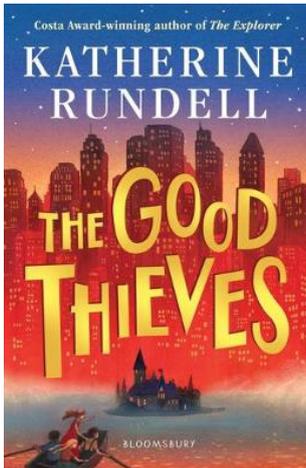


## A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 7 (11 - 12 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2020/21 academic year.

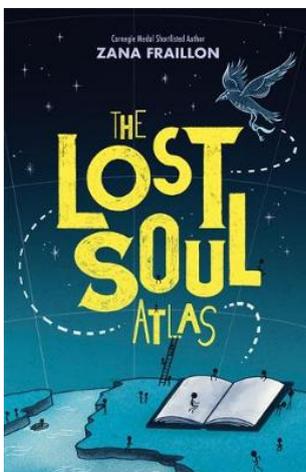
If your child is a competent reader or has read all these titles then try the books from the Year 8 list. Alternatively if these books are a little challenging try books from the Year 6 list. Our overall mission is to promote reading for pleasure with quality texts that are perfectly pitched for the 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.



### The Good Thieves

**Author:** Katherine Rundell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

**Longlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021** After stories set in jungles and on the Russian steppes, Katherine Rundell has chosen the streets of Prohibition New York for her latest, but it's just as full of the sense of peril and freedom from rules that characterises her earlier books, with central character Vita facing possibly the greatest danger yet. Newly arrived from England, Vita is determined to win back her family home, the fabulous Hudson Castle, acquired from her grandfather in a distinctly shady way by mob boss Victor Sorrotore. This will involve breaking and entering – and legend has it the castle is impregnable – and safe cracking, but Vita is fortunate enough to have as associates an extremely talented pickpocket and two fearless young circus performers. Rundell revels in setting her characters these kind of challenges and also in exploring the kind of physical and mental daring required to undertake them. She likes to equip her protagonists with right and with love too, the latter proves a formidable weapon for Vita. Beautifully written and full of scenes that both thrill and enchant, *The Good Thieves* is Rundell at her classiest. Readers who are captivated by Katherine Rundell's wild children will also enjoy *Stop the Train* or *The Middle of Nowhere* by Geraldine McCaughrean, or books by classic children's writers such as Joan Aiken and Eva Ibbotson.

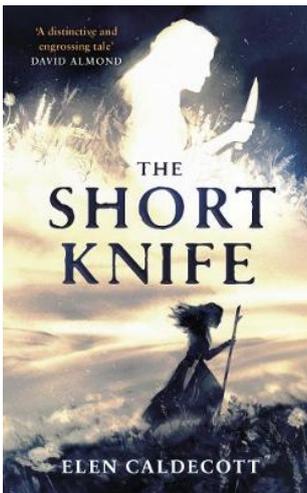


### The Lost Soul Atlas

**Author:** Zana Fraillon **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 23/07/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

Twig (a boy) wakes in the afterlife with vague memories of his Da, here he meets a Raven, Kruuk, to help guide him into Heaven where he will be part of the great forgetting. But Twig wanders off the path and meets the Gatherer, who gives him the Lost Soul Atlas, a skeleton key and a bag of bones with which to open Crossings between the physical world and the hereafter. Can Twig open all the Crossings whilst being chased by the Officials? If he opens them will his memories drag him into the real world and keep him there, in which case he will fade before he finds out what happened to him before he died.... He will forget his close 'blood family' friend Flea – who is also a street child and a pick pocket. This is a thought-provoking look at life for street children, how

they survive against the odds, the forces lined against them as they try to live, and the lack of choices they have when forced to thieve to keep themselves alive. It is an exploration of loyalty amongst friends and family. There are scares - and lots of caring - but ultimately it is a song to the strength of the human spirit. The author was once told "to shine a light in all the dark places" - and much as one might expect from knowledge of Fraillon's previous prize-winning books - this book does exactly that, using a richness of language that both exhilarates and makes you cry. It is both timeless and ageless having a wide appeal. A powerful read I would highly recommend.



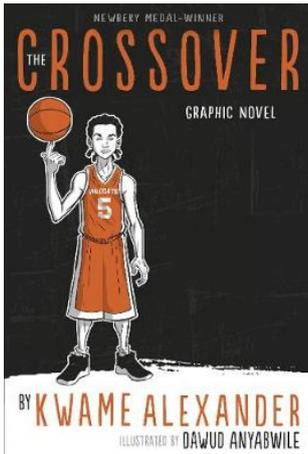
---

## The Short Knife

**Author:** Elen Caldecott **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 02/07/2020  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

**July 2020 Book of the Month** Set in the author's native Wales during the dark days of the fifth century, Ellen Caldecott's *The Short Knife* is an energetic, edge-of-your-seat page-turner with present-day resonance as 21st-century Britain - island of migrants - faces the challenge of forging an identity independent of continental Europe. With the Romans compelled to leave Britain after 400 years, the island is on the brink of collapse. Amidst this uncertainty and the chaos of Saxon invasion, thirteen-year-old Mai is cared for by her dad and sister (she lost her mam when she was three), and wrestling with her "anger at the people free to flee into the hills. Anger at all the world and everyone in it. I want to open my mouth and let the fire out, burn it all into blackness." When Saxon warriors turn up at their farm, the family is forced to flee to the dangerous hills themselves. Mai must cross the threshold from childhood to adulthood if she's to survive in a hostile world in which speaking in her mother tongue might turn out to be fatal. The cinematic scene-setting, first person narrative, and succinct, magnetically lyrical style make for a thrilling experience that will hook the most reluctant of readers. Recommended for fans of Caroline Lawrence and Damian Dibben's *The History Keepers* series, this offers enlightening insights into British history with fresh flair, and through the eyes of a compelling main character.

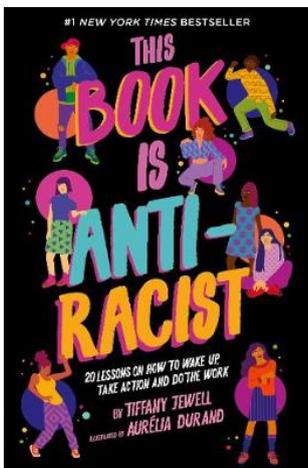
---



## The Crossover Graphic Novel

**Author:** Kwame Alexander **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/03/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

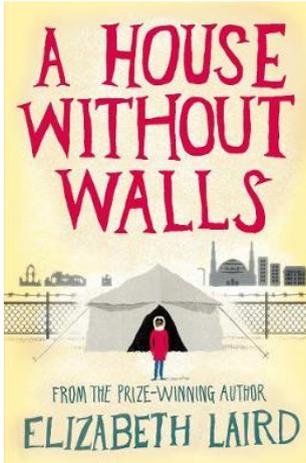
**March 2020 Book of the Month** The novel of The Crossover is a Newberry Medal Winner, and a Coretta Scott King Award Winner in the US and was Shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal in the UK. This graphic novel version is the whole story complete with large and small two-coloured illustrations gracing every page. This is a deceptively simple read – a novel in verse about siblings getting through middle school, their lives, their crushes, their family interactions, and basketball. The boys are twins Josh and Jordan Bell, sons of a famous basketball player, and aiming to make a mark in the world of basketball. There are rivalries between the boys, they revel in their differences, but family holds them together whatever the world throws at them. The words and pictures work so well together, you will be on the edge of your seat, rooting for the team as they play and crying with the twins when things go awry. To tell such a complex story with so few words, with such emotional depth – Alexander is a master of devastating and uplifting storytelling. Anyabwile’s illustrations enhance a superb story – adding expressions and movement to an already great novel.



## This Book Is Anti-Racist

**Author:** Tiffany Jewell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/01/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

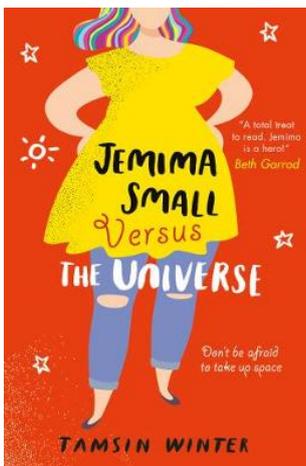
**20 lessons on how to wake up, take action, and do the work** This has 20 colourful chapters which slowly build to give a full picture of identities, histories and anti-racism work in the USA, Australia and UK. It is aimed at students (mainly) with the intention to make them feel empowered to challenge racism and stand up for what they believe in. Having said that – it is a powerful and accessible read for everyone. Tiffany Jewell is an anti-racist, anti-bias educationalist who uses a very carefully chosen vocabulary so that no-one is excluded, supported by the wonderful bright colour illustrations and layout it makes an inviting read on a sometimes difficult topic. Each chapter is a chance for the reader to look at their own beliefs, their power, or their lack of it, and consider what might be possible to change. The chapters are arranged in groupings under the headings of Understanding and growing Identities; Making sense of the world; Taking action and responding to racism; Working in solidarity against racism. If taken as the basis of a series of study this could provide a fascinating term’s work (at least) as it covers so much in such a short book. This makes it sound rather didactic – it isn’t, this is a very readable, very informative, very thought-provoking book. Just what we need in this radicalized and strife-ridden world. Buy copies for your school – you won’t regret it!



## A House Without Walls

**Author:** Elizabeth Laird **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 22/08/2019  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

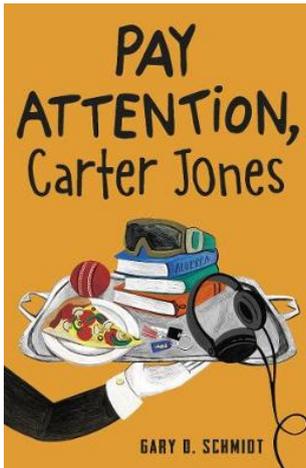
**Longlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021 | A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month September 2019** Award winning Elizabeth Laird brilliantly brings to life thirteen year old Safiya's new world as a refugee after her family flee from their comfortable home in Damascus because of the war in Syria. Safiya, her brother and father arrive in Jordan with nothing and must turn to relatives for help. Safiya has to adjust to living in a tent without running water. Suddenly, she is cleaning and washing and finding clever ways of making do on very little rather than going to school. But resourceful Safiya never gives up hope of going back to a better way for life or of finding her missing twin sister. A House without Walls is a vivid picture of a family facing an extreme experience with courage and imagination.



## Jemima Small Versus the Universe

**Author:** Tamsin Winter **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 28/06/2019  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

"It would be so much better to have kind arms, or intelligent legs... Why did our good qualities have to be so invisible to everyone?" Wise words from our protagonist Jemima that expose what our world does - and doesn't - value most. Namely, the exaltation of narrow ideas of the "body beautiful" over the likes of intelligence, kindness, empathy and loyalty. Ultra-intelligent Jemima Small knows this better than most. Small by name, she's big in brains and body size - "It's typical of my life that I look the exact opposite of my name" - and constantly wounded by people weighing her with their eyes and the cruel body-shaming bullies at her school. That and the fact that her mum has abandoned her family has left Jemima with an empty space in her heart that "felt bigger than the universe sometimes." But with the support of her sweet best buddy Miki and the inspiring leader on her Healthy Lifestyle Class (AKA "Fat Club"), Jemima finds the strength to compete in Brainiacs, a national TV quiz for super-bright students. Adopting a mantra written by a teacher describing her chance in the quiz - "Jemima Small: difficult to beat" - Jemima's story will have readers rooting for her every step of the way. This is a mightily big-hearted book, with honest, vital messages about believing in yourself and flourishing in your own skin.

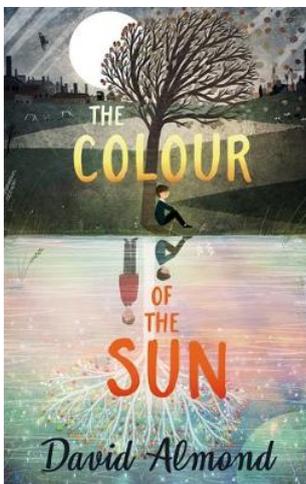


## Pay Attention, Carter Jones

**Author:** Gary D. Schmidt **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/05/2019 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

**Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2020 | May 2019 Book of the Month** Like all classics of American middle grade fiction - as this may well be esteemed in future - this is radiant with humour, heart and a whole lot of indelibly authentic child-centred observations and emotions. With his dad away on army service, and faced with being plunged into the jungle of middle school, Carter already has plenty on his plate when his family inherits the services of an eccentric British butler. While Carter is quick to revolt against the butler's rigorous regime of tea-drinking, homework and housekeeping (including folding underwear, can you believe it?!), the butler's ways, wisdom and polite-but-firm guidance (AKA being "a pain in the glutes") casts a healing spell over the family's soul, exactly when they need it most. Then, as the butler shares his love of "the most lovely and sportsmanly game that mankind has yet conceived" (AKA cricket) with Carter's schoolmates, Carter himself comes to share his troubles and release his anger and grief so he can keep the metaphoric "bails from coming down". Suffused with the same warmth, compassion and originality of the author's stunning debut, *Orbiting Jupiter*, this funny, moving middle grade novel is a true treasure with broad appeal and rich rewards.

---

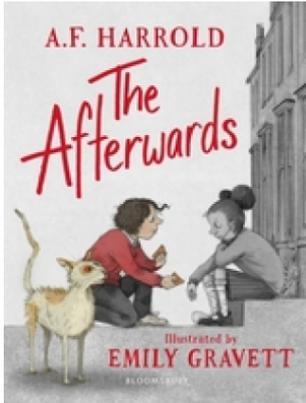


## The Colour of the Sun

**Author:** David Almond **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/01/2019 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

Lyrical writing exploring the ordinary and extraordinary in one day in the life of a young boy.

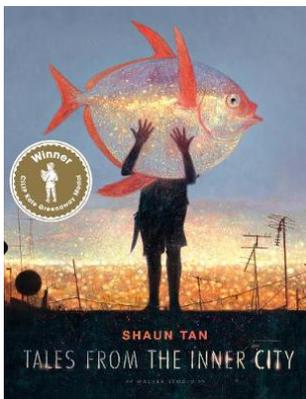
---



## The Afterwards

**Author:** A. F. Harrold **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 01/11/2018  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

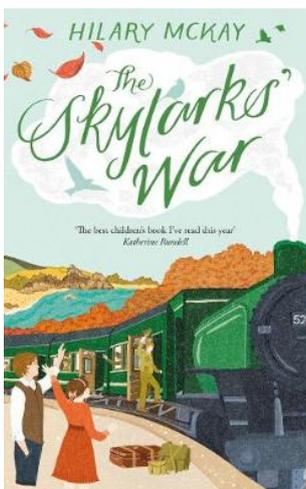
**November 2018 Book of the Month** A powerful, poignant, darkly comic and deeply moving story about friendship at its most extraordinary.



## Tales from the Inner City

**Author:** Shaun Tan **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 04/10/2018  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

**Winner of the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2020** In this mind-blowingly beautiful book comprising twenty-five tales, visionary artist and writer Shaun Tan turns his attention to the relationship between humans and animals in varied urban contexts. A rhino on a motorway. An owl at the side of a hospital patient. An eagle spied at multiple international airports. Giant snails declared “indecent” by the public. Dreamlike, mysterious and poignant, this is a book to pore over. Both words and illustrations lend themselves to multiple readings, each experience unearthing alternate interpretations, new discoveries, fresh ways of seeing the world. What a sublimely strange feat this is.



## The Skylarks' War

**Author:** Hilary McKay **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 20/09/2018  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

**Winner of the Costa Children's Book Award 2018 | A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month October 2018 | One of our 2018 Books of the Year** Award winning Hilary McKay tells a captivating and deeply moving story of three young people growing up in the years before and during World War One. How their lives were totally changed by the War, how what really happened to the soldiers could never be talked about and how a girl like Clarry suddenly had opportunities because of the war are all touched on in a story that is also about universal adolescent relationships and the timeless concerns of being a teenager. Following their mother’s death at her birth, Clarry and her older brother Peter live a joyless life with their gloomy father. The pair live for their summer holidays in Cornwall with their grandparents which they share with their older cousin Rupert. Here, the trio are free to be themselves and to begin to break away from the constraints of family expectations. When war is declared Rupert enlists: his family is horrified

and Clarry and Peter are left trying to work out where he might be, how they themselves should react to the war and, above all, whether Rupert is safe. Hilary McKay has a rare gift for novels about families and their interplay. Here, she weaves her story round one of the most powerful backdrops in history. And she does so with the lightest of touch which makes her history come alive. The Costa Judges said: 'Chime, resonance and sparkle – a truly great read.'

---

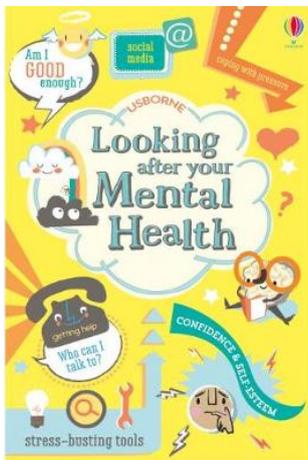


## Freedom

**Author:** Catherine Johnson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/08/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

**Winner of the Little Rebels Children's Book Award 2019** An action-packed and pacy story about a boy's experience of slavery in Britain. Nathaniel doesn't want to move to England with his master's family, leaving behind his mother and sister on the Jamaican plantation. But then he remembers what his mother told him: once a slave sets foot on English soil, they're free. Perhaps he can earn his fortune and buy his family's freedom, too. For more books on this theme head over to our sister site, LoveReading4Schools topic list - The Slave Trade

---

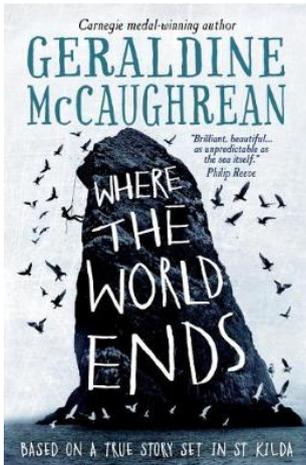


## Looking After Your Mental Health

**Author:** Alice James, Louie Stowell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/05/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

Full of practical advice, accessibly written, covering all the topics young people may need.

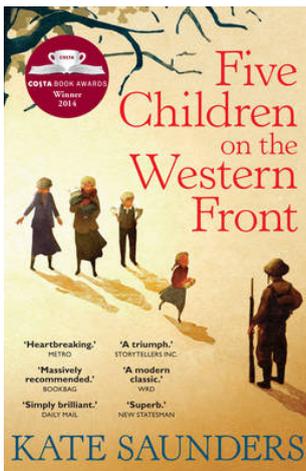
---



## Where the World Ends

**Author:** Geraldine McCaughrean **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 01/05/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

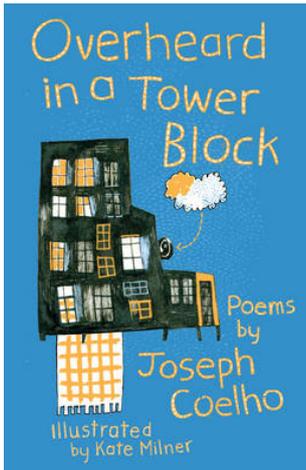
In the summer of 1727 a group of men and boys, there to harvest birds and eggs, were stranded on Warrior Stac, a pinnacle of rock that pitches out of the Atlantic, 'as black and fearful as one horn of the Devil himself'. It was nine months before anyone came to collect them. Geraldine McCaughrean has taken these bare facts and imagined the story of those terrible months and the characters of those who endured them. Yes, it's a mesmerising story of survival, but McCaughrean takes it in different and surprising ways too and, both terrifying and full of dark comedy, it becomes an elemental story of love and faith; of myth and imagination. Indeed, in the hands of one of our very finest writers this bleak, isolated rock becomes a microcosm for the whole world and all its stories. Unmissable. Readers should also seek out Geraldine McCaughrean's novels *The White Darkness* and *The Stones are Hatching* and will also enjoy David Almond's *A Song for Ella Grey*.



## Five Children on the Western Front

**Author:** Kate Saunders **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/04/2015 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

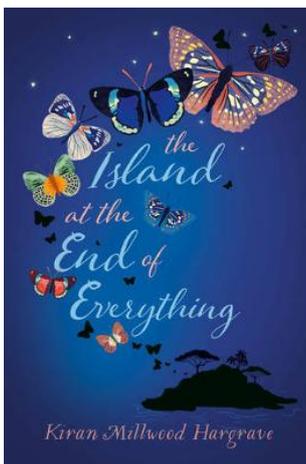
Witty, tender and full of insights into life love and politics, this is a brilliant book in its own right as well as a worthy tribute to E. Nesbit's classic *Five Children and It*. The year is 1914. Anthea, Robert, Jane and Cyril, who has just enlisted, are now grown up, the Lamb is a schoolboy and even Edie, an addition to the family since the original, is old enough to meet the extraordinary and magical Psammead when he re-enters their life. All the children are longing for some new adventures but has the Psammead still got his magical powers? As befits the serious times, the Psammead plays an invaluable role in helping the family understand the First World War while also sorting out problems from his own past. Action-packed, funny and thoughtful this is a book to fall in love with.



## Overheard in a Tower Block

**Author:** Joseph Coelho **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/07/2017  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

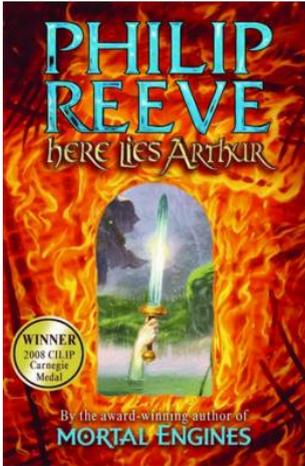
**UKLA Longlist Book Awards - 2019 | Shortlisted for the Centre for Literacy in Primary Poetry Award 2018** This second solo collection from Joseph Coelho, *Overheard in a Tower Block*, explores further some of the themes from *Werewolf Club Rules* (which won the CLIPPA in 2015). More suited to an older reader than that first collection, this is an extraordinarily powerful and moving book. Each poem offers us glimpses into the life of the main character as he grows, over the course of the collection, from young boy through adolescence to adulthood. The ingenious threading of fantasy, story, myth and magic throughout the poems only illuminates further the challenges and hardships of this young man's life, but ultimately concludes in moments of optimism, joy and possibility.



## The Island at the End of Everything

**Author:** Kiran Millwood Hargrave **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/05/2017  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

**One of Our Books of the Year 2017 | Shortlisted for the 2018 Blue Peter Awards - Best Story | Shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award 2017 | Longlisted for the UKLA 2018 Book Award** Kiran Millwood Hargrave follows up her award-winning debut *The Girl of Ink and Stars* with a story set in the real world, though one still filled with a sense of wonder and the extraordinary. Set in the Philippines at the beginning of the last century it tells the story of a girl forcibly removed from her mother, as many were, because her mother has leprosy, or as those with the disease preferred, is touched. With the help of her friends Ami makes her way back to her mother and it's a story of love, courage and hope, all of these symbolised by the butterflies that fill the pages and that are so important to the story. It's passionately told, full of memorable scenes and characters, and the writing is beautiful.



## Here Lies Arthur

**Author:** Philip Reeve **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/05/2009  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

Prize-winning author Philip Reeve gives a brilliant new take on the legend of King Arthur. Myrddin rides with Arthur spinning tales for and about him but what is the truth and can Gwyna discover it? Bridging the past and present Here Lies Arthur is the story of how heroes and the legends about them are made. Winner of the prestigious 2008 CILIP Carnegie Medal. On winning the CILIP Carnegie Medal he said "I didn't believe it at first, but as I got over the shock and it began to sink in, I felt totally honoured. It is very special to win the CILIP Carnegie Medal. It has such a history and I admire so many past winners' work it is quite humbling to be ranked alongside them." "Here Lies Arthur is an outstanding book, and deserving winner," said Tricia Adams, Chair of the 12 strong librarian judging panel. 'Reeve's is a consistent story-telling voice that brings us a subtle and credible retelling of the King Arthur myth. It is both a page turning adventure story and a clever historical novel. It also has clear political resonance for our times, demonstrating humanity's need to sustain hope and optimism, and our tendency to favour myth over reality to achieve that end.'

---

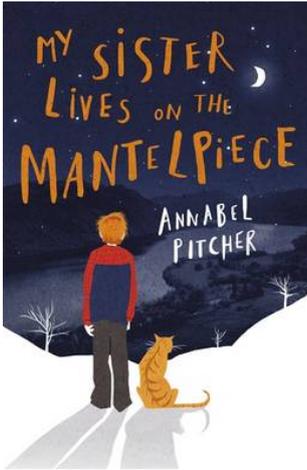


## The Sleeper and the Spindle

**Author:** Neil Gaiman **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 08/09/2016  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

**Winner of the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2016. A deluxe edition of the thrillingly reimagined fairy tale by the magical partnership of award-bedecked, bestselling Neil Gaiman and Children's Laureate Chris Riddell.** Award-winning Neil Gaiman shows all his story telling skills in this gripping fusion of familiar fairy tales told in a dark-hearted version with some original characters. Especially a bold-hearted queen. Not far from where the queen lives, a princess is under the spell of an enchantress who has put a whole country to sleep. Despite it being the eve of her wedding day, the bold queen decides to take action. Slipping into her mail shirt she arms herself with her sword and sets off out of the palace accompanied by the three dwarves who will lead her through the tunnels...The dark magic, great courage and spell-binding imagination that power this story is perfectly realised in Chris Riddell's awesome illustrations.

---

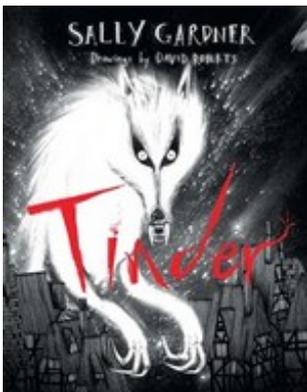


## My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece

**Author:** Annabel Pitcher **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/12/2015 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

**Winner of the 2012 Branford Boase Award for an outstanding debut novel** Heartbreaking and funny in equal measure, 10-year-old Jamie's direct and wide-eyed account of the emotional chaos he and his family live through following the death of his sister in a terrorist attack is poignant and warm-hearted. Beginning a new life in the Lake District with his older sister and his father, who mourns his daughter through alcohol and a wild rage against her killers, Jamie knows he should feel sadder than he does. The truth is, he can hardly remember his sister; and what is happening with his new school and new friends, especially Sunya, is more urgent – as is his yearning for his absent mother. Emotionally charged, this is a wonderfully touching story which never slips into worthiness.

---

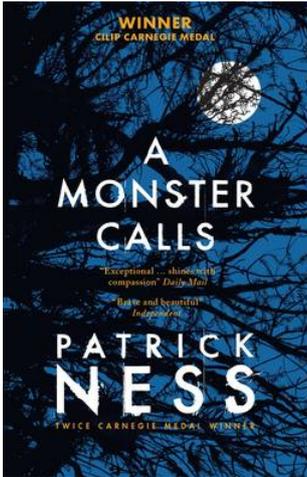


## Tinder

**Author:** Sally Gardner **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/10/2015 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

Shortlisted for the 2015 CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal - Shortlisted for the 2015 CILIP Carnegie Medal Award-winning Sally Gardner tells a gripping, bloody and bold story drawing on the traditions of fairy stories of all kinds and especially Hans Christian Andersen's The Tinder Box. Tinder tells how a young and romantic soldier finds true love by overcoming every kind of magic and trickery in the world through a mixture of bravery and cunning while also trying to hold fast to goodness and truth. Behind him and almost all he meets lie the horrors and the excitement of serving as a soldier; all of them long for a peaceful life they cannot resist the heady excitement of living with danger an urge that leads them all into violence with all the terrible attendant consequences. ~ Julia Eccleshare

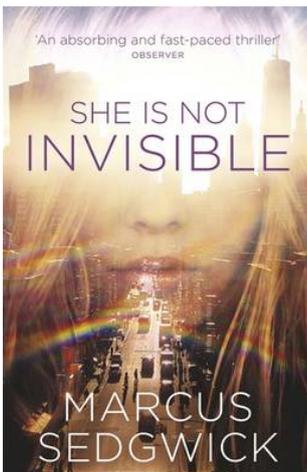
---



## A Monster Calls

**Author:** Patrick Ness **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/05/2015  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

**Winner of the 2012 Carnegie Medal AND 2012 Kate Greenaway Medal. This is the first time one book has won both prizes!** Prize-winning Patrick Ness displays brilliant new skills of sensitivity in this hauntingly touching story of how a boy deals with the looming threat of his mother's death from cancer. Haunted by a monster in his dreams, denied much information by his family and treated as a weirdo by his class mates and a 'special case' by his teachers, Conor struggles to get to grips with the devastating emotions which threaten to overwhelm him. How he finds the courage and strength to face the end when it happens is both utterly shattering and deeply satisfying. Costa Award winner Patrick Ness spins a tale from the final idea of much-loved Carnegie Medal winner Siobhan Dowd, whose premature death from cancer prevented her from writing it herself. Winner of the Red House Children's Book Award 2012. Winner of the Galaxy Children's Book of the Year Award 2011.

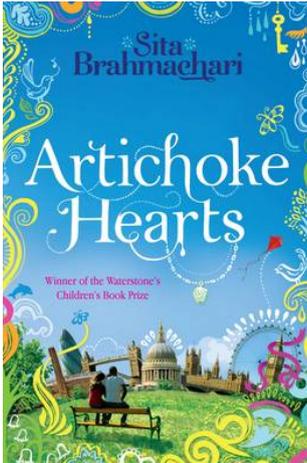


## She is Not Invisible

**Author:** Marcus Sedgwick **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/07/2014  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

**Longlisted for the Guardian Children's Fiction Book Award 2014**  
When sixteen-year-old Laureth's father vanishes she is determined to track him down. So determined that she flies to New York to find him. But Laureth doesn't go alone; she takes her seven year old brother with her because she needs him. Laureth is blind and Benjamin is essential as her guide. Award-winning Marcus Sedgwick tells a pell-mell adventure as the children unravel the mysteries of obsession and coincidence as they solve the riddle behind their father's disappearance.

---



## Artichoke Hearts

**Author:** Sita Brahmachari **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/01/2011 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

Selected by a distinguished independent panel of experts including our editorial expert, Julia Eccleshare, for Diverse Voices - 50 of the best Children's Books celebrating cultural diversity in the UK. Winner of the Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2011. A welter of emotions engulf Mira in this touching pre-teen story about secrets and how to keep them and share them. Strongly set in a busy family, Mira's life is full of the ups and downs of family, friends and school; most particularly there is sadness in knowing that her beloved grandmother is dying and happiness as her interest in a mysterious boy in her class blossoms. Mira tells her story with appealing directness. ~ Julia Eccleshare

---