

Review

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Gripping adventure tale brings the nightmare of war to life

By Cameron Woodhead and Fiona Capp

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Books to read this week include new titles from Paul Jennings, Suzanne Leal and Kath Koschel.

Book critics Cameron Woodhead and Fiona Capp cast their eyes over recent non-fiction and fiction releases. Here are their reviews.

Fiction pick of the week





CREDIT:

Running with Ivan

Suzanne Leal, Angus & Robertson, \$17.99

Suzanne Leal's debut children's book is a time-slip novel. It's as fully imagined an adventure as Ruth Park's *Playing Beatie Bow*, with the same timeless potential.

Thirteen-year-old Leo wants to be anywhere but home. His mother died two years back, his dad remarried, and he's been forced to share a room with his bullying stepbrother, Cooper. When he discovers an old music box and plays it, Leo shifts back in time to Prague on the cusp of World War II – a period he's studying in history class. He makes a new friend, Ivan, but is soon returned to his own timeline and its miseries. Desperate to go back, Leo tries the box again and finds the Czech capital under Nazi occupation. In mortal danger, Ivan and Leo must find a way to escape with their lives.

Running with Ivan is suspenseful and involving children's literature that vividly imagines the nightmare of history, while remaining sensitive to the age of its readership.