Losing It was such an enjoyable read! Losing It is a story of four girls who are trying to lose their virginity. They make a pact to try and lose IT and gather together to share their stories. The story is split into 5 different sections. The first section introduces us to the story of how these girls end up making a pact to lose their virginity. Then the rest of the four sections are the stories of each girls and how they lose it or perhaps not losing it!

Losing It was such a realistic read. The idea of sex in this book is both 'terrifying' and 'exciting'. The girls feel excited and also worried about losing it. Although, this was a light read. Nothing too heavy. Each girl's story was cute and funny! When I read the book, I noticed 'something' or 'someone' to be precise in each of the girl's story and after reading four of them, I never thought this 'someone' is actually the same person! I do like the how the book ended. The ending wrapped up the book quite well!

Characters:

Abby, Mala, Zoe and Bree are fun and cute characters. They were really enjoyable to read about! I love how they are very different compared to each other. I love reading each of their stories and discovering whether or not they end up losing it or perhaps discovering something more about themselves! And there's Matt. Let's just say he's the main guy in the book. He's pretty cool but I don't really like him.

The characters are one of the best things about Losing It. Lawrinson's characters felt so real and she depicts teenagers well!

Overall:

Losing It is a fun, light and enjoyable read! Want to read a story about 4 girls losing IT? Read this book and find out how they lose IT or perhaps not losing IT! I really enjoyed Julia Lawrinson's writing and am looking forward to read more of her books!

Thank you Penguin Australia for the review copy!
