



# National Share-a-Story-Month 2026



The Federation of  
Children's Book Groups

National Share-a-Story-Month is a reading initiative run by the Federation of Children's Book Groups, a charity whose aim is to promote enjoyment in reading and to encourage the availability of books for children of all ages.

[www.fcbg.org.uk](http://www.fcbg.org.uk)

Cover illustration by Emma Carpendale. [www.emmacarpendale.co.uk](http://www.emmacarpendale.co.uk)

Supporter of



National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026

# ONCE UPON A STORYTIME



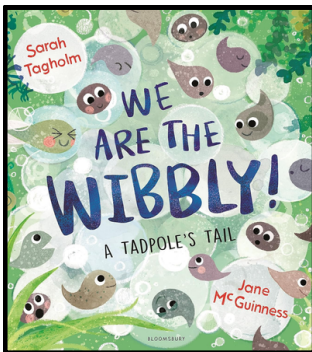
## Favourite books to Read Aloud

Many of our members have contributed to the making of this list, who between them they have spent thousands of hours reading aloud to children. Making the selection has been difficult. By choosing which books to put it, it meant leaving others out. For a charity devoted to serving children's reading, it felt right for children to have the final say. Many of the titles featured here were high scorers in our Children's Book Award as well as being excellent to read aloud. We hope that you will enjoy browsing and that our choices may lead you to new favourites - and we wish you a happy year of reading as you 'Go All In'.

--Louisa Farrow, National Share-a-Story Month coordinator, February 2026

## PICTURE BOOKS

### We Are The Wibbly by Sarah Tagholm & Jane McGuinness



Children love this one, giggling nonstop and shouting 'Oh My Crikeys' as they learn the lifecycle of a frog. Written in the first person, you can't help but read it in character.

Bloomsbury (2024)  
ISBN: 9781526627346

### Donut Touch by Seb Davey



A hilarious interactive story - Mikey the dinosaur's delicious donuts are disappearing one by one and he thinks the reader has stolen them. Watch out for the sequel, Donut Burp, coming out in September 2026.

Gemini (2024)  
ISBN: 9781917082099

### Maybe... by Chris Haughton



This simple but hilarious cautionary tale about mischief and taking liberties when nobody's looking creates a sense of complicity between the characters, the reader and the listener.

Walker Books (2022)  
ISBN: 9781529503982

### Mama's Special Wonton Soup by Wai Mei Wong & Xin Yue Zhu



A little girl's expedition to buy ingredients for her mother's wonton soup soon involves the whole neighbourhood in this gentle story of cooking and sharing. Repetition makes it satisfying to read aloud even if it makes you hungry.

Lantana (2025)  
ISBN: 9781915244901

Check our other booklists for reading inspiration. Find them at [fcbg.org.uk](https://fcbg.org.uk)

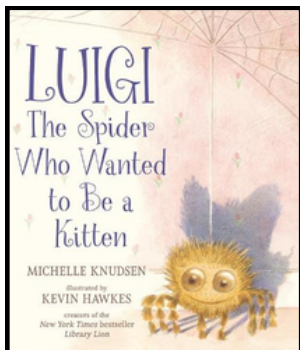


# PICTURE BOOKS



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

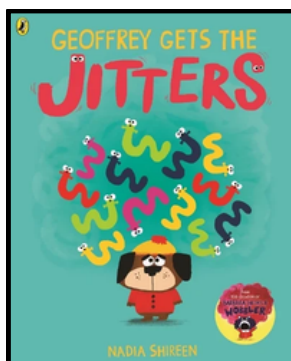
## Luigi the Spider who Wanted to be a Kitten by Michelle Knudsen and Kevin Hawkes



A poignant story about accepting who you are and being loved for it - with an endearing spider as the main character and an enchanting view of his perspective. Good for a quieter storytime.

Walker Books (2024)  
ISBN: 9781529517828

## Geoffrey Gets the Jitters by Nadia Shireen



A comical book about an important subject - how to deal with worries - that manages to be funny and wise at the same time.

Puffin (2023)  
ISBN: 9780241623688

## No-Bot, the Robot With No Bottom by Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet



A funny, silly book that really appeals to children's sense of humour and invites them to look at the pictures.

Simon and Schuster (2013)  
ISBN: 9780857074454

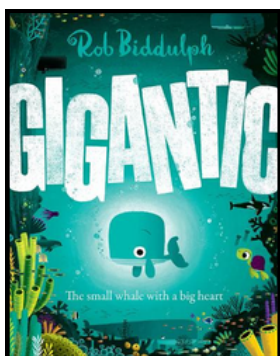
## My Rice is Best by Selina Brown and Maxwell A. Oginni



An exuberant story about favourite food and cultural differences. A dispute about whose rice is best ends in mutual understanding. Told almost entirely in direct speech so plenty of opportunity to use expressive voices.

Puffin (2025)  
ISBN: 9780241635537

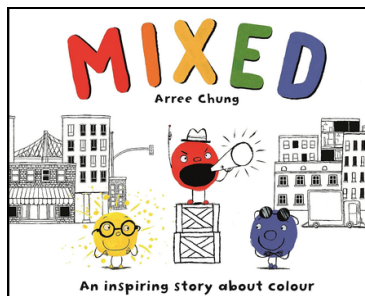
## Gigantic by Rob Biddulph



Jolly rhyming text encourages listeners to predict what comes next and join in, while its gentle story (biggest isn't always best) is a hymn to kindness.

Harper Collins (2023)  
ISBN: 9780008413446

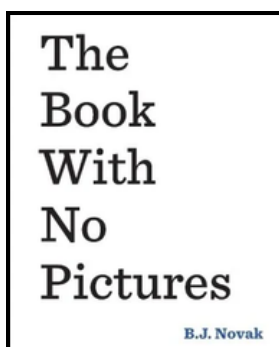
## Mixed by Arree Chung



A simple exploration of colour theory becomes an entertaining and relatable fable about kindness and acceptance. This one can be relied on to keep listeners entertained and joining in.

Macmillan (2018)  
ISBN: 9781509871346

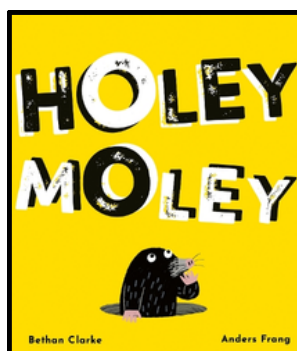
## The Book with No Pictures by B J Novak



This hilariously silly book works off the interplay between reader and audience. Everything written on the page has to be said by the person reading it aloud. Even if the words say BLORK. Or BLUURF.

Puffin (2016)  
ISBN: 9780141361796

## Holey Moley by Bethan Clarke and Anders Frang



Gus the Goat loves guessing. And he loves rhyming. Then he meets Mavis Mole. The great tongue twisters and the funny rhymes are brilliant for getting children to giggle and join in.

Little Tiger (2024)  
ISBN: 9781801044134



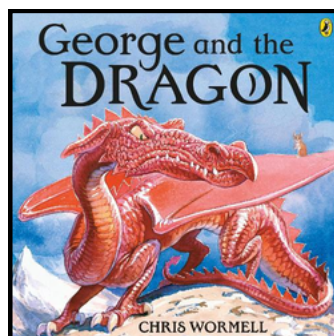
## Grotti by Leonie Lord



This imaginative story makes children chortle with recognition at the antics of a baby monster who demands attention but inspires love at the same time.

Walker Books (2024)  
ISBN: 9781529517118

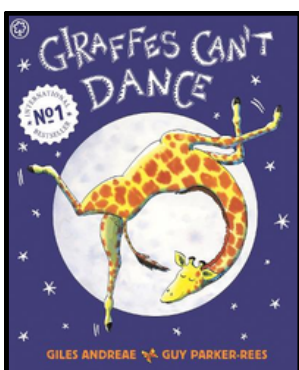
## George and the Dragon by Chris Wormell



A version of the classic tale that combines resonant storytelling language with beautiful illustrations and a surprising spin.

Puffin (2018)  
ISBN 9780241370407

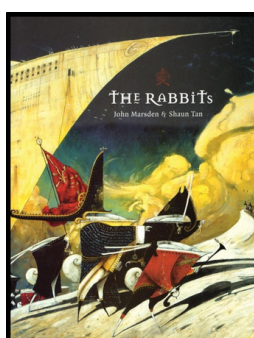
## Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae & Guy Parker Rees



Gerald the Giraffe would love join in at the Jungle Ball but everyone knows giraffes can't dance - or can they? An empowering story with rollicking rhymes, this is pure fun to share.

Orchard (2014)  
ISBN 9781841215655

## The Rabbits by John Marsden & Shaun Tan



This beautifully illustrated book offers expressive language to revel in as you read it. An unseen narrator tells of the arrival of the rabbits 'many grandparents ago' and the effect they have on their environment.

Hodder Children's Books (2010)  
ISBN: 9780734411365

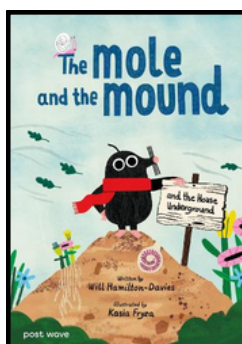
## Gozzle by Julia Donaldson & Sarah Ogilvy



Julia Donaldson books are perennial read aloud favourites. This one is a funny and joyful story about a home, family and belonging. A gosling thinks Bear must be her daddy.

Macmillan (2026)  
ISBN: 9781529076424

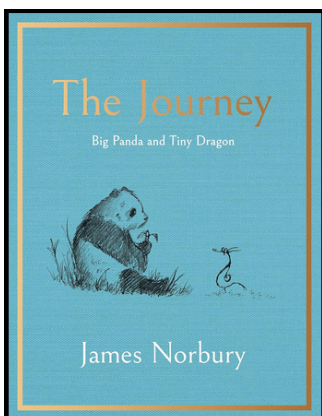
## The Mole and the Mound: and the House Underground by Will Hamilton-Davies and Kasia Fryza



Scoop, wiggle-wiggle, went the mole, working on his great grand hole ... Bouncy rhymes and a funny story make for a gigglesome storytime with a heartwarming ending.

Post Wave Publishing (2026)  
ISBN: 9781836271154

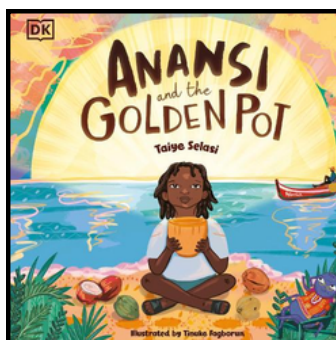
## The Journey: A Big Panda and Tiny Dragon Adventure by James Norbury



This book has a beautiful storyline that tackles life's ups and downs in lyrical language. It makes you appreciate the blessings and friendships you have. Great for opening up conversations about difficulties with children and adults.

Michael Joseph (2022)  
ISBN: 9780241585382

## Anansi and the Golden Pot by Taiye Selasi and Tinuke Fagborun



A classic tale of Anansi the Trickster imaginatively reworked for the children of today. The ending sums it up: 'Traditional stories are always true. ... Nothing lasts so long as truth nor travels quite so far'.

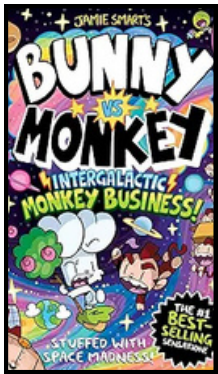
DK Children's (2023)  
ISBN: 9780241625910

# GRAPHIC NOVELS



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

## Bunny vs Monkey by Jamie Smart



The latest title in a series of madcap graphic novels that's a runaway favourite with children. Have you thought about reading them aloud? There's endless fun to be had with making the noises and sharing the anarchic humour.

David Fickling (2025) Age 7+  
ISBN: 978-1788453271

## Hilda and Twig by Luke Pearson



A perfect introduction to comics and graphic novels with larger panels and simpler text that make it perfect for reading aloud and learning the basics.

Flying Eye Books (2025) Age 5+  
ISBN: 9781838743963

## Detective Stanley and The Mystery at the Museum by Hannah Tunnicliffe & Erica Harrison



An irresistible animal detective mystery for younger readers in graphic book format. Have fun with the different voices as well as the delightful illustrations.

Flying Eye Books (2025) Age 7+  
ISBN: 9781838742119

## Siri the Viking: the Emperor's Treasure by Patric Nystrom and Per Demerval

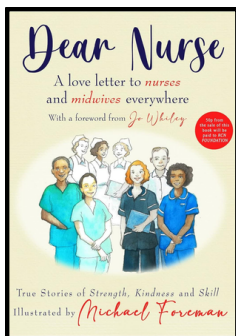


An exciting and adventurous graphic novel about cross-cultural encounters with a feisty heroine who won't take no for an answer and a rumbustious cast of characters each with a distinctive voice.

Eken Press (2020) Age 8+  
ISBN: 9781908233288

# SHORT STORIES

## Dear Nurse: True Stories of Strength, Kindness and Skill by Royal College of Nursing & Michael Foreman



The stories are a great prompt for conversations about working in the NHS as well as for developing empathy. An inspirational collection of short, true stories.

Scholastic (2023) Age 11+  
ISBN 9780702317149

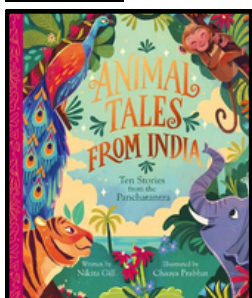
## Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror by Chris Priestley and David Roberts (Illustrator)



Genuinely creepy stories written in atmospheric language with a flavour of Victorian gothic. Uncle Montague tells his nephew some of the scariest stories he knows. But as the stories unfold, another narrative emerges, one that is perhaps the most frightening of all.

Bloomsbury (2016) Age 10+  
ISBN: 9781408871096

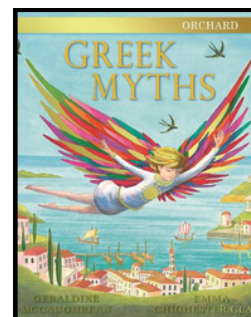
## Animal Tales from India: Ten Stories from the Panchatantra by Nikita Gill and Chaaya Prabhat



Ten timeless stories that have been shared for thousands of years because they are brilliant and now lyrically retold for a new generation. Meet mighty elephants and courageous mice, cunning crocodiles and clever monkeys, talkative tortoises and little lapwing birds.

Nosy Crow (2023)  
Age 8+  
ISBN 9781839944628

## The Orchard Book of Greek Myths by Geraldine McCaughrean & Emma Chichester Clark



There are dramatic thrills aplenty in these ten classic myths retold by a master storyteller.

Orchard Books (2013)  
ISBN 9781408324370  
Age 7+

# CHAPTER BOOKS



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

## Beastlands: Race to Frostfall Mountains by Jess French



Before there were people, there were beasts... The world building, the characterisation and invention are pure genius. Children hang on every word and enjoy going on to create their own creatures

Piccadilly Press (2024) Age 8+  
ISBN 978-1800784062

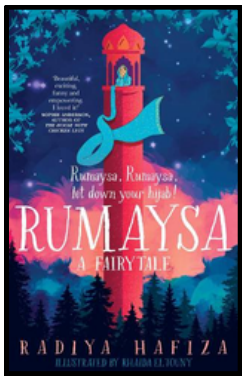
## There's a Beast in the Basement by Pamela Butchart & Thomas Flintham



If you want to make an eight-year-old (or thereabouts) laugh, don't miss the latest in this hilarious series of primary school stories where nothing is quite what it seems and drama is off the scale.

Nosy Crow (2023) Age 7+  
ISBN: 9781839940514

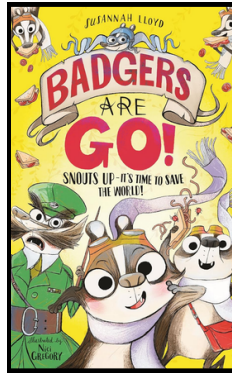
## Rumaysa by Radiya Hafiza



An empowering mash up of three classic fairy tales that shows that anyone can be a hero if they take charge of the story. Enchanting and funny by turns and rich in the language of storytelling.

Macmillan (2021) Age 8+  
ISBN: 9781529038309

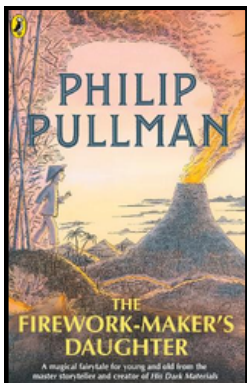
## Badgers Are Go! by Susannah Lloyd & Nici Gregory



A zany adventure about badgers, cheese and tomato sandwiches and staying true to yourself. There are some brilliant voices to do and the children respond so well.

David Fickling (2024) Age 7+  
ISBN 9781788453196

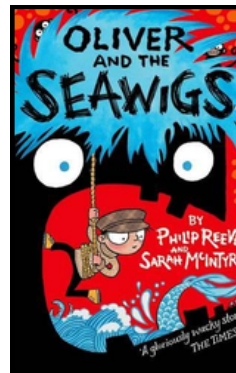
## The Firework Maker's Daughter by Philip Pullman and Peter Bailey



Rich in the language of traditional stories yet inventive and original. Young Lila heads into the unknown in search of the Firework Maker's secret with her friend Chulak and a white elephant in hot pursuit.

Puffin (1995) Age 7+  
ISBN: 9780241326336

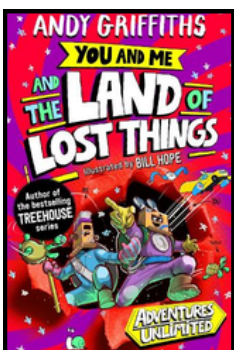
## Oliver and the Seawigs by Philip Reeve & Sarah McIntyre



A book where words and pictures are full of life and the humour is infectious. Oliver has to search for his missing parents with the help of a grumpy albatross and a short-sighted mermaid.

OUP (2014) Age 7+  
ISBN: 9780192734884

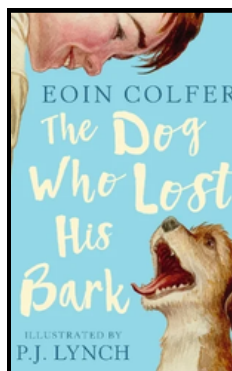
## You and Me and the Land of Lost Things by Andy Griffiths and Bill Hope



We chose this because it reads like an invitation to join an adventure full of laughs and action - and CBA testers gave it the thumbs up.

Macmillan (2024) Age 8+  
ISBN: 9781035046157

## The Dog Who Lost His Bark by Eoin Colfer and P J Lynch

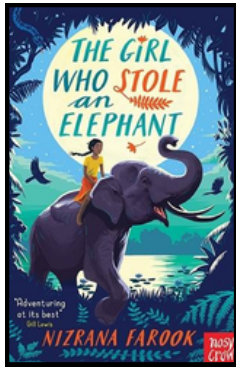


Not a long read but a poignant one that builds empathy and understanding. Oz the dog has been badly treated by humans. Patrick is struggling to come to terms with his parents separation. Can each help to heal the other?

Walker Books (2019) Age 7+  
ISBN: 9781406386622



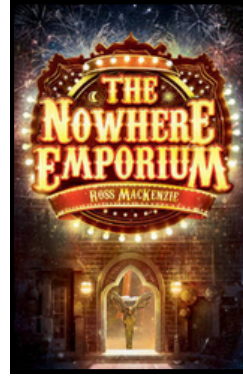
## The Girl Who Stole an Elephant by Nizrana Farook



A thrilling escapade with a feisty heroine and cliffhangers galore, set against a luscious Sri Lankan landscape. Chaya's determination to set wrongs to right will win over your listeners and the risks she takes will keep them on the edge of their seats.

Nosy Crow (2020) Age 9+  
ISBN: 9781788006347

## The Nowhere Emporium by Ross Mackenzie



The sign above the Nowhere Emporium announces that all you need is your imagination. Daniel stumbles in to find a world of breathtaking magic and looming threat. Thrilling adventure, sinister villainy and plucky heroism will excite and entertain your audience.

Kelpies (2015) Age 9+  
ISBN: 9781782501251

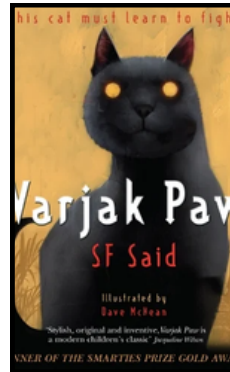
## The Secret of Golden Island by Natasha Farrant



What if you could win an island? Two children with a desire to change the world team up to do just that. If you want a classic exciting adventure story, written in glowing language this is for you.

Faber (2024) Age 9+  
ISBN: 9780571382507

## Varjak Paw by S F Said and Dave McKean



An intrepid cat's kung-fu adventure with not a word out of place - an established favourite but unmissable nevertheless.

Corgi (2003) Age 8+  
ISBN: 9780552572293

## The House with Chicken Legs Runs Away by Sophie Anderson



With its predecessor, The House with Chicken Legs, this draws on magical folk tales and combines them with a three dimensional, relatable heroine to make a spell-binding story written in sparkling prose.

Usborne (2026)  
Age 9+  
ISBN: 9781803704364

## I am Rebel by Ross Montgomery

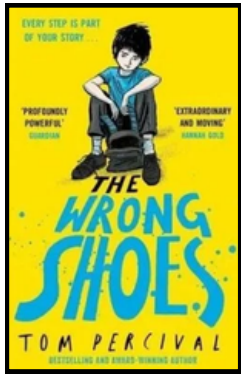


A heartwrenching adventure story about a dog who will do whatever it takes to save the human he loves, written in expressive read aloud language from the perspective of the dog.

Walker Books (2024)  
Age 9+  
ISBN: 9781529502909



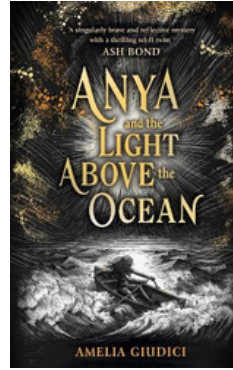
## The Wrong Shoes by Tom Percival



Will has always been stuck with the wrong shoes but he doesn't know how to get the right ones. With the help and empathy of friends, can he find a way forward? Children love the way the words and illustrations work together to build a moving story.

Simon and Schuster (2025) Age 9+  
ISBN: 9781398527140

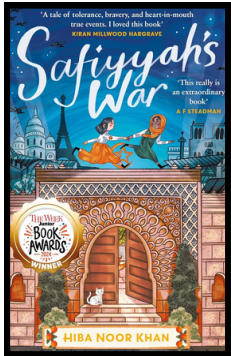
## Anya and the Light above the Ocean by Amelia Giudici



A pageturning adventure that follows a girl who after her mother's mysterious disappearance encounters a strange phenomenon in the sky that sends her on a thrilling quest for truth. Original and exciting!

Andersen Press (2026) Age 10+  
ISBN: 9781839136474

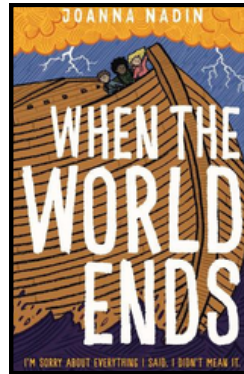
## Safiyyah's War by Hiba Noor Khan



This story of heroic defiance in a mosque in World War II Paris is all the more compelling for being based on rarely-reported real-life events. An invitation to reflect on our shared humanity while enjoying a rattling good story. Lots to listen to and lots to discuss.

Andersen Press (2023)  
Age 9+  
ISBN 9781839133138

## When the World Ends by Joanna Nadin



Climate change has brought flooding and the fabric of society is ruptured. Told from the perspective of three very different children, each with a distinctive voice, this is a story of hope, survival and collaboration.

Fox & Ink Books (2026) Age 10+  
ISBN: 9781916747951

## Front Desk by Kelly Yang



When Mia and her family arrive in America, the chasm between their dreams and reality seems unbridgeable, but if Mia sees a chance, she won't give up. Read it aloud to break your heart and mend it again, it's a real crowd pleaser that will also generate discussion around themes of hope, kindness and community.

Knights Of Media (2021) Age 11+  
ISBN 9781913311094

## Little Light by Coral Rumble



An evocative verse novel about a lonely and troubled girl, told in a series of expressive poems where the words leap off the page. Addresses challenging themes of abuse and abandonment, so pick your audience carefully.

Troika Books (2021) Age 11+  
ISBN: 9781912745166



"In reading aloud... all of us, including the reader are receivers of the gift of the author's story" *Aidan Chambers*



National Year of Reading 2026



## Zombierella by Joseph Coelho and Freya Hartas



A twisted version of the classic Cinderella story - funny, dark and inventive and told in rich and rhythmic verse. A great humorous adventure for gothic fans

Walker Books (2020) Age 8+  
ISBN: 9781406389661

## Matt O'Shanter: a cautionary tale by Simon Lamb and Ross MacRae



This modern version of Robert Burns's classic Tam O'Shanter, is one of a kind. Its darkly gothic humour and resonant language make it a brilliant short book for sharing aloud.

Beautifully illustrated

Scallywag (2025) Age 9+  
ISBN 978-1836300090

## The Hidden Story of Estie Noor by Nadine Aisha Jassat



Estie has been expelled from school and nobody wants to hear her side of the story. She is determined to reveal the truth . . . An exciting verse novel about identity and friendship with a powerful message that really resonates.

Orion (2024) Age 9+  
ISBN: 9781510111608

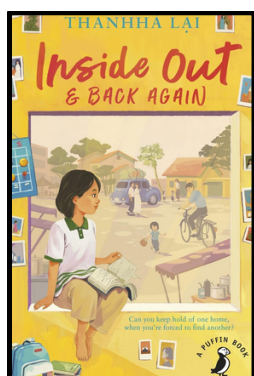
## The Final Year by Matt Goodfellow, Illustrated by Joe Todd-Stanton



A CBA winner, popular with adults and children for the way it builds the character of Natey, a warm-hearted 11 year old with a talent for poetry and a complicated family life, who struggles with his emotions.

Otter-Barry (2023) Age 10+  
ISBN: 9781915659040

## Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai



What is it like to leave everything you know behind - including the hope that your father will return from war? Concise images and carefully chosen words interleave sadness with flashes of humour. A moving story to provoke discussion.

Puffin (2023) Age 9+  
ISBN: 9780241613061

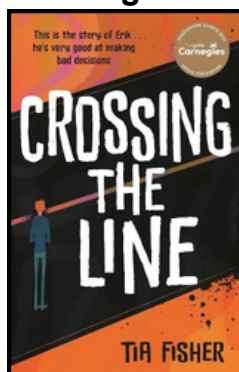
## Gone for Good by Sarah Crossan



Immersive and compellingly told with one cliffhanger twist after another. A girl goes missing from a remote, camp for 'troubled' teens. Everyone holds part of the puzzle but everyone's got something to hide too. A read aloud gem.

Simon and Schuster (2026) Age 12+  
ISBN: 978-1398549029

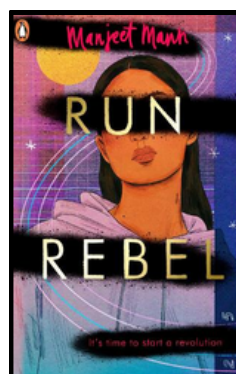
## Crossing the Line by Tia Fisher



As Erik's world changes, a new outlook and new priorities lure him into the dangerous world of county lines. A powerful, gripping story about impossible choices (with strong language and some violent scenes).

Hot Key Books (2023) Age 13+  
ISBN: 9781471413049

## Run, Rebel by Manjeet Mann

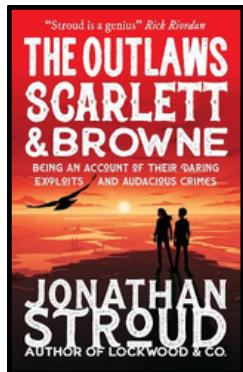


Amber is trapped by family expectations and a domineering father but she's ready to fight, even though freedom will come at a price. Economical, rhythmic poems shoot to the heart of important emotions.

Penguin (2020) Age 13+  
ISBN: 9780241411421



## The Outlaws Scarlett and Browne by Jonathan Stroud



From our FCBG patron, full of jeopardy and excitement - a book to keep readers on the edge of their seat but make them think and question at the same time.

Walker Books (2021) age 12+  
ISBN: 9781406394818

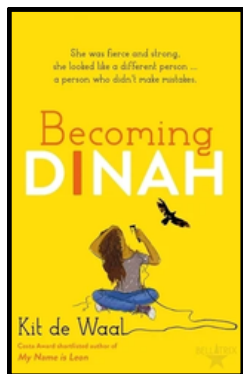
## My Secret Lies with You by Faye Bird



Three close friends, a missing girl and a dark secret are the classic ingredients in this tense but sweet mystery that will keep your audience on the edge of their seats.

Usborne (2019) Age 13+  
ISBN: 9781474958240

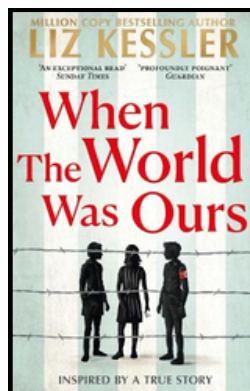
## Becoming Dinah by Kit de Waal



Dinah needs to leave the commune where she grew up. Doing so will force her to confront her past. An emotional coming-of-age story that riffs on the classic read aloud - Moby Dick.

Orion (2019) Age 13+  
ISBN: 9781510105706

## When the World Was Ours by Liz Kessler



Vienna, 1936. Max, Elsa and Leo are inseparable until the arrival of the Nazis tears their friendship and their lives apart. A haunting, poignant, compelling story which faces horror but never destroys hope - one to make your listeners cry and ponder.

Simon and Schuster (2022) Age 13+  
ISBN: 9781471196812

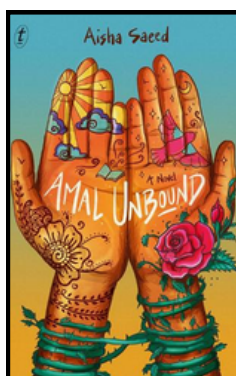
## Feather and Claw by Marta Palazzesi and Ambra Garlaschelli



A girl who is hawk by day. A boy who is panther by night. A secret that will change everything. A fast-paced magical adventure told in powerful atmospheric language and immersive full page illustrations.

Templar Books (2023) Age 12+  
ISBN: 9781800789227

## Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed



Trapped in a cycle of poverty and debt, Amal must fight to effect change and reach for her dreams. A compelling story with plenty of excitement that inspires discussion around social justice.

Text Publishing (2018) Age 12+  
ISBN: 9781925773026



## Handle with Care by Louisa Reid

A moving verse novel about teenage pregnancy told in prose and verse. When Ruby gives birth at school on a glum morning in February her life is plunged into chaos ... she hadn't even realised she was pregnant.

Guppy (2024) Age 13+  
ISBN: 9781916558311



This list was compiled by for National Share-a-Story Month 2026 as part of the National Year of Reading by Louisa Farrow and FCBG Members.  
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# National Share-a-Story-Month 2026



The Federation of  
Children's Book Groups

National Share-a-Story-Month is a reading initiative run by the Federation of Children's Book Groups, a charity whose aim is to promote enjoyment in reading and to encourage the availability of books for children of all ages.  
[www.fcbg.org.uk](http://www.fcbg.org.uk)

