

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
Black Swan, 9780552773898

The narrator of this story is Death. Liesel lives in Nazi Germany with foster parents and, even though she is unable to read, she picks up a book dropped in a graveyard. Her unusual relationship with books has begun.

I'm the King of the Castle by Susan Hill
Penguin, 9780140034912

Mrs Helena Kingshaw and her son Charles arrive at a large house called Warrings, where she is to be housekeeper for Joseph Hooper and his son Edmund. The house is decaying and depressing, and Edmund is a bully, so there is a fairly good chance they won't all live happily ever after.

Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys
Puffin, 9780141335889

This is a stunning and powerful debut novel. We all know about the atrocities committed by the Nazis in World War Two, but this book will open your eyes to the horrors inflicted on the people of Lithuania on the orders of Joseph Stalin.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins
Scholastic, 9781407109084

Katniss is chosen to represent her district in the annual Hunger Games, but in this post-apocalyptic world, this is no honour. The Hunger Games are a fight to the death on live TV. Katniss' story continues in *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*.

There is no Dog by Meg Rosoff
Puffin, 9780141327167

And now for something completely different! Bob is seventeen years old. He is lazy and sex mad, but he has a very important job – he is GOD! He created the world and all the things in it, and, my goodness, didn't he make a mess of some of it!

Northern Lights by Philip Pullman
Scholastic, 9781407130224

This is the first book in the award winning *His Dark Materials* trilogy. The journey starts as Lyra tries to rescue Will from kidnappers, and it continues as they travel to other lands and encounter fantastic creatures. The magic continues in *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*.

Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman
Corgi, 9780552555708

This is the story of love in a segregated society. Sephy and Callum shouldn't even think of starting a relationship, but they do. Life won't be easy for either of them from here on. This brilliant story continues in *Knife Edge*, *Checkmate* and *Double Cross*.

When I Was Joe by Keren David
Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 9781847801005

This exciting story begins when Ty witnesses an act of violence and has to go into police protection. He becomes Joe and moves to a new school in a different part of the country, but is he safe? You will have to read the conclusion of the story in *Almost True*.

Shiver by Maggie Stiefvater
Scholastic, 9781407115009

There have been so many books about vampires, it's a relief to move on to

City of Ghosts by Bali Rai
Corgi Children's, 9780552556019

This story brilliantly mixes fictional characters and events with real people and historical events. The First World War has come to an end and an injured Indian soldier, who fought for Britain, returns home. Two orphaned boys are trying to find their way in the world and the Amritsar Massacre is just around the corner. Bali Rai is a great writer, so also grab hold of *Killing Honour*, *(Un)arranged Marriage* or any of his other books.

Looking for JJ by Anne Cassidy
Point Scholastic, 9780439977173

As a child JJ committed a terrible crime. Why did this happen and what kind of a life can she expect when she is released from prison as a young adult? If you like this story, look out for *Missing Judy* and *The Dead House*.

Exposure by Mal Peet
Walker, 9781406306491

This book is part of a series of books featuring the football reporter Paul Faustino, but *Exposure* could be considered his best. A black South American footballer, Otello, marries a white pop-singer Desmerelda and for a while they have the perfect life. Faustino watches as Otello's life and career fall apart. Mal Peet's *Life: An Exploded Diagram* is also brilliant.

The Knife of Never Letting Go by Patrick Ness
Walker, 9781406320756

Todd and his dog live in Prentisstown, a place that is populated only by men and where everyone can hear everyone else's thoughts. He has to flee the town shortly before the birthday that will mark his transition from childhood to manhood and so his adventure begins. This exciting story is continued in *The Ask and the Answer* and *Monsters of Men*.

The Carbon Diaries 2015 by Saci Lloyd
Hodder Children's Books, 9780340970157

At the start of the year 2015 the UK begins a system of carbon dioxide rationing in an attempt to combat climate change. Laura Brown keeps a diary detailing how her family copes (or rather, fails to cope) with the effects the rationing has on their lifestyle. The story concludes in *The Carbon Diaries 2017*.

And moving on still further...

Some of these titles will be suitable for more mature young adult readers.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom
Sphere, 9780751536829

Eddie dies at the very beginning of this book. When he gets to the afterlife he meets five people, some he previously knew, some he didn't, but they all have something to tell him about his own days on Earth. This is a book to surprise you.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
Bloomsbury, 9781408824856

Amir is forty years old and living in California, but Afghanistan, the country of his birth, is never far from his thoughts, and nor is his childhood friend, Hassan. Events that occurred long ago and far away can haunt you forever. Khaled Hosseini also wrote *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, another wonderful novel about Afghanistan.