

MONSTERS OF VIRTUE

L.J. RITCHIE

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If the government can define a 'superior' race, where does the power end?

In 1928 Parliament was on the brink of enacting a eugenic sterilisation law allowing the state to decide who was fit to breed. This was despite New Zealand's reputation for being a liberal country committed to equal opportunity for all.

Ritchie's new young adult novel mixes fact with fiction: the bill has been defeated, but the agenda continues. *Monsters of Virtue* plays out an alternative history in which a utopian settlement is established in the Ōtaki River Gorge where the country's 'finest' youth are chosen to lead, and breed, a new superior race. But is anyone prepared for the consequences of allowing prejudices and power to intervene with nature?

Through powerful storytelling, Ritchie exposes the disturbing places powerful individuals will go in the name of social progress. In an era of Trump, genetic testing and designer babies, *Monsters of Virtue* is a timely reminder of the dangers of believing in one 'superior' race.

Sales points

- This is a very hot issue, as those with extreme views on race are increasingly able to push their ideas into the mainstream (Trump).
- Young adult readers will be attracted by the adventure, dramatic storyline and high stakes.
- This is the first New Zealand novel to reveal the country's shocking eugenics history. Many prominent Kiwis were supporters.
- The novel encourages philosophical and moral discussions about the morality of contemporary science through engagement with Plato's *The Republic*.
- The author will be available for interview and there will be a sustained publicity campaign.

Target market

- Fans of New Zealand authors or young adult fiction.
- People interested in issues of ethics and morality.
- People who liked L. J. Ritchie's first novel.
- People who like New Zealand history and alternative histories.
- Readers interested in eugenics, science and issues of race.
- Secondary school libraries and educational establishments (teachers, students).

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L.J. Ritchie is a Wellington-based author of YA fiction. His first novel, *Like Nobody's Watching*, was shortlisted for Best Young Adult Fiction and Best First Book, NZ Book Awards for Children and Young Adults, 2017. *Monsters of Virtue* is his second novel. The author will be available for interview and there will be a sustained publicity campaign for the launch.

