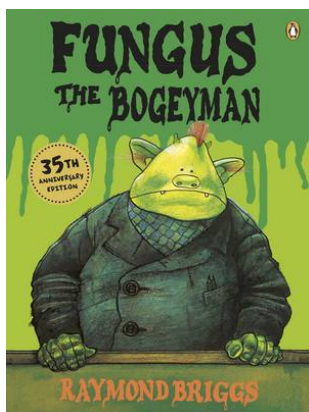


A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 5 (9 - 10 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2025/26 academic year.

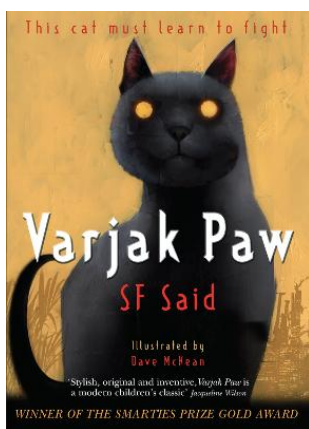
If your child is a competent reader or has read all these titles then try the books from the Year 6 list. Alternatively if these books are a little challenging try books from the Year 4 list. Our overall mission is to promote reading for pleasure with quality texts that are perfectly pitched for the age group and the curriculum. We have particularly avoided blockbusters, classic or set texts, known to everyone, so that we can include poetry, stunning information texts and inspirational books in which all children and young people can find themselves reflected.



Fungus The Bogeyman

Author: Raymond Briggs **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 29/03/1990

This is a book that is enduringly funny, wonderfully poignant and at times quite rude. Beautifully described through stunning illustrations and hand written text is the story of the bogey men - and in particular Fungus - who live underground and whose day starts as we all go to bed, is a story that will live long in the memory of all those who read it, or indeed dip into from time to time. Living long in my memory is the food eaten by them - Scab and matter Custard, Snot and Bogey Pie, Dead Dog's Giblets, Green Cat's Eyes - how can one ever forget names like this!!!



Varjak Paw

Author: S F Said **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 13/03/2014

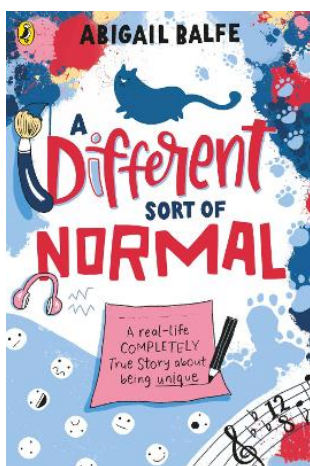
Beguiling and mysterious , thought provoking and as wise as the feline hero, this is becoming a modern classic.



Twitch

Author: M. G. Leonard **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/06/2021

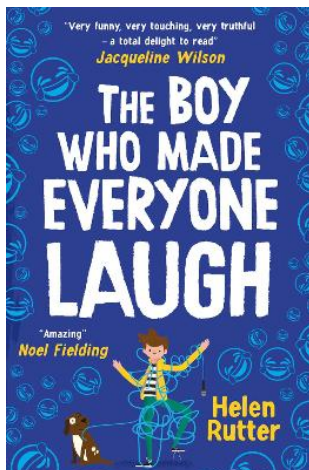
Can a birdwatcher outwit an escaped convict? Twitch has three pet chickens, four pigeons, swallows nesting in his bedroom and a passion for birdwatching. On the first day of the summer holidays, he arrives at his secret hide to find police everywhere: a convicted robber has broken out of prison and is hiding in Aves Wood. Can Twitch use his talents for birdwatching to hunt for the dangerous prisoner and find the missing loot?



A Different Sort of Normal

Author: Abigail Balfe **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 22/07/2021

Abigail Balfe is autistic and has written this honest, amusing and very useful book about some of the things she was aware of as she was growing up. Balfe knew she was different all the way through her childhood and youth – and this book is full of observations on how she navigated her younger years. It was not until she was an adult that her diagnosis of autism was delivered – which suddenly explained a great deal of confusing issues from her youth. The book is full of all the milestones of a young life from changing schools to puberty to friendships to children’s birthday parties – and how someone who feels different coped with all those stages. Written with an honesty and openness that is refreshing – and full of quirky illustrations by the author - this is an information book one can sit and read like a novel, as well as using it to dip into for information on all sorts of topics to do with neurodiversity. It is packed full of useful descriptions and definitions, has a thorough glossary which doubles as an index in a very practical way whilst also signposting websites and information sources for further investigation. A book for everyone to read (adults too), not just for people with neurodiversity issues – this book is a great explainer, full of empathy for different situations, which explodes many misconceptions about autistic people along the way! I wish I had had this available many years ago when teaching an autistic child on a one-to-one basis.



The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh

Author: Helen Rutter **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/02/2021

Shortlisted for The Branford Boase Award 2022 | Shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award 2021 | Shortlisted for the Blue Peter Awards 2022 Best Story | A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month February 2021 | February 2021 Debut of the Month Both

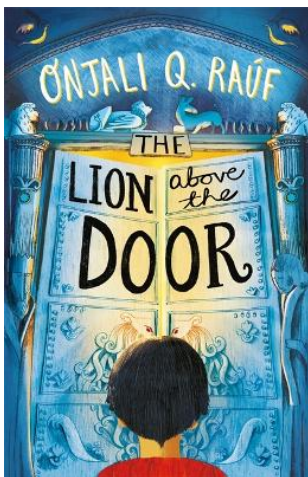
touching and funny this is a brilliant story about being brave, being different and learning that being you is what really matters. Billy likes nothing more than making and performing jokes and dreams that one day he will be a famous stand-up comedian. But Billy has a stammer and it can be hard for him even to get a joke out quickly enough. Just now, Billy has a problem which will strike a chord with many: he is about to start secondary school and knows that it will be all too easy for him to become a target for bullies. Especially because of his stammer. Billy thinks of all kinds of schemes to avoiding speaking while also knowing that staying silent goes right against who he really is. How can Billy show his tremendous inner strength and especially his great sense of humour if he never dares to speak? Luckily Billy makes some good friends, meets a great teacher and, drawing on the support of his family and the work of his speech and language therapist, manages not only to survive but also to succeed! Find more books with Positive Images of Disability.



When Secrets Set Sail

Author: Sita Brahmachari **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 20/08/2020

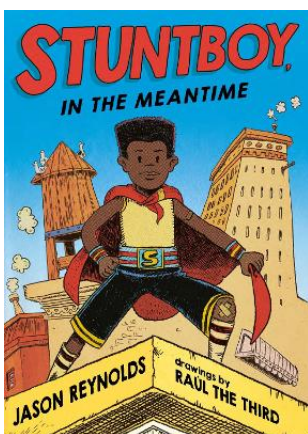
Set in a perfectly realised East London, the story begins as newly adopted Imtiaz arrives in Usha's home. Initially misunderstandings abound between the two girls. Sadly, Usha's beloved gran, Kali Ma has recently passed away. But when first Kali Ma and then other ghosts appear and task the girls to right a past wrong and reveal the hidden secrets of their house, which is also a refugee community centre and under imminent threat of closure, they and their new Roma friend Cosmo must work together. There is rich historical detail in this complex but very rewarding and thought-provoking story crafted in delicate and thoughtful prose. We learn about the fate of Indian Ayahs travelling to care for children of the British Raj on the long voyages back to the UK and then being abandoned here and also about the first female Asian GP's and the struggles of the Windrush generation. In an interview the author reveals that there has been a recent campaign for a Blue Plaque to commemorate the real-life House of the Ayahs. This is a skilfully woven narrative with a shameful look at just some of the racist colonial attitudes of Britain both past and present and real tension and adventure as the children race to unravel the mystery and save the refuge and a beloved family home.



The Lion Above the Door

Author: Onjali Q. Raúf **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 14/10/2021

Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2023 ages 7-10 On a school trip to Rochester Cathedral, Leo is astonished to see a World War II memorial to a man with exactly the same name as him, Leo Kai Lim. Who was the Leo commemorated with a golden lion in the cathedral, and could there be a family connection? Determined to find out more, Leo suggests forgotten heroes as the theme for the class project on WWII, and it's chosen alongside family histories. The project takes on even more significance when the class learn it will be put forward for a national Remembrance Day competition. In his endeavour to find out more about his namesake, Leo is helped by his best friend Sangeeta, who is tracking down information on the part played by Indian soldiers in the war, and thrilled to discover more about the role played by women too. He's also helped, to his surprise, by Olivia Morris, universally regarded as the coolest kid in school. Leo's efforts get him into trouble with his parents (a midnight phone call to his Auntie Su in Singapore) and his school (a disastrous, but very funny secret trip to the RAF Museum), but Leo's determination is overwhelming. When a nasty racist bit of sabotage threatens the project, Leo suddenly finds everyone is on his side, and there are more surprises to come. Onjali Raúf writes superb adventure stories for children, full of excitement and incident, and has a great ear for the way they speak. This story will intrigue and entertain young readers while also helping them understand racism, past and present. It's not just a really good read, it's a really important read.

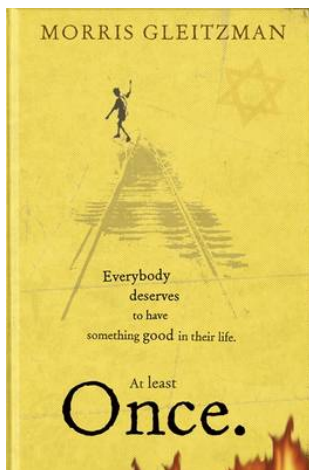


Stuntboy, In The Meantime

Author: Jason Reynolds **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/11/2021

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2023 ages 7-10 Jason Reynolds has a golden touch when it comes to creating thought-provoking fiction that will enthral even the most reluctant of readers. In Stuntboy In the Meantime readers will feel well and truly understood by two golden touches, with Raul the Third's energetic illustrations ingeniously interwoven to the entertaining, empathetic tale. Portico Reeves is a one of a kind boy, with a one of a kind best friend in Zola. After a tough day dealing with the local bully, Herbert Singletary the Worst, followed by a bad case of The Frets (his evocative term for anxiety), with Zola's guidance Portico finds his superpower and Stuntboy is born, a superhero whose job it is to keep other superheroes safe, so they can get on with saving the world. But while Stuntboy performs several acts of superhero-dom around his Skylight Gardens apartment block (never blowing his own calamity-averting trumpet), he has to fend off further attacks of The Frets and figure out how to stop his parent's constant arguments (aka "the mean time"). Driven by first-rate, funny dialogue and fast-paced action, and suffused in

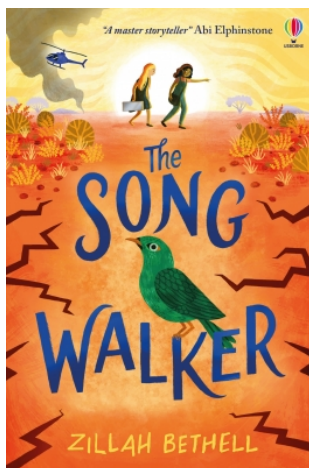
understanding, Stuntboy will speak to young readers dealing with anxiety, bullies and separating parents while keeping them upbeat and engaged.



Once.

Author: Morris Gleitzman **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 23/02/2006

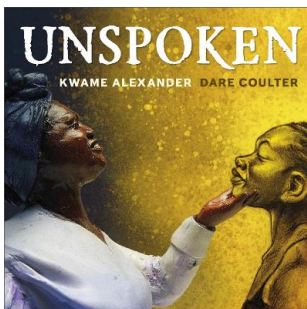
A moving and convincing child-eye view of what happened to the children of Poland after the Germans invaded. Felix has been placed by his parents in an orphanage for safe-keeping but, when the Germans come and burn the books in the orphanage library, Felix knows he must set out to return to his parents who are booksellers and make sure they are safe. Felix's journey is dangerous and desperate but also full of courage and hope in a world where friendships and loyalty are the glue that hold things together.



The Song Walker

Author: Zillah Bethell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/02/2023

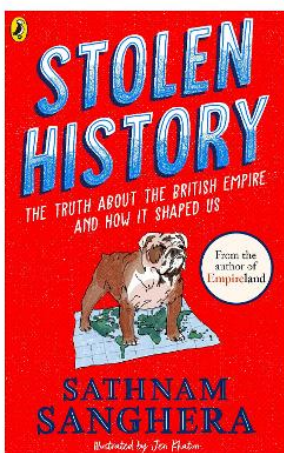
Readers will be immediately hooked by the intriguing opening to this novel. A girl wakes up in the middle of the Australian desert with no idea of who she is or how she got there or why she is carrying a strange heavy case. Her life is saved when she meets Tarni, a First Country girl from the Alaywarre community. Tarni is on a mysterious quest of her own and together they set off on a trek through the ever changing Outback. The location is as beautifully evoked as these intriguing characters and as their stories unfold and memories are awakened, a strong bond is formed between the girls despite their cultural and economic differences. Music is a strong theme throughout the book, not just because of what the case contains, but through the ancient song lines which Tarni uses to navigate their route. Respect for ancient traditions and the powerful connections between people and places is an important aspect of this remarkable and beautifully written story. We also confront the imbalance of power between the First Country and the white community reflected in the importance put on the life of a white girl but not on that of a First Country girl. This book has a powerful message of equality and empathy, spirituality and identity. An intense and rewarding reading experience that fans of her debut novel *The Shark Caller* will absolutely devour.



Unspoken

Author: Kwame Alexander **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 02/02/2023

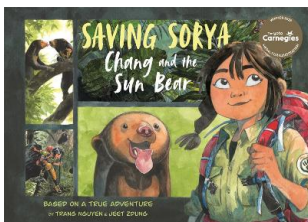
March 2023 Book of the Month Companion to the brilliant *The Undeclared*, Kwame Alexander's *Unspoken* achieves the seemingly impossible, beginning with the question: "How do you tell a story/that starts in Africa/ and ends in horror/An unbelievable story/about evil plans/and big guns/hiding in the night/waiting". Presented as a teacher talking to their pupils about slavery, this bold, poetic masterwork speaks to multiple ages. Add to that Dare Coulter's powerful illustrations — portraits and scenes that speak to the soul — and you have a tremendous book that will be appreciated and treasured for years as a testament to truth, bravery, struggle and survival. We learn of the "sly men from cold places" who shackled African people in their ships, and the unpaid, backbreaking labour Black children were forced to do while their white counterparts "ate their candy/and played tag/before school". We read of "families torn apart, sold like cattle". And we also bear witness to fighting back, standing up and speaking out, before the answer to that opening question is presented - the story is told "by being brave enough/to lift your voice".



Stolen History

Author: Sathnam Sanghera **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 08/06/2023

June 2023 Non-Fiction Book of the Month Accessible and enlightening, with complex, vital history explained with clarity, Sathnam Sanghera's *Stolen History* is, quite simply, a powerful, transformative must-read for all British youngsters. The honest, personal style of the introduction is a smart way to encourage young readers to understand the relevance of history: "History bored me to tears at school. I couldn't see how spending a whole term learning about the Stone Age was going to help me live my life." From this, Sanghera moves to explain how learning about the British Empire is eminently relevant to all contemporary Britons. And the reason? "It explains so much about Britain as a nation, including where our money comes from, the stuff we find in our museums, the reason the country is home to citizens of all different backgrounds, the food we eat, the words we use and so much more." Throughout, Sanghera presents case studies readers will really relate to, from the reason cricket is played around the world, and why tea became seen as the quintessential English drink, to the role the Empire played in Sunday roasts, and its connection to Wembley Stadium. Always honest and wise, the final "What can I do?" chapter arms youngsters with vital questions they can ask of teachers and museum staff, along with comebacks they can present to adults who don't fully address issues around the British Empire.



Saving Sorya: Chang and the Sun Bear

Author: Nguyen Thi Thu Trang **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 30/09/2021

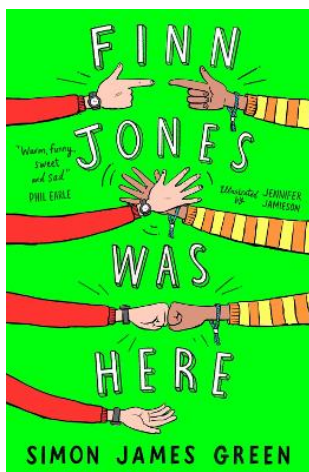
Winner of the Yoto Carnegie Medal for Illustration 2023 Written by scientist and environmental activist Trang Nguyen, *Saving Sorya: Chang and the Sun Bear* is an inspirational graphic-novel adventure, based on a true story about a young conservationist who overcomes the odds to save a sun bear.



The Rescue of Ravenwood

Author: Natasha Farrant **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 23/02/2023

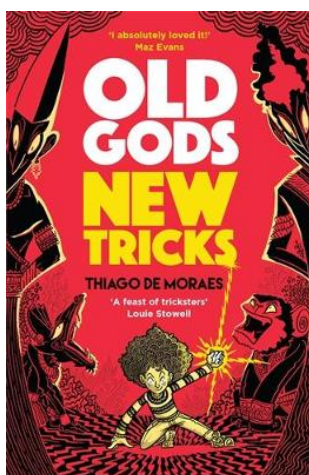
Ravenwood is an eccentric house, surrounded by old trees – in fact it has a collapsed tree taking up a great deal of the kitchen! But to Bea and Raffy it is their home, their refuge and their strength. They form a family with Raffy's mother, Bea's uncle and the wonderful countryside around them – full of memories and magical natural places. Bea struggles with the apparent rejection she faces from her own parents – but whenever she visits them something always seems to go wrong and her mother cries until Bea is back at Ravenwood. But she is bold, creative and adventurous and she and Raffy have the sort of relationship that many siblings would envy. Until Noa arrives – having a third person around changes the dynamic in their relationship and seems to cause a difficulty in communication for the pair. As they all try to have a summer to remember events conspire against them until they have to fight for what they believe in, and to save their home. Natasha Farrant writes books that instantly feel like classics – and this is no exception. It is a book rejoicing in celebrating the environment in your own area, as well as exploring the dynamics of families, friendships and courage. I read it from cover to cover and really didn't want to put it down – it grabs you by the heartstrings and lives on after you have finished it. We should all make sure we protect our Ravenwood's. A vital message for today wrapped in a warm and enthralling story.



Finn Jones Was Here

Author: Simon James Green **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 11/05/2023

A funny, heartbreaking story about life and loss, and making every second count. Eric's best friend, Finn Jones, was the world's biggest prankster. Now Eric can't believe Finn's not here anymore. ...Or is he? Eric seems to be getting messages from beyond the grave, and as he follows Finn's wild, cryptic instructions, his hope grows that he'll find Finn laughing at the end. The journey also brings memories - and a truth that seems impossible to accept. Hilarious illustrations throughout by Jennifer Jamieson



Old Gods New Tricks

Author: Thiago de Moraes **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/07/2023

July 2023 Book of the Month This highly talented author/illustrator, perhaps best known for his Myth Atlas, translated into 18 languages, puts his depth of knowledge of mythology around the world to very good use in this fresh and original take on a story about gods and humans. Indeed, each chapter starts with a quote from a genuine encyclopaedia of mythology, but this does not overwhelm, just adds another layer to the storytelling and actually visually represents our heroine's research. Trixie is well named and has quite a reputation for trickery herself. She is the fiercely intelligent and independent daughter of two anthropologists, and she uses her passion for studying myths to work out that it is the Gods who have taken power (electricity) from the world threatening total disaster for humans. Not only that, but she plots to enlist (trick) the most famous trickster gods from different cultures to help her steal it back and to save the world. The concept of all the deities knowing each other and squabbling, like all families do, is highly entertaining. Trixie really has to pit her wits against a variety of challenges to get each god on her team, but she will need them all to face the rip-roaring conclusion on Olympus. Although there is a lot of humour and obviously lots of magical adventures, this is a story with depth, wisdom and pathos which reminded me of Terry Pratchett because the world created is treated with utter seriousness and belief. One almost suspects that Mr De Moraes has met many of these gods himself! The brilliant illustrations only add to the wide-ranging appeal of, what I hope will be, the first of many adventures with the redoubtable Trixie.



The Swifts

Author: Beth Lincoln **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 02/02/2023

February 2023 Debut of the Month In scenes and a setting that would have Benoit Blanc nodding with approval, young Shenanigan Swift is presented with a murder mystery to solve in her own (rather grand) house and surrounded by all members of her large and decidedly eccentric extended family. Who caused Arch-Aunt Schadenfreude to fall down the stairs at the regular Swift family reunion? Is it linked to the family's periodic search for Vile Swift's missing treasure trove? With so many suspects and so many hiding places, Shenanigan needs all the help she can get, even if that means turning to her sisters, science-obsessed Phenomena and goody-goody Felicity. As country house murder mysteries go, this is top notch, with a fabulous cast of characters and perfectly placed red herrings. It's also extremely funny, full of jokes, situation comedy and gloriously idiosyncratic narration. If you're wondering why Shenanigan and her family have such unusual names, it was decided in the 'tights-and-doublets' days of the Swift family, to name children using the Family Dictionary; after all, 'People often overlook a Mary or a John, but they seldom forget a person named Meretricious or Flinch.' In a sub-plot, Shenanigan puzzles over whether her name found her, or if she is somehow choosing to grow into her name. Clever, original and hugely enjoyable, this is a don't miss.



Spellstone

Author: Ross Montgomery **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/05/2023

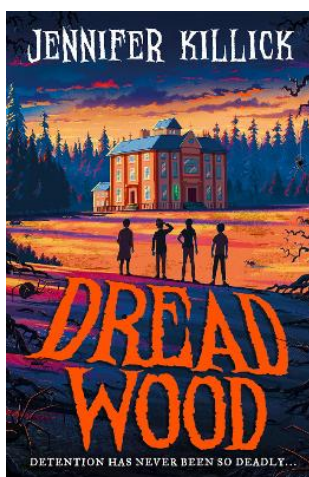
A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month May 2023 Evie is a bored, cross and very ordinary twelve year old when she is suddenly recruited into the Order of the Stone by Wainwright, a mysterious magician she meets by chance. With no idea as to how or why she has been chosen she is swept up in the Order's ancient battle to keep the forces of darkness at bay and to defeat Vale, the evil magician. Evie's companions in the fight look like a motley and unlikely crew, including a very bossy talking cat, but each of them has very special magic powers of their own. Vale's powers are huge and his team of henchmen, known as smoke-men, are deeply sinister. Has Evie the courage that is needed to lead her team and win the battle? The stakes are high and Ross Montgomery sensitively explores how Evie finds more courage than she knew she had in a roller-coaster read full of creative surprises.



The Good Turn

Author: Sharna Jackson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 12/05/2022

A thrilling, pacy adventure about friendship, bravery and real-life injustice from the award-winning author of High Rise Mystery. Josephine Williams is definitely a leader - and her teachers know it! What other eleven-year-old is desperate for MORE schoolwork? Looking for more challenging tasks, Josie enlists her friends Wesley and Margot into her very own Scout troop, the Copseys, named after the street they all live on. Together they start their quest for their camping badge by sleeping out near to the abandoned factory behind their houses. But that night they stumble across something strange. Someone seems to be living in the derelict building! The Copseys have to solve the mystery... and perhaps earn their bravery and activism badges along the way... Perfect for readers who love Robin Stevens and Katherine Woodfine, and full of fast-paced adventure, brilliant characters and snappy dialogue with themes of real-life activism and how to help others.



Dread Wood

Author: Jennifer Killick **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 31/03/2022

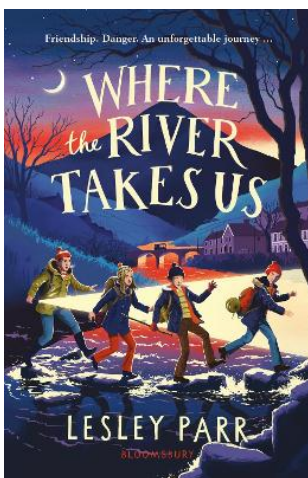
April 2022 Book of the Month | Winner of the Children's Book Award 2023 - Older Readers category Four young people, who know but don't like one another; a Saturday detention in their creepy old school; and the sudden, terrifying disappearance of their teacher... The stage is set for a fabulously scary horror story in which Jennifer Killick gleefully plays the genre for everything it's got: shocks, surprises, black humour, and a growing understanding between our bunch of unlikely heroes that if they're going to get out alive, they'll need to work together. Killick knows just the right amount of gory detail to include and has a great line in teenage banter too. Readers, especially those new to this kind of story are in for a treat!



Saving Neverland

Author: Abi Elphinstone **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 05/01/2023

The reimagining of the classic story of Peter Pan could not have been in safer hands than with the multi award winning Abi Elphinstone. Wild magical adventures with real heart and a strong moral compass are her forté and she has crafted a wondrous tale which encapsulates all that is best of the original while removing some undeniably racist and sexist elements which are off-putting to modern generations. Martha Pennyworth and her younger brother Scruff have come to live in 14 Darlington Road, which once belonged to the Darling family, and discover the permanently open window and mysterious golden dust in a drawer. With a missing mother and a busy father, Martha, aged ten, is feeling that she must grow up and be more responsible for younger asthma-ridden brother Scruff, after a “Terrible Day” she won’t talk about. But Peter Pan entices her and her brother to go with him to save Neverland from an icy curse that was cast upon it by Captain Hook. The fairies and fairytale creatures are in danger of extinction and childhood itself is in danger. The initially reluctant but redoubtable Martha is only one of a fantastic cast of well-rounded and believable new characters, including new Lost Kids and a much more likeable new Fairy called Muddle. In Neverland she must battle frostbears, icesharks and snowtigers before a thrilling showdown with the truly dreadful pirates. The peril feels genuine and the bravery immense. Just as with the original Peter Pan this is a story about the transition from childhood to adulthood, but Martha comes to realise that a life full of adventures is far better than a life of worry. She can deal with her guilt about the ‘Terrible Day’ and find a way to embrace the wonder and hope of childhood again. Adventure laced with magic powered by genuine emotion, this is thrilling, heartwarming and utterly enthralling. A triumph!



Where The River Takes Us

Author: Lesley Parr **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 16/03/2023

April 2023 Book of the Month Award-winning Lesley Parr’s gripping adventure story is made luminous by the exploration and celebration of friendship that underpins it. Set in a tightknit Welsh community at the time of the miners’ strike in 1974, four children set off on a mad quest to be the first to spot and photograph a mysterious big cat that is said to be a large in a neighbouring valley. The adventure has most importance for Jason, who narrates the story, as he and his brother desperately need the reward money that is on offer. Although they don’t need the cash, his three friends are equally committed to the trip: they are Jason’s friends and they want to be by his side as the best supports that they can be. Told with a lot of humour, the details of the two days of walking and the two nights of camping are full of mishaps as well as lucky breaks and moments of great kindness from strangers. For Jason,

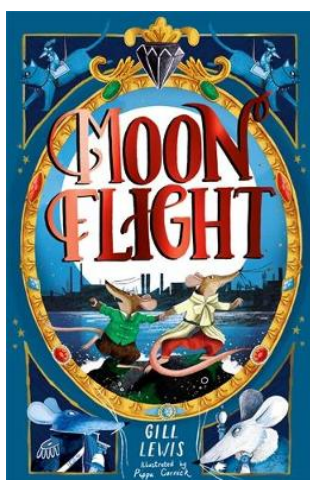
it is a hugely significant journey of self-discovery as he begins to come to terms with the recent death of his parents and learns how to share his sadness with his accept help from his friends and accept the help they so want to give.



The Boy Who Saved a Bear

Author: Nizrana Farook **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/04/2023

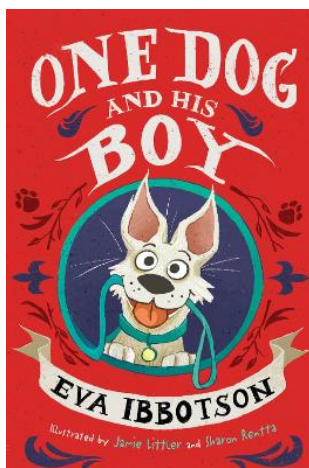
A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month April 2023 Nuwan loves adventures! As a younger brother, he is always trying to prove to his family and friends that he is not only brave but also sensible and trustworthy. When he sees the opportunity to take on his older brother's job he is determined to do it. But while the job itself isn't too difficult, Nuwan had not bargained on getting caught up in a dramatic plot to steal the Key of Nissanka and a run in with a bear! Luckily, Nuwan really is resourceful. In a hugely dramatic story with a host of twists and turns he somehow he manages to outsmart all of those who are determined to stop him. And, in doing so, to show everyone who doubted him, that he is a winner.



Moonflight

Author: Gill Lewis **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/03/2023

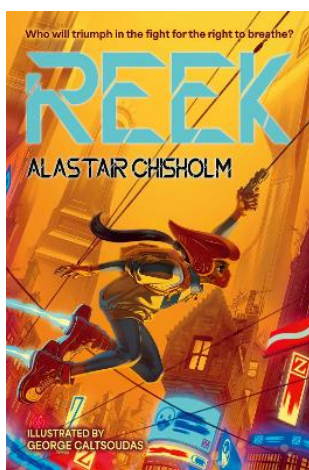
March 2023 Book of the Month This tale of daring adventure, a quest to return a stolen jewel and thereby end a generations' old curse, is even more epic in feel because our heroes are two young rats, Tilbury Twitch-Whiskers and his sister Nimble-Quick. Together, they set out from home to journey over sea and land, taking on fierce cats and even a tiger, facing terrible dangers and shocking betrayal from those they thought they could trust. Gill Lewis is best known for her superb animal stories but proves herself equally talented at fantasy adventure, the world she creates here completely convincing and full of wonderful, memorable scenes, details and characters. And, as in books such as Sky Hawk, Moon Bear or Scarlet Ibis, she shows us that big hearts and determination are powerful things, no matter how great the enemy you're up against. A thrilling read!



One Dog and His Boy

Author: Eva Ibbotson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/01/2021

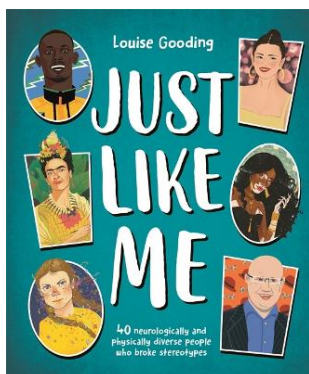
Award winning Eva Ibbotson's poignant and beautiful last book celebrates a boy's passion for a dog. All Hal has ever wanted is a dog but his parents refuse to contemplate the idea. A dog would mess up their beautiful house and disturb their busy routine. When they discover East Pets, they hire Hal a dog for a weekend thinking that will do the trick. But they don't know Hal! Hal takes matters into his own hands. Soon Hal and all the dogs he has released from Easy Pets are out on the road - with a price on their head. How Hal makes his escape is both thrilling and moving as it marks his growth from sadness to great happiness.



Reek

Author: Alastair Chisholm **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 18/07/2024

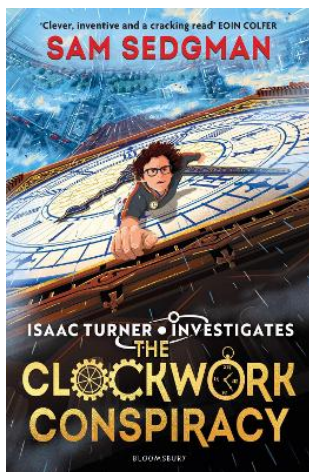
July 2024 Book of the Month | Interest Age 9+ Reading Age 8 Set in a dystopian future in which the earth has become so polluted even the air is toxic, Alastair Chisholm's thriller, like all the best sci-fi stories, is full of warnings about contemporary society. Teenage Sparrow has already had to leave school to support her grandfather and little sister. She works as a courier, tearing round Edinburgh at top speed, relying on her hover skates and her bespoke tether to meet the specified delivery times. It's not just food and rent the family need, oxygen must be paid for too, all supplied by big tech corporation Zephyr. When Sparrow's inventor friend discovers a way to purify air easily and cheaply, the obvious next step is to share it with Zephyr's CEO. Can Sparrow make this potentially world-changing delivery, and who is out to stop her? The story moves at the same pace as Sparrow weaving through the poisoned streets of Edinburgh, and there are just as many twists and turns before it reaches its breath-taking conclusion. Written for Barrington Stoke to be accessible to all readers, this delivers a big story in just 152 pages and gives readers so much to think about.



Just Like Me

Author: Louise Gooding **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/07/2024

Written by debut author, Louise Gooding and vividly illustrated by a team of artists who all identify as physically or neurologically diverse, this inspiring anthology is a testament to lived experience. Having three daughters who were all physically or neurologically diverse and having realised her own missed diagnosis as a child, Louise states her intention of improving visibility for every child who feels different. She wanted everyone to know about the amazing achievements of the disabled people she found in her research. Each double page features a quote, a beautiful illustration, the life story, and achievements of the individual and a simple explanation of their diagnosis. This anthology features 40 figures including well known personalities like Ellie Symonds, Stephen Hawking, and Helen Keller and lesser well-known ones such as Naoki Higashida, Sudha Chandran, and Nkosi Johnson and the stories cover a huge variety of different conditions, including some rare conditions such as progeria and Treacher Collins Syndrome. It is the positive tone that makes this book so special. So often one is met with the trope of success being achieved 'despite' a disability or condition. Here the stories are told in a positive way. The condition is part of who they are and while it may make things harder, it is not by any means the thing that holds them back. This empowering anthology encourages every child to celebrate their uniqueness and for us all to recognise our potential to achieve whatever we want.

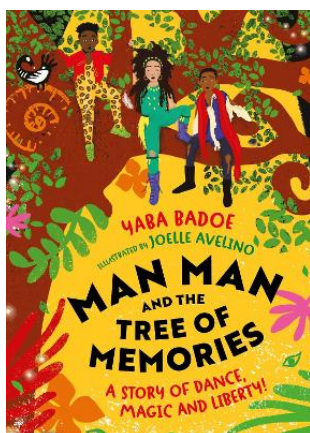


The Clockwork Conspiracy

Author: Sam Sedgman **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/02/2024

February 2024 Book of the Month In his first solo fiction outing as author, Sam Sedgeman, of Adventures with Trains fame, has produced a quite extraordinary tour de force which combines an intricately plotted classic 'closed room' mystery, with some truly mind-bending science and maths, fascinating facts about our democracy, London landmarks and how the world measures time, in one exciting package! The mystery involves the inexplicable disappearance of Isaac's father, The Chief Horologist, who is responsible for Big Ben, on the night the clocks go back and as the debate over the New Time law is about to go to parliament. All that is left is a smashed pocket watch and a cryptic message. Isaac teams up with new friend Hattie, the clever, confident, and rebellious daughter of Isaac's godfather, the Speaker of the House. Together they embark on a rooftop-navigating quest across London, solving codes and puzzles as they go. They uncover a dastardly plot at the heart of government and it's a frantic race to save both his father and the country and time itself! Packed with excitement, drama, witty dialogue, and ingenious and relatable main characters, I am this will surely grow an army of fans ready for the next instalment of Isaac

Turner Investigates.



Man Man and the Tree of Memories

Author: Yaba Badoe **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/08/2024

Being confirmed admirers of Yaba Badoe's fiction for older readers, we were thrilled to hear about her first work for younger children, with Joelle Avelino's beautifully bright, dynamic illustrations promising the perfect feast of words and pictures. As expected, the result certainly lives up to its promise. Set in present-day Notting Hill, *Man Man and the Tree of Memories* is a bedazzlement of carnival magic, African-Caribbean culture and ancestral connections. We meet young Man-man in Notting Hill as he's practising his carnival dance steps, with his nan recently arrived from Jamaica to take care of his ill mother. With "Let Freedom Rain" the theme of this year's carnival, Man-man's Aunt Flo, a costume-making seamstress, asks who he's going to be, explaining that "for one day and one day only, you can decide who you are and feel it deep down." Such is the magic of carnival. While Man-man keeps his plans a secret from everyone but Aunt Flo, his exuberance invokes the Queen of Revels, whom he asks to make his mum better. This sees Man-man, along with his best friend and sister, swept back in time and across the world to Africa. Here, after they assemble around the Tree of Memories and witness painful, brutal realities of Man-man's family's heritage, Man-man comes to understand how the anguish held in the Tree is afflicting his mother. Propelled by profound love and newfound knowledge, hope, joy and freedom burst forth. What a splendidly inventive book.

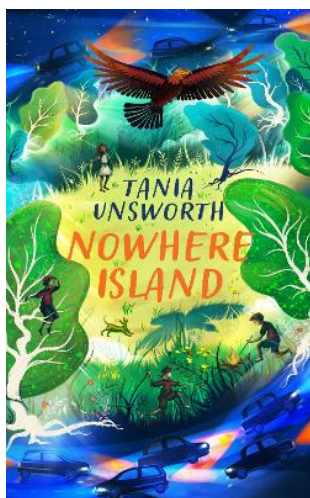


Shipwrecked

Author: Jenny Pearson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/08/2024

July 2024 Book of the Month Jenny Pearson should be on everyone's radar as an author who writes funny, heartwarming, fast paced and exciting adventures with relatable and authentic characters we get completely invested in. *Shipwrecked* is exactly that and more. I think it might well be her best yet! Sebastian is the narrator of the story which is written as a diary/survival guide. Each chapter begins with a #survival tip, and we appreciate the wisdom of these when we see these are lessons learned the hard way! Life has a tendency to go wrong for the honest and fun-loving Sebastian, he thinks he is a disappointment to his Dad, and does not really understand why his Mum did not want to take him when she left the family home a year ago. When he and best friends Lina and Étienne win a competition, to go to Climate Avenger's camp, he thinks this will be his chance to prove himself (but mainly to have fun!). Sebastian challenges the cool kids to a boat race, and when a storm hits, the friends find themselves stranded on an island in the Pacific Ocean. Here begins a hilarious and epic adventure of survival, pirates, baby turtles and a goat. But as always, amongst the humour

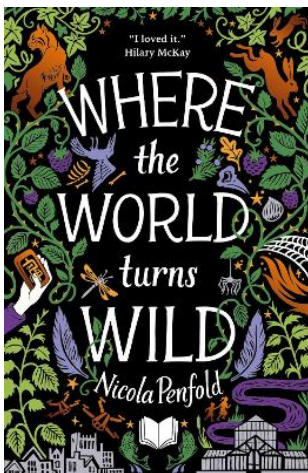
there are some sensitively handled serious issues. These three friends are very different, but each have their strengths and as the weeks pass, they begin to appreciate these rather than be annoyed by each other. They figure out how to work as a team and in moments of true danger, they unite and act together. What I particularly love is that Lina, the reader, knows *Lord of the Flies* and is determined that they will not go the same way. What their experience demonstrates to Sebastian, and to us readers, is that contrary to William Golding's theory, tough times can bring out the best in us. A wonderful, wise story full of perseverance, friendship and indomitable spirit.



Nowhere Island

Author: Tania Unsworth **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/08/2024

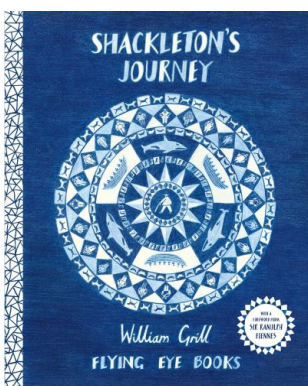
August 2023 Book of the Month With its stellar storytelling, and unique, unforgettable characters, Tania Unsworth's *Nowhere Island* is a fresh, thought-provoking survival-in-the-wild adventure. Both nuanced and immediate, *Nowhere Island* gets to the heart of human bonds in an arresting voice that speaks of, and to, young minds. It also transcends age boundaries, and really is a wonder for all ages. "Gil was five years old when his parents were drowned in a kayaking accident." Now twelve, after spending "his whole life being taken to one place after another" in the foster care system, Gil decides to go somewhere all by himself for once. After hiding out in the trunk of a car, Gil's bag is stolen by two brothers, Riley (11) and Grayson (13). Having fled their violent father, they now live on a wild area of land that's protected from spying eyes by a motorway. Though the area is plainly visible from the road, no one sees them simply because no one looks. As such, "Nowhere Island" is the perfect hideout for all three runaways. Gil remarks that the brothers are like pirates, plundering what they can to survive, surrounded by the road rather than sea. And, in befriending the boys, Gil realises that the magic of telling stories doesn't only provide personal pleasure; it also pleases other people. As a result, he starts to think that "there was a place for him in the world, after all." But the boys aren't alone on *Nowhere Island*. A girl the brothers have named Pez also lives there. After fleeing the Starborn survivalist community her parents moved to, she's adept at wild living, but set on remaining true to her resolution to never speak to anyone, and to never form friendships. That way, no one can ever betray her again. But meeting Gil sees an unexpected shift in Pez — she wants to make him laugh again. Then, after the two camps begin to exchange gifts, with Pez also silently sharing her wisdom with the boys, the secrecy of *Nowhere Island* is spoiled and all four residents are forced to make tough decisions. Gripping, moving and teeming with tension, with every sentence perfectly crafted and layered with meaning, *Nowhere Island* is a beautiful, impactful book.



Where The World Turns Wild

Author: Nicola Penfold **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/02/2020

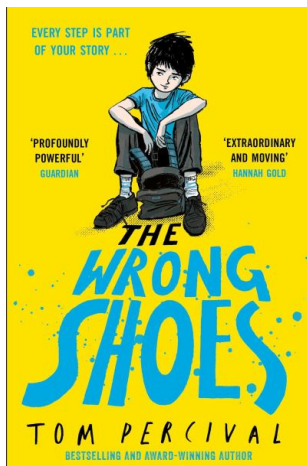
February 2020 Debut of the Month Debut novelist Nicola Penfold has talked of inspiration from reading about what author Richard Louv called “nature-deficit disorder”. Her strong belief that humans need a connection with nature to be truly happy shines through this powerful story and the creation of the nightmare world that Juniper and her little brother, Bear inhabit. They live with their grandmother in a walled city from which nature has been banished, following an apocalyptic tick-borne disease released by ReWilders willing to sacrifice humans to save the planet. Fifty years on nature flourishes beyond the walls. Within them humans struggle to artificially create what they need to live. Juniper and Bear have always known they have a resistance to the disease, just as they know that their parents are still living in the wild. Juniper always planned their eventual escape, but they must leave urgently when the authoritarian regime reveals a dangerous scheme to farm their blood. What follows is a thrilling and utterly convincing escape and a perilous journey. The rigours of outdoor living and survival are not glossed over- the reader really fears for these characters and feels every setback. Success is won through bravery and persistence and the sibling relationship is beautifully conveyed. Bear is a very recognisable six-year old boy who both frustrates and astonishes his sister. There are no easy solutions to problems and no miraculous happy ending. This is powerful and believable storytelling which will keep readers gripped and inspire lots of discussion about the vulnerability of nature and what humans are doing to the planet. An outstanding debut, beautifully written and utterly compelling.



Shackleton's Journey

Author: William Grill **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 05/09/2024

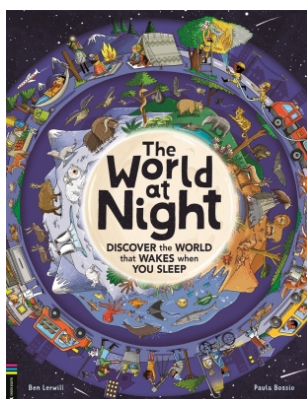
Winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal 2015 Greenaway Medal winning debut from William Grill whose images range from tiny vignettes to sweeping frozen vistas which, together with an absorbing narrative, tells the powerful story of the ill fated voyage.



The Wrong Shoes

Author: Tom Percival **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 08/05/2025

May 2024 Book of the Month Tom Percival's award winning picturebooks have demonstrated his powerful capacity for empathy building and in this, his first full length novel, that skill is even more evident as he gives a painfully authentic insight into the shamefully growing problem of child poverty. It is unlikely that you will read a more powerful and important book all year. It should be required reading for all politicians and for those eligible to vote. But young readers will just be entirely gripped by Will's story, at the same time as gaining insight into what it is like to face this struggle every day. There is not enough money for food let alone the trendy haircut or the new pair of shoes that might make him look more normal and make the school bullies leave him alone. Will hides the true extent of his worsening situation from teachers, friends and even his mother and her new partner. He certainly does not want his best friend's charity, however well meaning. Their rift seems to push Will towards some bad life choices just as his father disastrously turned to loan sharks. Yet Will does not give up and his artistic talents give him small moments of joy and hope for the future. Will is a wonderfully nuanced character and seeing the way he triumphs over temptations to find the strength to be true to himself and recognise that there is no shame in asking for and accepting help, gives an empowering message to those children who will see themselves in his predicament. The author is frank about his own lived experience which adds unmistakable reality to the portrayal of the complex characters and situations. The striking black and white illustrations add even more life and vigour to this completely enthralling story, which does end on a hopeful but realistic note. This would make a fantastic book to read aloud in a classroom or at home, enabling children to discuss the issues raised. I cannot recommend this more highly.

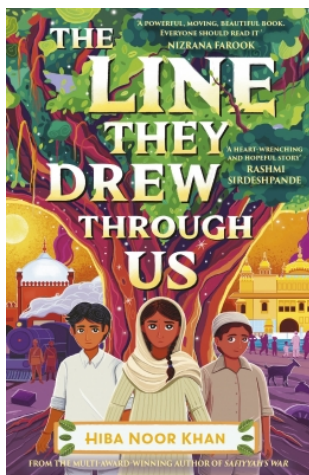


The World at Night

Author: Ben Lerwill **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 13/03/2025

March 2025 Factual Book of the Month Penned by Ben Lerwill and superbly illustrated by Paula Bossio, *The World at Night* does a dazzling deep dive into the nocturnal wonders of our world. Traversing the globe — from tropical Caribbean oceans and Amazonian rainforests, to the Arabian desert and Antarctica — it's suffused in an infectious spirit of exploration as it shines a light on marvels of the dark, among them glow-in-the-dark mushrooms, bioluminescent plankton, the Northern Lights, and (a personal favourite!) Bornean bearded pigs that migrate by night. While the topics covered are wonderfully presented — lucid, engaging and richly illustrated — what really makes *The World at Night* stand out is the way it explores night-time magic from multiple perspectives, adding up to an immersive, holistic experience. For one example, through coverage of Antarctica, we learn about the living conditions of researchers based near the South Pole, as well as the wildlife that call

this chilly place home. Also covering the day-night cycle, eclipses, the moon, nocturnal animals in cities, sleep, dreams and night workers, *The World at Night* illuminates every nook and cranny of night-time. Perfectly pitched for readers of 7 and upwards, it's a great book for kids who are into science, nature and humanities subjects, and also comes highly recommended for school libraries.



The Line They Drew Through Us

Author: Hiba Noor Khan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/04/2025

April 2025 Book of the Month Shortlisted for the Carnegie and now the UKLA Book Award with her debut novel *Safiyya's War*, Hiba Noor Khan has written another masterclass in historical fiction, this time shining an unflinching and evocative light on a very dark period of history for the Indian subcontinent. The Partition in 1947 is insufficiently studied or known about and yet it is very much a part of family history for so many in our society and often the reason why families are here at all. With her superb ability to create indelible and credible child characters, that live with you long after you close the book, she enables us not just to learn about what happened in that turbulent time, but to really feel the emotional impact. Narrated through the third person voices of Lakshmi, Jahan and Ravi, all born on the same day in miraculous circumstances and all linked to a remote village nestled under an ancient banyan tree. Lakshmi would remain there, and the boys returned frequently, returning for a family wedding as the book opens. The lyrical descriptions of their life and the close-knit community, where Muslim, Hindu and Sikh co-existed in peace and harmony and all the diverse traditions were celebrated, act as the perfect counterpoint to the horror yet to come. As Lakshmi gets her dearest wish, joining the boys in Lahore to attend school, the political crisis gathers pace and the children become involved in trying to prevent terrorism, but eventually they will become separated as each family struggles to find safety across the arbitrary borders. Yet ultimately the strength of their bond keeps hope alive that they will be reunited. A hope for peace, reconciliation and healing for the whole country. Thought provoking, compelling storytelling, with maps and glossaries to aid understanding, this emotionally charged story is an absolute must read.



After

Author: Padraig Kenny **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/03/2025

March 2025 Book of the Month A brilliantly conceived post-apocalyptic world is the setting for this perfectly pitched middle grade dystopian page turner. This world is virtually uninhabited after the Flood which took out all the world's technology, including the humans who were all connected to the central information hive. This is an utterly credible vision of a future where our ever-increasing thirst for technological advancement has proved to be society's complete undoing. We follow Jen and Father, scavenging and travelling across the country, seeking refuge and peace and other people. Gradually we learn that Father is not actually a biological relation of Jen's; he found her abandoned as an infant and more significantly is, in fact, not biological at all. Yet this human appearing 'mek', John, has defended and cared for his 'daughter' as she has grown with the help of parenting guides and logic. Coming across a small, self-sufficient human settlement, John sees he may be a liability to Jen and considered a danger in a world where machines/AI are feared for what they did to humans in the past. Jen is torn between her curiosity about other people and her loyalty to Father, theirs is a beautifully nuanced relationship. For young readers, who have grown up in the digital age, this is not just a heartfelt, moving story exploring what it is to be human and what constitutes a family, but also a really thought-provoking exploration of just how far we should go in our quest for a better life. The fact that it is also an engaging and accessible read is a great testament to the quality of the writing.



Peregrine Quinn and the Cosmic Realm

Author: Ash Bond **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 30/01/2025

January 2025 Debut of the Month Any fantasy in which libraries and librarians have a major role is going to be a hit with me, but there is so much more to enjoy in this blockbuster start to a new series by debut author Ash Bond! Firstly, we have brilliant world building, where the Terran Realm is life as we know it, but it sits alongside the Cosmic Realm, home to the Immortals. Famous libraries in the Terran Realm (like the Bodleian Library in Oxford where the story starts) house portals to the Cosmic Realm. Each portal is guarded by an immortal librarian. There is a wonderful mix of modern and futuristic Olympus Inc tech too. Then we have a fantastic cast of characters, including a sentient and adorable plant, and the end pages give us a wonderful visual guide to them all and chapter headings very usefully pinpoint the narrator and the location for the coming action. Yes, there is breathtaking action in plenty as we move between realms and from Oxford to the rivers of London and into the Under-Underground, transportation for Immortals to sites of significant Cosmic interest. Then there is wonderful infusion of Greek mythology with recognisable characters, situations and locations to spot. All wrapped up with a cracking fast paced narrative, laced with

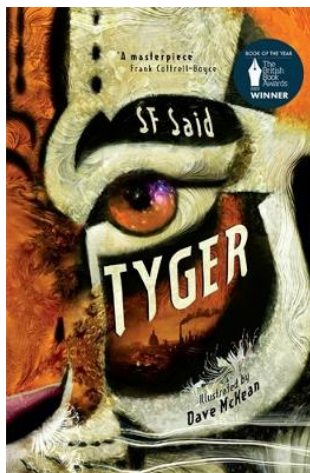
wit and humour as well as genuine jeopardy and world threatening baddies to outwit. Our main characters are Peregrine, the bold Terran granddaughter of the Olympian Daedalus Bloom, whose abduction starts their quest, Rowan the nervous dryad apprentice librarian and the only librarian not to be trapped in the portal they guard, and Cal the faun, who is their hapless, but not helpless, liaison with Olympus Inc. Their gradual bonding into an unbeatable team is a joy to follow – readers will be rooting for them at every tense turn of events. A brilliant, unputdownable start to a new series that will leave readers panting for the next instalment, but which nevertheless ends entirely satisfactorily. Join LoveReading4Kids Editorial Expert Joy Court and young reading ambassador Bethany, in conversation with author Ash Bond as they discuss her brilliant mythological, high-tech fantasy series Peregrine Quinn.



My Dog

Author: Olivia Wakeford **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 27/02/2025

March 2025 Debut of the Month This beautifully written debut is both heartbreaking and heartwarming in equal measure, giving us a sensitive and nuanced portrait of a young boy coping with grief and huge life changes. Rhys has a deep love of dogs, which he shared with his mum who sadly dies at the start of the book. Together they would watch a TV show called The Dog Rescuers presented by Rhys' idol Dr Jimmy and on what turns out to be his final visit to his mother's bedside, Rhys spots a lonely black labrador under her hospital bed and because of Dr Jimmy, he knows just how to care for him. His Dad has come to look after Rhys and does not like dogs and so this has to be a secret. The depiction of the dog is wonderfully ambiguous and keeps the reader guessing. Keeping Worthington secret is even more challenging when Rhys has to leave his home in Wales, his beloved grandparents and move to London, where his father now lives with his new wife, Lucy, and baby daughter Evie. We can feel all of Rhys's anxiety at facing a new school and finding new friends and his heartache and confusion in trying to fit into a new family where he is not sure of his place. Worthington is his only comfort. When Rhys makes a series of wrong choices, things reach a crisis point and Rhys realises he needs help and that he is surrounded by people who do want to help. A touching and authentic story about grief, which has sorrow, but also moments of brightness, humour, joy and love. It also a tale about being open and truthful and about building friendships and very obviously highlights the bond that can exist between children and dogs. The wonderful characteristically warm illustrations by David Litchfield only add to this memorable reading experience.



Tyger

Author: S F Said **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/09/2023

October 2022 Book of the Month | Shortlisted for the Week Junior Book Awards 2023 Chosen by our Guest Editor for May 2023, Jacqueline Wilson, as one of her must-reads - "He's written about cats in his Varjak Paw stories. This is a novel in an alternative world about two children and a huge mythical Tyger - it's brilliant." This is a dark and magical story about two children who find a mythical creature - a Tyger - in a rubbish dump in London - set in the near future of the 21st Century. An altered, dark London, where the Tyger is in danger and our protagonists Adam and Zadie are driven to save the Tyger, and in the process save London too. This is a book that looks at spirituality, and ideas of community, whilst the Tyger teaches Adam and Zadie about the sheer wonder of the universe, of nature and about interpersonal relationships. The Tyger helps the children find all their hidden skills and courage and release it all to fight against the awfulness in their world. It is unique book full of adventure, joy and hope in this thrilling read. It is written in a careful, almost distilled down text that fills the reader with hope. Complemented by wonderful black and white illustrations from Dave McKean this will become a classic in the same way as the author's Varjak Paw has - and be taught in many classrooms. It is a book designed for readers of 9 to 99 who enjoy escaping into other worlds. Much anticipated and destined to be a classic that will be shared and enjoyed everywhere.