



AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Adam Stower is an award-winning illustrator and author. As well as having a dynamic partnership with David Walliams (including *The World's Worst Superheroes*, HarperCollins, 2025), he illustrates his own younger picture books (including *Silly Doggy*, Templar, 2022) and young fiction series including King Coo and Murray and Bun.

WEBSITE

<https://www.worldofadam.com/>

LINKS

<https://www.arenaillustration.com/artists/adam-stower/> Includes video of Adam talking about the origins of his King Coo character, his story development and the writing process.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Guj99VMRw6Y> An introduction to 'How to Talk Like a Pirate'.



MURRAY AND BUN! MURRAY THE PIRATE

Younger Readers Shortlist 2026

INTRODUCTION

One of a **funny, highly illustrated** black and white series about a cat called Murray and a bun called Bun. Sometimes Murray's **enchanted cat flap** leads them to adventure. This time they find themselves in the land of **pirates** where they are kidnapped by the dread pirate Captain Patch. At first, they think they are in great danger, but soon realise that the pirates are not a particularly happy bunch and end up helping them to look for some buried treasure and find an alternative happier way of life. This **joke-filled** book is ideal of newly independent or reluctant readers. Other titles in the series include *Murray the Knight*, *Murray the Viking* and *Murray the Ghost Hunter*.

ACTIVITIES

Read *Pirate Stew*, encouraging your child or children to join in with the refrain or read aloud from *Interview with Blackbeard* (see below), which was inspired by the story of a real-life pirate.

Write and illustrate a list of pirate words and phrases. This may require some research into pirate talk (see Links, for example). The lists could be used if you celebrate 'Talk like a pirate day' on 19th September.

Create a full-length portrait of Fumblethumb, Murray's owner, the accident-prone wizard, based on the illustrations of his legs and feet seen towards the beginning and the end of the book.

NOW READ ON

Beastie Bros: The Curse of Captain Slugbeard by David O'Connell (Scholastic, 2026) Third in hilarious, highly-illustrated series, recommended for 6+.
Pirate Stew by Neil Gaiman & Chris Riddell (Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2021) A rollicking, illustrated rhyming story for all ages.
Blackbeard's Treasure by Iszi Lawrence (Bloomsbury Education, 2023) Swashbuckling adventure, recommended for 9+.
Interview with Blackbeard and Other Vicious Villains by Andy Seed & Gareth Conway (Welbeck Children's Books, 2023) Entertaining question and answer format, recommended for 8+.