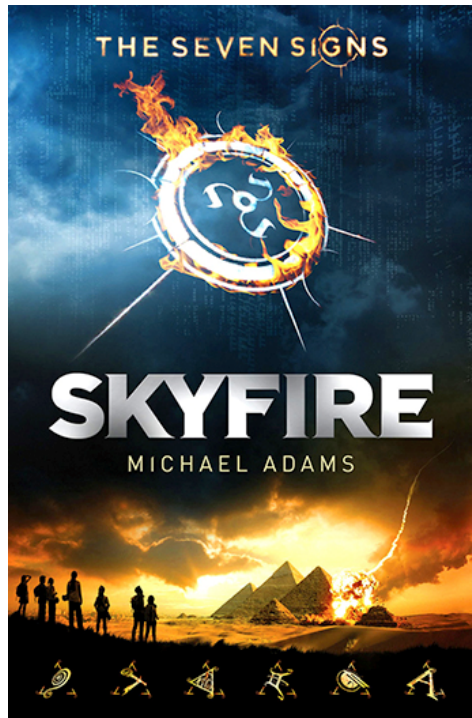


Skyfire (The Seven Signs #1)



Michael Adams, *Skyfire (The Seven Signs #1)*, Scholastic Australia, Sept 2016, 192pp., \$12.99 (pbk) ISBN 9781743628010

Skyfire is the first intriguing instalment of the *Seven Signs* adventure series for young readers (10 years +) from Australian author and journalist Michael Adams.

Set amidst the glitz and star-studded glamour of a New York award ceremony we meet Yasmin, Isabel, Andy, Dylan, JJ, Zander and Mila: seven exceptional teenagers, hand picked by trillionaire internet king, Felix Scott, as his mysterious DARE (Dream! Act! Realise Everything!) award winners. Singled out for their exceptional brilliance, with achievements ranging from advanced robotics to dreaming up new ways in which to promote world peace, Felix labels these bright young minds his 'dreamers and doers of the future.'

As fledgling friendships begin to form and our successful seven bask in their respective glory they have no way of knowing the deadly terror that lies in wait. Even before the enormity of their life-changing prizes has begun to sink in, each receives a message: an unusual symbol. Their only line of enquiry leads to a confusing online message and an ominous looking count down screen. When the seven symbols are finally combined, they make up the 'first sign'; a devastating prediction of truly epic proportions.

With no time to lose, our seven friends must work together to solve the first of the seven signs, cracking codes and matching wits with an unknown, omnipotent mastermind of terrifying power and ambition.

Skyfire marks a thrilling descent into a technologically advanced world of remote-controlled terrorism and criminal genius. The author has an engaging, action focused style that quickly hooks the reader, and the plot moves quickly from one exciting event to the next, drawing you into the compelling, problem-solving adventure and making this an ideal book for young mystery enthusiasts.

The story is told from a range of different viewpoints and despite multiple main characters, we get to know them by the way they interact with each other and by what the author reveals about them as the story unfolds.

Headed up with a drop-pin map, each chapter transports the reader from one fascinating location to the next, giving a chance to explore legendary places like the City of the Dead, Cairo, without overwhelming geographical detail or lengthy descriptions.

Technology features prominently throughout the book and whilst devices like the InfiniFone and the wireless nature of the terror threats are immediately recognisable to the reader, they remain tantalizingly just ahead of our time, giving the story a futuristic yet authentic edge.

This high-stakes, globe-trotting mystery is set to unfold over seven books released in quick succession across the year and promises a tension-fueled cliff hanger at the end of each instalment. If *Skyfire* is anything to go by, *Carnage* (book two) will certainly be a highly anticipated title for those young readers who enjoy an action-packed and intelligent page-turner.

Reviewed by Lisa Hoad, Children's Book Council of Australia, Reading Time