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***The Name at the End of the Ladder* by Elena de Roo**

Publisher: Walker Books

RRP \$16.99

An innovative, exciting novel set in a time where people's lives are so controlled they can't even choose their own name. Children are known by the name of the month of their birth coupled with the day of the week they are born on. That is, until they reach twelve years of age. Then they must visit the Name Bank and be counselled on a suitable name they will receive.

September-Tuesday dislikes the boring flower names most of the girls in her class have been given, while the boys are called after trees. She has found an old Book of Names and longs to choose an exotic name that will reflect her personality.

On her way to the Name Bank September meets Sweet Pea, a sweet seller who gives her a lollipop that leads her to the mysterious Madame Alcina. In Madame's office, September is tricked into entering a game of Names and Ladders with high stakes, 'No name, no escape.'

In the game September meets August, a boy searching for his brother who has been missing since he entered the Name Bank years ago. The pair join forces to try and win the game and free other children trapped in the game. With each roll of the dice they receive names that have magical and terrifying effects. The fascinating plot takes many twists and turns as the pair race against time.

This ingenious tale will be of particular interest to youngsters who enjoy gaming, both old-fashioned board games and computer games. It's an exhilarating fantasy novel that draws the reader on at a fast pace.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

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