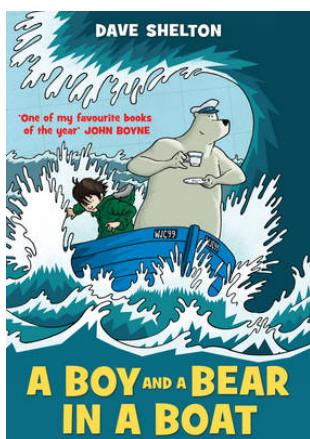


A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 4 (8 - 9 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2025/26 academic year.

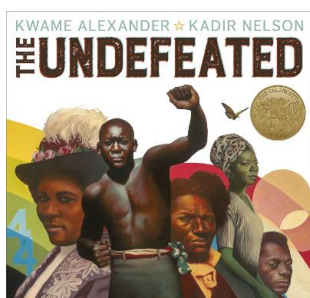
If your child is a competent reader or has read all these titles then try the books from the Year 5 list. Alternatively if these books are a little challenging try books from the Year 3 list. Our overall mission is to promote reading for pleasure with quality texts that are perfectly pitched for the 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.



A Boy and a Bear in a Boat

Author: Dave Shelton **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 14/03/2013

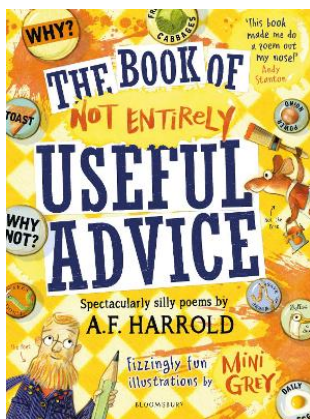
Winner of the Branford Boase Award 2013, the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2013 & the Costa Children's Book Awards 2012 An amazing adventure follows when a boy takes what he thinks will be a short ride in a boat with a bear. But the ride is not a short one... Soon, the boat is in the middle of an empty sea and the bear is struggling with a map and searching the horizon with a telescope. Luckily the boy has brought some food with him as together, the boy and the bear deal with impenetrable mist, a terrifying sea monster and even the remains of a disgusting sandwich in this humorous and gentle journey of survival and self-discovery.



The Undeclared

Author: Kwame Alexander **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 20/02/2020

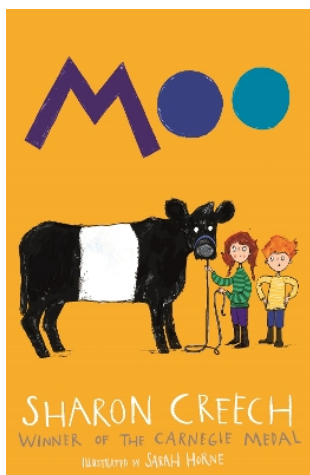
October 2019 Book of the Month Written for and about "the swift and sweet ones/who hurdled history and opened a world of possible", for those who "survived America by any means necessary. And the ones who didn't," this is an inspiring ode to the author's forebears and to the world-changing feats of unforgettable Black American figures. Author Kwame Alexander's initial inspiration for this book came in the year his second daughter was born, the same year Barack Obama became the first African American president of the USA. As a result, Alexander wanted his daughters "to know how we got to this historic moment", which is exactly what this stirring book does. The chained slaves who kept faith, the elite Olympians, the innovative musicians, the seminal scientists, the courageous activists - people from all walks of life are celebrated in Alexander's poetically poised words, and gloriously illustrated by Kadir Nelson, with much for young children to ponder and ask questions about. As well as being a wonderful way for parents to explore Black American history with their little ones on a one-to-one basis, this will also work well with older children in a classroom context. Indeed, this is one of those rare and wonderful picture books that defies age boundaries - a radiant, resonant unforgettable tour de force, as befits its theme.



The Book of Not Entirely Useful Advice

Author: A. F. Harrold **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020

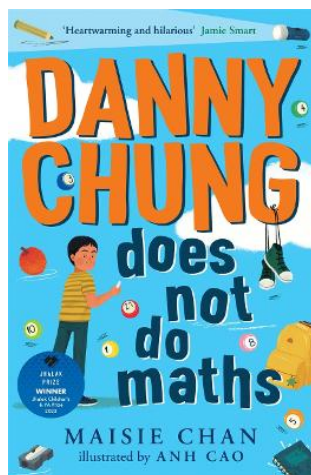
Two phenomenally talented people are united in this book, and it is hard to know which of them – poet A.F. Harrold or illustrator Mini Grey – had the most fun creating it. Either way, the end product is glorious, an entirely essential collection of poems offering unforgettable advice on an extraordinary range of subjects. Scanning through the index will give you an idea of the topics covered, and how: the entry for banana, for example, reads how to identify a ... while that for pencil case is why you shouldn't muddle one up with a lunchbox ... There are three entries for tiger, referring you to very useful poems, including the one that explains just how many tigers it takes to spoil a picnic. Harrold is a master of the absurd, taking ideas or phrases and turning them quite round about and Mini Grey illustrates his poems with an equal delight in the possibilities he conjures up. Most of the poems are wonderfully comic, but there's space for quiet, thoughtful verse too. It's a book to fire the imagination and to make you see things in a whole new way, like a poet in fact.



Moo

Author: Sharon Creech **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/04/2021

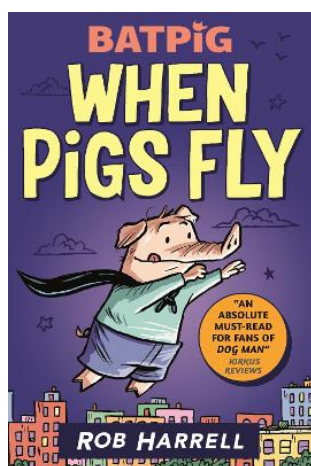
Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 7-10 Reena and Luke's lives change forever and in completely unexpected ways when they move from New York City to live in Maine. The surroundings and lifestyle are completely different, but the biggest drivers of change are their encounters with a cow called Zora. Sent by their parents to help Zora's owner Mrs Falala, one of the most doughty and memorable eccentrics in fiction, they are pushed and pummelled (often literally) into becoming proficient cow handlers. There is so much more to learn too, not least about Mrs Falala. The story is told in a blend of poems and prose that is perfect for the story, conjuring up unforgettable images of the characters and the setting. Sharon Creech won the Carnegie Medal for Ruby Holler and Moo is just as original and heart-warming. Congratulations to new independent publisher Guppy Books for bringing it to readers in this country.



Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths

Author: Maisie Chan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/06/2021

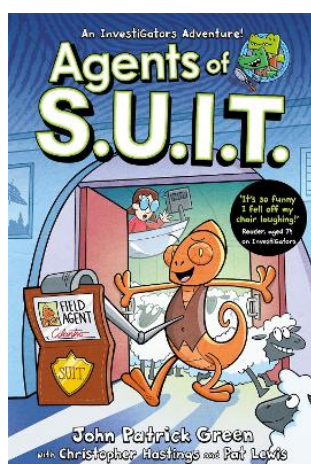
Winner of The Branford Boase Award 2022 | Shortlisted for the Blue Peter Awards 2022 Best Story | Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2023 ages 7-10 Danny Chung loves art. Unfortunately, everyone else – parents and schoolfriends alike – thinks he should love maths. Then his grandmother arrives from China, and she and Danny have to share a bedroom. It feels like a catastrophe, but could funny, intelligent Nai Nai turn out to be his best friend? The Branford Boase judges commented: 'well-rounded characters and I loved the depiction of the intergenerational relationship'; 'you could feel the author's love for the story she was telling'; 'it provides a really important perspective'; 'I've never read anything that describes the diasporic experience so specifically.'



Batpig: When Pigs Fly

Author: Rob Harrell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/08/2022

Some pigs are born great, other pigs have greatness thrust upon them. BATPIG follows the amazing, porktastic adventures of Gary Yorkshire – an entirely normal piglet whose world is turned upside down when he's bitten by his friend, Brooklyn the bat, and develops the power of flight! And what could Gary do with this newfound talent other than become a superhero? Alternating between Batpig's origin story and a furious and hilarious battle with his nemesis, Repto-Man, this is a brilliantly funny and skilfully rendered commercial young graphic novel series, with each book containing two separate stories. Perfect for fans of Dav Pilkey and John Patrick Green.

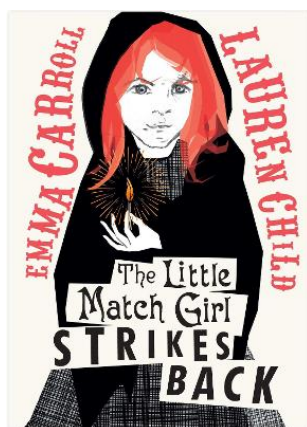


Agents of S.U.I.T. A full colour, laugh-out-loud comic book adventure!

Author: John Patrick Green, Christopher Hastings **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 09/03/2023

From John Patrick Green, the creator of the side-splitting InvestiGators series, comes Agents of S.U.I.T. – the first in a full colour, laugh-out-loud graphic novel series perfect for fans of Bunny vs Monkey! Meet Cilantro the Chameleon! Newly appointed Agent of S.U.I.T.!* Cilantro finally has a chance to prove herself . . . but her first big case is OUT OF THIS WORLD. As she begins to uncover a sheep-led worker's rights revolt and an alien invasion conspiracy, can Cilantro earn her V.E.S.T.** and catch the bad guys? Created by John Patrick Green with cowriter Christopher Hastings and artist Pat Lewis, join the Agents in this standalone but complementary series. *Special Undercover Investigation Teams **Very

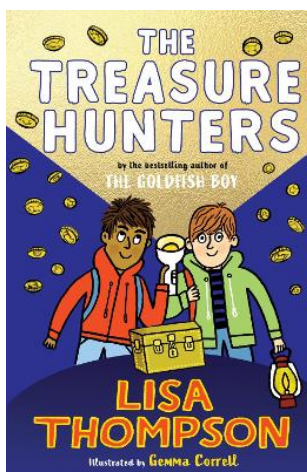
Exciting Spy Technology



The Little Match Girl Strikes Back

Author: Emma Carroll **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 15/09/2022

Award winning author Emma Carroll and former Children's Laureate Lauren Child bring a fresh twist and a whoosh of magic to one of Hans Christian Andersen's best-loved stories. As in the original, this Little Match Girl, a feisty red head called Bridie Sweeney, is also poor and cold and hungry. She makes what money she can by selling matches while her mother struggles to keep a roof over the family's head by working in the factory where the matches are made. But Bridie is never going to accept that life can be so unfair. Why should the rich live in great comfort and the poor suffer? Bridie strikes back! Helped by some powerful magic, she soon makes great and wonderful changes to everything!



The Treasure Hunters

Author: Lisa Thompson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 13/04/2023

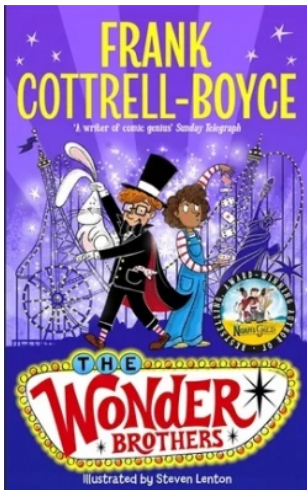
A gripping, page-turning mystery adventure from the bestselling author of modern classic *The Goldfish Boy* When Lonely Vincent is forced to go on an outdoor activity weekend with three other kids from his class, he's counting the seconds until he can escape home. But one of his classmates is hiding a secret: she's convinced there's pirate treasure buried deep within a nearby mountain. Suddenly, this boring trip becomes an exciting adventure! But a thief is hot on the trail, intent on stealing the loot for themselves... can the Treasure Hunters work together to stop them? for fans of Frank Cottrell Boyce's *Millions* and classic action adventure movie *The Goonies* funny, moving and a real page-turner a sensitive depiction of a hero with dyspraxia PRAISE FOR LISA THOMPSON BOOKS *Goldfish Boy* an utterly captivating read BookTrust This empathetic debut is a middle-grade whodunit with a very special heart. Kirkus a heart-warming tale Books for Keeps *The Light Jar* Shortlisted for the Children's Book Awards 2019, Books for Older Readers Category bags of empathy to a deftly plotted tale *The Guardian* A hugely endearing boy hero *The Times* *The Day I Was Erased* Lisa Thompson's light touch in delicately exploring emotional wellbeing means the story can be enjoyed by younger children and teenagers alike and can help begin important conversations about memory loss, parental discord and the meaning of friendship. BookTrust



Paradise Sands: A Story of Enchantment

Author: Levi Pinfold **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 03/11/2022

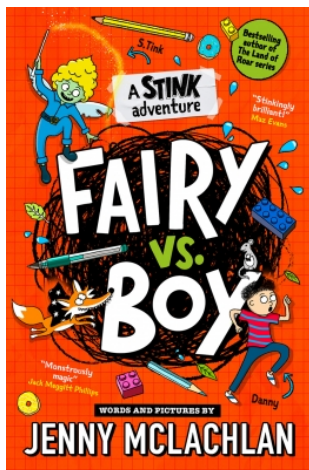
Julia Eccleshare's Pick of the Month November 2022 Award-winning Levi Pinfold tells a haunting tale of enchantment and entrapment in a simple, beautifully formed text and his exquisite and atmospheric illustrations. On a journey through a hot and dry landscape a young girl and her brothers stop to pick flowers. While the brothers are led on to a forbidding palace where their thirst is quenched by plenty of drink and they are cooled by a swim in a beautiful pool, the young girl holds back. She alone avoids being enchanted by the Teller who rules the palace. While the boys are transformed into white birds she makes a deal that saves her life and allows her to bring her brothers home to safety. Levi Penfold's illustrations set the unsettling tone of the story while also providing readers with scope for endless imagination.



The Wonder Brothers

Author: Frank Cottrell-Boyce **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 20/07/2023

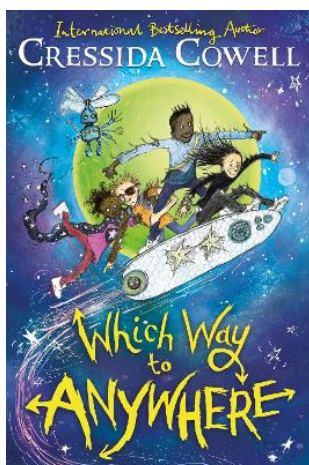
You can absolutely guarantee that any new Frank Cottrell Boyce adventure will keep you and the young readers you give it to, absolutely entranced until the last page. He has performed his writing magic ever since his Carnegie medal winning Millions first appeared and real magic, the sort practised by magicians, is at the heart of this story. The protagonists are cousins Nathan and Middy who share an obsession with magicians. Middy is all about practising her skills and Nathan is the born showman and together they are the Wonder Brothers (don't ask!). Older cousin Brodie is supposed to be looking after them, but all he cares about is his giant rabbit, Queenie, who turns out to be the real star of the show. Together they are on the track of the Blackpool Tower, gone missing since superstar magician Perplexion's last ever show there. Alternatively narrated by the cousins and the world-weary Las Vegas Police captain trying to find out how and why they are alone in Las Vegas, this is a story that genuinely has you suspending disbelief amidst the laughter. Full of wonder and fascinating facts and stories about magic and brim full of brilliant characters that you are reluctant to leave, this is masterful storytelling. Steven Lenton weaves his own magic with the illustrations to complete this perfect treat.



Stink: Fairy vs Boy: A Stink Adventure

Author: Jenny McLachlan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 16/03/2023

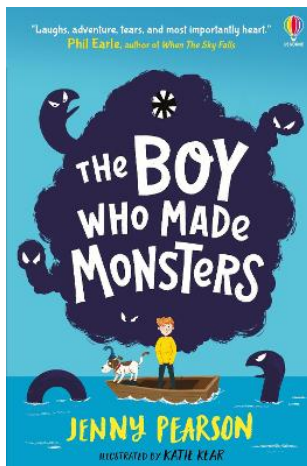
April 2023 Book of the Month Is Stink the Worst. Ever. Fairy? Readers will laugh out loud at this madcap story, as recorded by 11 year Danny Todd in his diary, about a fairy who seems to break all the rules. Danny sets out to tease his sister, who believes strongly in fairies, that he can summon one. Not believing a word of it, he follows 6 invented steps including Knocking on a Fairy Door and Saying a Magic Rhyme. Much to his surprise, a real life fairy appears! What's more, the fairy promises to stay with Danny until he dies! Danny knows that sounds like a terrible threat but he doesn't know quite how bad it is until Stink starts biting his ear to keep him in check! From then onwards, Danny lives in constant fear of Stink and the terrible things that happen next. How will he ever escape??



Which Way to Anywhere

Author: Cressida Cowell **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 15/09/2022

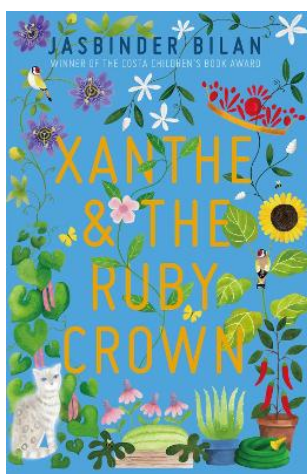
Best-selling children's author and former Children's Laureate Cressida Cowell's Which Way to Anywhere is a fantasy story and a family story that zings with magic, warmth and adventure. It is a firecracker of vast imagination that will leave its readers braver and kinder. Against a background of wild and sometimes frightening magic, a strange new planet Excelsiar and some worrying disappearances of parents and appearances of aunts, four children, two from the O'Hero family, two from the Smith family and one baby born to the new family they are all part of, are trying to adapt to living together. Its complicated, messy and full of much unexpected noise. They have problems to solve and relationships to build. Luckily, their story is in the hands of the storyteller who can guide all readers on a thrilling journey.



The Boy Who Made Monsters

Author: Jenny Pearson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/07/2023

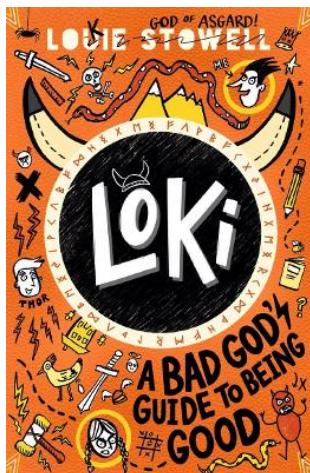
July 2023 Book of the Month Benji McLaughlin is a self-confessed visionary and resolutely hopeful, no matter the circumstances, and his are very tough. His parents are missing after an accident at sea in which his big brother Stanley also nearly died, and the two of them have been moved to live with Uncle Hamish in the remote Loch Lochy in Scotland. Benji is as certain that his parents will be found safe as he is that there's a monster in the Loch. All he has to do while waiting for his parents to come back, is find the monster. Then the tourists will come flocking, thereby saving Uncle Hamish's holiday business from bankruptcy. As the story unfolds, Benji learns that monsters are real, though not in the way that the Loch Lochy monster might be real. His other big lesson is that hope can shift, and it's such shifts that allow you to carry on living. Jenny Pearson explores grief and bereavement in a book that is frequently laugh-out-loud funny and is not afraid to include the occasional miraculous bit of good luck. It's a rare skill to be able to mix humour with such profound themes, and one that makes her books rich and rewarding reading. Few authors create such warm and original characters either and this is every bit as entertaining and warm-hearted as the award-winning *The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates*.



Xanthe & the Ruby Crown

Author: Jasbinder Bilan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/03/2023

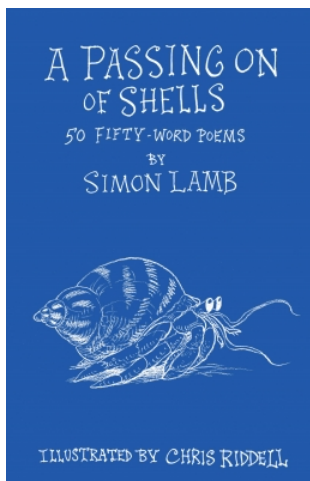
A stunning new children's novel from the Costa Award-winning author of *Asha & the Spirit Bird*. Xanthe loves visiting her gran in her flat with its rooftop garden. But Nani is becoming forgetful - and Xanthe wishes she could help her, if only she knew how. A mysterious cat shows her a way. It leads Xanthe to clues about Nani's childhood, and how, long ago, she had to escape her old life in Africa for a new one in Britain ... The fourth novel by bestselling, Costa Award-winning author Jasbinder Bilan; author of *Asha & the Spirit Bird*, *Tamarind & the Star of Ishta* and *Aarti & the Blue Gods Follows* archaeology-obsessed Xanthe as she uncovers her family's secrets. A tale of secrets, family, refugees, belonging and love. Set in a tower block in Nottingham, bringing Jasbinder's trademark magical realism to an urban, everyday setting.



Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good

Author: Louie Stowell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/02/2022

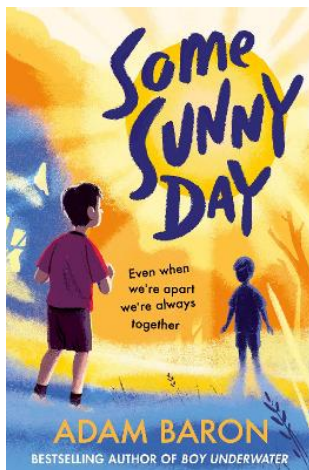
Winner of the Children's Book Award 2023 | Shortlisted for the British Book Awards 2023 Shot-through with wit, myth, friendship and fart jokes, and told through a blend of narrative text, doodles and comic strips, Louie Stowell's *Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good* is a riot from start to finish. Oh, how the mighty are fallen! After playing one joke too many, trickster god Loki has been banished to earth by Odin, and this book presents Loki's diary account of his 31-day exile as a mere mortal. The interlocking of words and pictures is hilariously effective from the off, such as when the author juxtaposes Loki's "before and after" form. Before he had "awesome big hair", "cool facial hair", "broad shoulders" and "arm muscles". As an eleven-year-old boy his hair is "only slightly awesome", and his body is decidedly scrawny. Despite believing "I am too awesome to be treated like this!", Loki reluctantly admits that "Odin IS the boss of me", which leaves him no choice. If he wants to return to his god-form, he must do good deeds, go to school, and show some kind of progress. Alongside the fast-paced execution of an excellent concept, this heady hotpot of humour has been superbly designed. I loved the droll correction boxes flagging-up Loki's fibs. As he explains, "this is a magical diary. If I lie in here, the diary will correct it". And there are comic corrections aplenty as Loki strives to increase his "virtue scores" to end his banishment. The first in a series, *Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Being Good* is sure to generate tonnes of "have you read this?" enthusiasm in the playground.



A Passing On of Shells

Author: Simon Lamb **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 23/02/2023

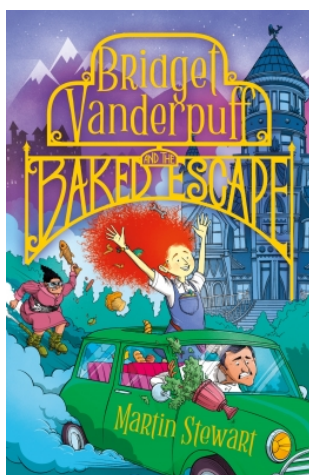
March 2023 Debut of the Month | Shortlisted for the Week Junior Book Awards 2023 A carefully curated selection of very brief but meaningful poems which will amuse, inspire and provoke readers. Chris Riddell's attractive line illustrations wittily bring out the key points of each adding to the enjoyment of the poems and the book in general. As do the beautiful production values of the book which make it a joy to dip into again and again.



Some Sunny Day

Author: Adam Baron **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/07/2022

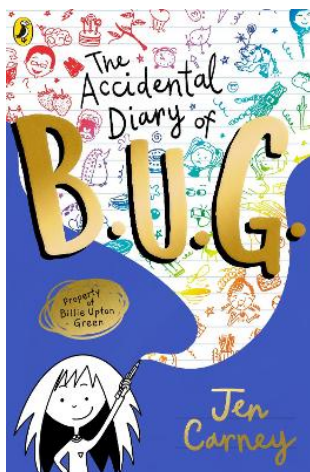
July 2022 Book of the Month Brimming with kindness, and voiced with humour by its adorable Charlton-obsessed protagonist, Adam Baron's *Some Sunny Day* evokes all the fears and frustrations of pandemic lockdown from a child's perspective. With a cast of gloriously authentic characters, it's also a beautiful tribute to the work teachers did during the pandemic, and incredibly funny, with a mystery to boot. Cymbeline Igloo (Cym) is well and truly fed up of being locked down. His mum is super-paranoid about COVID-19 and takes social distancing to the extreme. She's also obsessed with keeping busy, which is why a massive clear out leads to her accidentally giving away Cym's beloved signed football shirt. A powerful subplot about the experience of refugees comes to the fore when Cym discovers who has his shirt. Then, when COVID strikes close to home and his fellow Charlton-supporting neighbour Mrs Stebbings, the much-loved school cook, is taken into hospital, Cym realises what really matters, and rallies his class to pivot their WWII history assignment into a magical project to make her feel better. Incredibly moving (reader, I cried), *Some Sunny Day* also brilliantly evokes the hilarious absurdities of lockdown, from taking daily exercise with a TV personality and baking sourdough bread, to supermarket shortages, and the triumph/despair of discovering/missing out on that last pack of toilet paper or bottle of ketchup. A truly special story that will chime with thousands of young readers, this would also make a great book to read as a class. You can watch our exclusive interview with author Adam Baron [here](#).



Bridget Vanderpuff and the Baked Escape

Author: Martin Stewart **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 08/06/2023

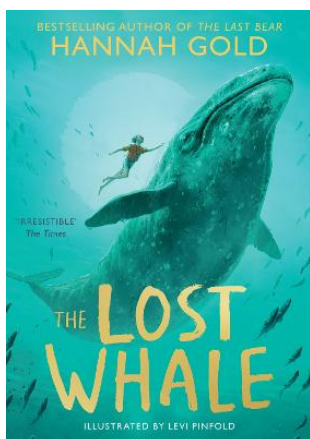
There are orphan stories with bold, indomitable orphans escaping cruel and unusual treatment, and then there's this orphan story, which is wonderfully idiosyncratic, full of imagination and a celebration of blended families, baking and ingenuity. Bridget has experienced a truly awful life at Miss Acrid's Orphanage for Errant Childs (sic) and it seems set to get even worse when, in an act of unparalleled spite, Miss Acrid arranges for all the errant childs, except for Bridget, to be adopted, leaving her not just miserable and oppressed, but horribly lonely too. Miss Acrid has reckoned without the lovely Mr Vanderpuff however and can't stop Bridget escaping with him for adoption. Life at Vanderpuff's Bake Shop seems magical after the orphanage, and literally so, when Bridget meets Pascal La Fleur, bakery elf, but Miss Acrid is out for revenge and determined to get Bridget back under her control. With nods to Dahl, who would have admired Miss Acrid, and huge amounts of invention, humour and heart, Martin Stewart has created a story and characters that will hugely entertain young readers. Also available in the series: *Bridget Vanderpuff and the Ghost Train*



The Accidental Diary of B.U.G.

Author: Jen Carney **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 15/04/2021

May 2021 Book of the Month Ten-year-old Billie Upton Green opens up her doodle diary to readers, and what a treat it proves: a fabulously lively and idiosyncratic record of an eventful couple of weeks in her life. When a new girl joins her class, Billie is determined to make her feel welcome, even though Janey seems a bit of a show-off. She's disconcerted that Janey doesn't know what it means to be adopted, like Billie, or that you can have two mums, also like Billie. It gets harder to like Janey though when it appears she's stealing Billie's best friend, Layla. This also seems, to Billie, to put Janey in the frame for a sudden spate of thefts at their school, but the culprit is someone else altogether and by the end of the book, Billie, Layla and Janey are firm friends, the three of them performing a special dance at Billie's mums' wedding. Readers will love Billie's adventures, and her funny, doodle-filled way of sharing them, as much as they love the Dork Diaries or Wimpy Kid stories, and it's great too to see such a warm celebration of diverse family life.



The Lost Whale

Author: Hannah Gold **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/02/2023

April 2022 Book of the Month Rio is sent to stay with his grandmother in California whilst his Mum is hospitalised back home in the UK. Unfortunately, Rio only met his grandmother 5 years ago so knows little about her or about the area she lives in the US. Grandmother Fran lives by the Pacific Ocean – so life becomes punctuated by the sound of the sea and waves breaking on the shore. Rio feels totally alone, away from friends and his usual surroundings. That is, until he meets Marina by chance on the harbour. Marina and her dad, Birch, live on a boat and run whale spotting trips for tourists. It is this and the finding of his Mum's 'treasure' box that contains drawings of whales, and especially one who somehow seems to draw Rio in – an individual named White Beak – that helps give Rio a focus and a way back from feeling adrift. The story is totally engrossing – once I started reading I had to read it in one go! Gold writes about animal adventures in a completely natural way, combining lots of information with a strong story line and characters which evoke our empathy. It's a story you can literally dive into, enjoying the vicarious thrills of spotting – and along the way – saving grey whales. As I read a proof copy I had no chance to see the illustrations from award winning illustrator Levi Pinfold – but, if the author/illustrator pairing is even half as good as Gold's previous novel *The Last Bear*, then we are in for an absolute treat! A read that appeals to anyone interested in ecological themes.



Peanut Jones and the Illustrated City

Author: Rob Biddulph **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 17/03/2022

The first novel from the lockdown #drawwithrob hero for schools and families everywhere, is an absolute triumph. The first in what is sure to become a best selling and popular series introduces us to the amazing Peanut Jones. Her artist father has gone missing, and her own love of drawing is being stifled in her new school and not valued by her mother. The discovery of a magic pencil, that literally brings drawings to life, enables her to draw a door and step through into another world, where she hopes she may be able to find her father. Peanut is aided and accompanied by her new science-loving friend, Rockwell, and her genius younger sibling, Little Bit. Together they face many dangers as they travel through the land of Chroma, not least the villainous Mr. White, who wants to extinguish all colour and creativity. Chroma is a superbly imagined world and each district and many of the vivid characters have a distinctly artistic flavour – The Ink District, Warholia, Vincent Fields etc. Little Tail the magic pencil is also known Pencil Number One, the very first pencil created by inventor Nicolas-Jaques Conte. There is actually a glossary at the end of the book to give readers a mini education in Art History and ensure they can appreciate all the references- very useful for parents and teachers! This is a book suffused with the joy of art, by an artist and for budding artists everywhere, but most of all it is a hugely enjoyable, witty and exciting story that will captivate readers of all ages. Highly recommended.

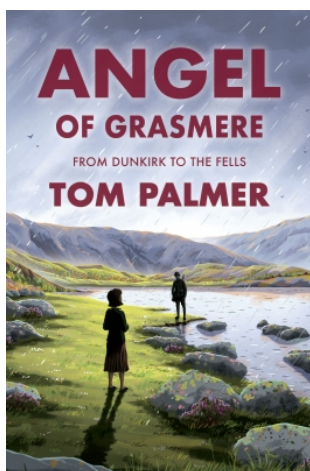


The Secret Garden Rewilded

Author: Anthea Simmons **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/07/2024

August 2024 Book of the Month A reworking of Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic, this has all the magic and colour of the original but with a thoroughly contemporary feel and focus. Mary Lennox is now Mia Townsend. Orphaned when her wealthy socialite parents are killed in a helicopter crash, to the passing dismay of their Instagram followers, Mia is sent to live with her reserved Uncle James in his remote old house on the edge of Dartmoor. Countryside, house, lifestyle are as far from Mia's old life as it's possible to get and, spoiled though neglected, as well as lost and afraid, she reacts like Hodgson Burnett's Mary by being insufferably rude to absolutely everyone. Following the original, it's the discovery of a secret garden that transforms Mia's life, awakening her to the beauty of nature and prompting new friendships with her cousin Christopher, recovering from heart surgery, and housekeeper's grandson Daniel. Rather than restore the formal beauty of the garden however, the children rewild it, making it a haven for birds, bugs and native plants. Readers will be just as fascinated as Mia by the extraordinary new world she discovers. The setting, from the cold bedrooms of Mis Tor House to the wild beauty of the moors are vividly depicted, and the characters are just as real. This is both a terrific

homage to a much-loved classic and an excellent book in its own right.

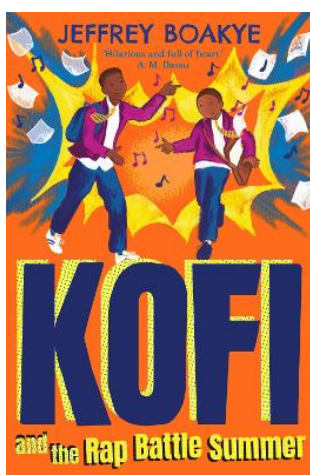


Angel of Grasmere

Author: Tom Palmer **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 09/05/2024

May 2024 Book of the Month | Interest Age 9+ Reading Age 8

Surrounded by fells and farms Tarn lives in the Lake District village of Grasmere; World War Two rages far away, but its impact is felt throughout her small community. Tarn and her friends spend their days studying the skies above the fells searching for early signs of the much-feared Nazi invasion. Whilst silently Tarn mourns for her adored older brother, killed at Dunkirk. Meanwhile, a strange, reclusive young man haunts the hills high above them, too traumatised to reveal himself but deeply connected to the village and its residents. The third in Palmer's much loved World War Two Lakeland series, and possibly the best yet. Full of heart, wisdom and kindness, this is a book that young readers will adore. Published by Barrington Stoke, the accessible format with cream pages and dyslexia-friendly font opens up Tarn's world to struggling and non-traditional readers. Whilst the powerful storytelling never condescends, instead offering a full and heartfelt story alive with vibrant characters. Highlighting the long-lasting pain and mental anguish experienced by young soldiers after the Dunkirk retreat, Angel of Grasmere offers a fresh look at a huge historical event. At the same time, we see the impact experienced by those left at home, struggling to survive whilst missing loved ones. As the story progresses from 1939 to 1942 village life and the impact of the war is expertly brought to life, alongside a deeper story of the importance of love, compassion and humanity. Sure to become a firm favourite, this is a skilful and engrossing tale of wartime rural life.

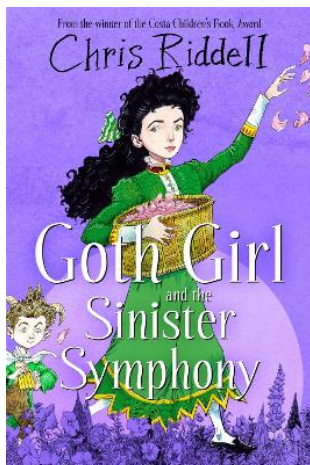


Kofi and the Rap Battle Summer

Author: Jeffrey Boakye **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/06/2023

June 2023 Debut of the Month This hugely enjoyable fiction debut by the award-winning author of Musical Truth, the ground-breaking look at black history through popular music, is similarly infused with music. Set in the 90's but packed with instantly recognisable and relatable family, friendship, and school dynamics, this is the story of the fast talking, well-meaning, irrepressible Kofi and his sometimes misguided money-making schemes. Exploiting his best mate Kelvin's excellent memory skills, they create and sell Paper Jam, a fanzine of ragga and rap song lyrics. Everyone at school is obsessed with the music but nobody knows the words and so Paper Jam is a big success. But another ingenious scheme to make money by cheating arcade games, gets them involved with Leroy and his gang and almost lands his Uncle Delroy in jail. Kofi's optimism is shaken by seeing prejudice in action and he has to learn what it means to be a true friend and what matters more than money.

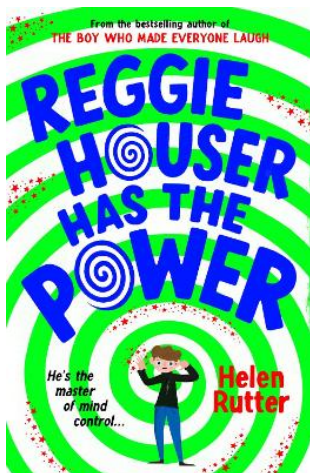
Kofi has a loving, nurturing family to help him find a way through his problems and Leroy's bullying also turns out to be the catalyst for discovering Kelvin's rapping talent and for transforming the playground cussing battles into rap circles that celebrate creativity and community, not cruelty. The razor sharp and witty dialogue and the frequent hilarious scenes make this a truly engaging read with an authenticity and warmth that will undoubtedly have readers keen to follow more of Kofi's escapades.



Goth Girl and the Sinister Symphony

Author: Chris Riddell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 25/04/2024

Best-selling Goth Girl is back for an action-packed new adventure in this stunningly produced volume by former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell which has the additional delight of a mini-book, Fable of a Faun, tucked into it. Lord Goth is turning Ghastly-Gorm Hall into the venue for Gothstock, a sensational music festival that will match his home. Naturally, Ada Goth is thrilled at the thought but will it all go to plan? In both words and pictures Chris Riddell creates an amazing cast of characters and the most original escapades in which they are all entangled.



Reggie Houser Has the Power

Author: Helen Rutter **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/02/2024

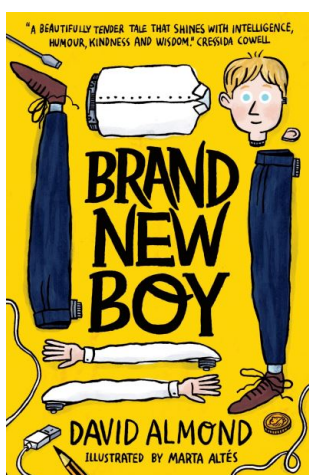
Having twice had stories selected for Empathy Day collections, Helen Rutter is becoming known for her capacity to make the reader see the world through another pair of eyes and to walk in the shoes of individuals in challenging circumstances. She is renowned also for her capacity to do this in narratives that are as funny as they are touching - an extraordinary talent that is amply demonstrated in this her latest novel. Reggie has ADHD and is coming to the end of primary school where he has constantly struggled to make friends, to fit in and to 'be good.' He desperately wants secondary school to be different and when he sees a hypnotist perform on stage, Reggie becomes obsessed with learning the skills of mind control and discovers that he has an incredible talent for it! Could this be the answer to gaining friends and popularity? But his talents are noticed by a gang who want to use his skills for their own advantage and things quickly get out of hand. Reggie needs to learn what real friendship is and to trust and believe in himself. This is a really perceptive and moving exploration of what ADHD is like, what it feels like to not fit in and the dangerous power of peer pressure. Readers will find much to relate to and enjoy in this heartwarming and hilarious story. Sharing as a class or at bedtime will promote some really valuable discussion about acceptance and tolerance. Highly recommended.



Stitch

Author: Padraig Kenny **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/01/2024

January 2024 Book of the Month Although obviously taking inspiration from Mary Shelley's classic Gothic tale of Frankenstein, this is not just a watered-down version of that tale, but a fresh, original story which packs a real emotional punch within its 200 beautifully written pages. Who could fail to find Stitch endearing? A boy who just happens to have been made (stitched together) rather than born, but who is simply trying to make the best of his life and live up to the standards his beloved Professor tried to teach him before he died. Stitch's innocence, trust and curiosity make him very vulnerable to the likes of Professor Hardacre, who is the Professor's nephew and has his own gruesome reasons for wanting to continue his uncle's work. Stitch soon discovers the peril that he and especially his friend and an earlier creation, Henry Oaf, are in and together with Alice, Professor Hardacre's assistant they try to escape. Henry is another delightful character who reads extensively and the inventive embellishments to language add humour to the story mix. Alice helps Stitch and Henry realise what they are and how they are made and warns them that the world is not very accepting of people who are different. Born disfigured and abandoned by her parents, she has direct experience of this before she was rescued and put to work by Professor Hardacre, who is perhaps not entirely bad. Kenny's novels often centre around the topic of difference and what makes us human and here in this gripping and enjoyable tale, which will have all readers rooting for a happy ending for Stitch and his companions, there are moments of great pathos as well as moments of love, hope and friendship. This is a rich and rewarding read which as a read aloud could provoke deep discussion and empathy in the audience.



Brand New Boy

Author: David Almond **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/02/2022

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 7-10 A warm and thought-provoking tale from a master storyteller, winner of the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award and author of the Carnegie Medal-winning Skellig.



Mayowa and the Sea of Words

Author: Chibundu Onuzo **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/06/2025

June 2025 Debut of the Month This debut middle grade novel from bestselling author Chibundu Onuzo is a dazzlingly original and imaginative fantasy, the first in a projected trilogy and, what is more, a wonderful allegory about the power of words. 10 year old Mayowa discovers she has inherited a powerful ability from her paternal grandfather. She is a logosalter - someone who can jump onto a book, and channel the emotions conveyed by those words into other people - changing their attitudes and behaviour and at the extreme end even weaponised. The amount of power that can be generated is very logically in direct proportion to the number of readers the book has had. Jumping on an international best seller or old classic could be very dangerous, not least for the logosalter. Mayowa and her grandfather discover they are not, as he thought, the only logosalters in existence and someone is using this power with evil intent. What makes this story so outstanding is not just the imaginative fantasy elements but the way in which the story and wonderfully inclusive characters are very much grounded in important issues of the day. They realise their logosalter adversary is trying to force through the cruellest anti refugee legislation. Will Mayowa's new found powers be able to prevent this? Without seeming at all forced, the refugee issue is made real and examined through Mayowa's friendship with newly arrived Hamza. Even young readers will pick up on the injustices of the system his family face. Mayowa is truly a heroine for our age. Wonderfully witty and informative footnotes might be my favourite feature in the novel and these, and the wry narrative voice, rich language, fast pace and engaging characters will have readers yearning for book two! Learn more about Mayowa and the Sea of Words in our fabulous event with author Chibundu Onuzo.

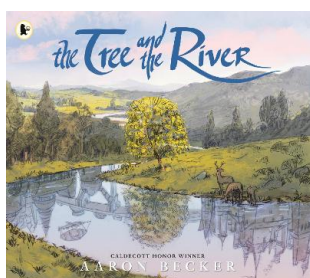


Hunt for the Golden Scarab

Author: M. G. Leonard **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 30/01/2025

A fantastic start to what is obviously going to be a brilliant new series from a bestselling and award-winning author, this was literally unputdownable! A fast moving and actioned packed time travel adventure that also revels in loads of historical and geographical detail (in this case of Ancient and modern Egypt) that will fascinate and inform as well as entertain. It is also so refreshing to see an adventure where the relationship between parent and child is so positive and where the parent does not have to 'disappear' but is very much a partner. Sim's martial art teaching Mum has moved them around a lot, but he is currently enrolled in the local school and enjoying the company of his friend Nelson, while they live in the caretaker's flat at the Sir John Soames Museum in London. When some sinister strangers appear at the museum one night and his Mum reveals that she can open doors into time, he finds himself on a dangerous quest to locate the golden heart

scarab of Nefertiti before the mysterious Council of Keys claim it and capture him. But he has Nelson helping him from London and is accompanied by a newly found and formidable cousin, Jeopardy as he begins to understand the true nature of the powerful gift that runs in his family. The internal logic of the time travel with the use of music and musical instruments as a means for opening the time doors works particularly well and it will be fascinating to see where the next adventure will take Sim, Nelson and Jeopardy. At the end of this instalment there is a feature which will be particularly loved by teachers! Nelson's Time Traveller's Diary which records the factual settings and historical period of each door they travel through and a wonderfully explanatory Key's Guide to Ancient Egypt. Highly recommended.



The Tree and the River

Author: Aaron Becker **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/04/2024

Winner of the 2024 Yoto Carnegie Medal for Illustration and the Shadowers' Choice Medal Prize winning author Becker is known as a master of the wordless picture book – and this latest volume is no exception. It is a series of time lapse images of the life in a valley on the banks of a long and winding river. It is not set in any particular country – and takes architectural styles from an amalgamation of different times and countries – thus it is relevant to everyone. Mankind's advances are reflected in the amount of building, growing industries, and enmities between neighbouring towns. The development of urban sprawl in other words, but depicted in such detailed, and to start with, entirely beautiful spreads that we are beguiled. As the book progresses, we see the damage and the destruction that man and nature can inflict as they are abused and ignored in search of 'progress'. The illustrations are so detailed the reader can spend a long time looking at each spread, noting the good and the bad changes, seeing the effect these changes have on the tree that grows in the crook of a river bend. Until finally the tree seems wrecked with the civilisation that stood around it. That is, until we see one tiny acorn from our dying tree fall into the river, travel downstream a short way and find fertile ground in which to bury itself and the cycle of growth and recovery can start again. The river and trees are the witness to the folly of man – but also the witness to the new birth and growth. An ultimately uplifting look at what we are doing to our world – to make us pause and think. A spectacular read that will thrill readers of 5 to 95 equally.



Jakub's Otter

Author: Coral Rumble **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/10/2024

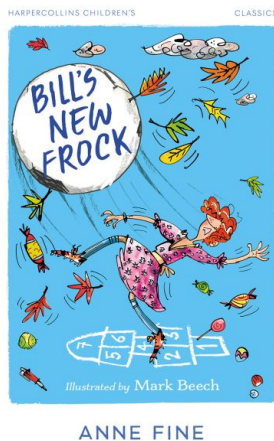
Interspersed with poems, and set in the forested hills of Perugia, Coral Rumble's book quietly takes readers on a real adventure, one involving an encounter with a bear, secret escapades, and the forging of new friendships. It's narrated by Jakub and describes the summer holiday he spends with family friends the Koniks. Jakub is carer for his mum, who has MS, and is worried about leaving her, and irritated by the Koniks' daughter Marta, who is the same age, super clever but, in his opinion, childish. The holiday turns out to be quite magical however, as he explores the local area with the family's neighbour/caretaker Signor Mancini, learning about the wildlife and even befriending an otter. Slowly too, he and Marta become friends as they get to know one another properly. The setting is beautifully described, and readers will feel that they too have had an Italian holiday, but just as warm and real is the friendship that develops between the two children. Coral Rumble finds time and space for all this in a book that is thoughtful, memorable and full of insight.



Jed Greenleaf

Author: Kieran Larwood **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/07/2025

November 2024 Book of the Month Set in an otherworld England, in which Lady Jane Grey became queen and where her descendants still rule alongside six magical Guilds, Kieran Larwood's new story is bursting with magic, intrigue and excitement. Sickly, bullied orphan Jed Greenleaf is as surprised as anyone to discover that he is a member of the Guild of Leaf, with the magical ability to transform his skin into the rough, solid bark of an oak tree. Competing at the Arthanfest trials alongside members from the other Guilds, he finds out that Iron and Fire are cheating, and this realisation puts him and his gentle new Leaf friends in deadly danger. Can Jed prevent Albion falling into the power of these ruthless Guilds for ever, or can he restore the older, juster way of things? In his efforts, he discovers he has even more power than anyone realised, and is helped by Hobb, a merry and very, very old dryad. This self-contained story is a wonderful adventure and feels as though it has sprung from ancient folktales particular to our green and pleasant land. As fresh as the brightest green shoots and as sturdy as the oldest oak, this is a wonderful piece of storytelling.

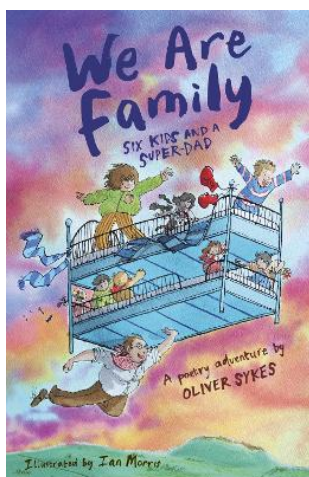


ANNE FINE

Bill's New Frock

Author: Anne Fine **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 28/08/2025

Anne Fine has a rare genius for building a funny, enriching and moving story around the nuts and bolts of school life. Many of Anne Fine's books are ideal for reluctant readers as they tend to be quite short and also because of the great warmth and humour in her writing. Bill wakes up one day as a girl, and is horrified to be sent to school in a frilly pink frock with fiddly shell buttons. There he finds life suddenly very different. The bully whistles at him, instead of kicking him, he can't be picked to lift a table - not being a 'big strong boy' - his work's supposed to be ultra neat and he's being cast as Lovely Rapunzel, who in any case never gets to say anything! By the time he gets home the impractical frock is covered in mud and - thank goodness - Bill will never have to wear it again! Have a look at *The Angel of Nitshill Road*, *How to Write Really Badly*, and *Anneli the Art Hater*. Anne also writes for older readers, the most know of which is probably *Madame Doubtfire*.



We Are Family - Six Kids and a Super-Dad

Author: Oliver Sykes **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 09/05/2024

June 2024 Debut of the Month Home is 'the place where, when you have to go there/They have to take you in' in Robert Frost's famous poem; Oliver Sykes uses poems to create a very different sense of home in this debut collection, a vibrant, warts and all description of his own childhood experiences. After his mum left the family when Oliver was 8, his dad had sole responsibility for looking after their six kids. It was tough, and they didn't have much money - the first poem explains how Dad went poaching rabbits and trout to get them through the weeks until the first benefit cheque arrived, the kids all helping in whatever way they could. In sections titled *Meet the Family*, *Dad's Most Dangerous Dishes*, *Savage Siblings* and *Priceless Pranks*, we live the life that Oliver lived, the scrapping and arguing, the days out, the games, and the precious moments when it was just him and his dad, one particularly powerful poem describing going boxing, just the two of them. There's a wonderful sense of the helter-skelter of life with so many brothers and sisters but just as clear is the sense of family love and togetherness. Ian Morris's black and white illustrations catch the moments of quiet as well as the noise.