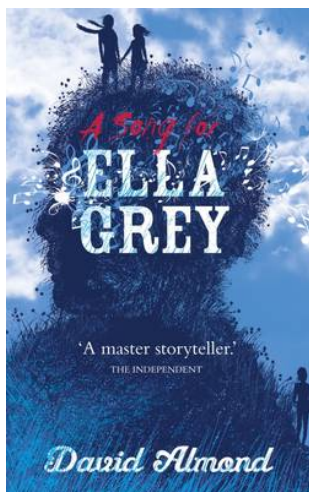


A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 10 (14 - 15 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2026/27 academic year.

If your child finds these books are a little challenging try books from the Year 9 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 Song for Ella Grey**

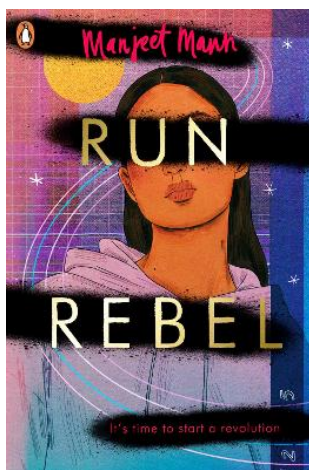
Author: David Almond **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/06/2015

Award-winning David Almond is at his lyrical best in this eloquent, tender and ultimately devastating contemporary teenage love story which draws lightly but to great effect on the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Camping on a beach near home as a break from school and its pressures, a group of teenagers, minus their friend Ella, come across Orpheus, a wandering musician. No one knows where he comes from or whether he will appear again but his music is so special that Claire plays it down the phone to Ella. And Ella is entranced. But who is Orpheus? The power of love and the terrible danger it can pose drives this exceptionally touching and thoughtful story.

**The Bunker Diary**

Author: Kevin Brooks **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/03/2013

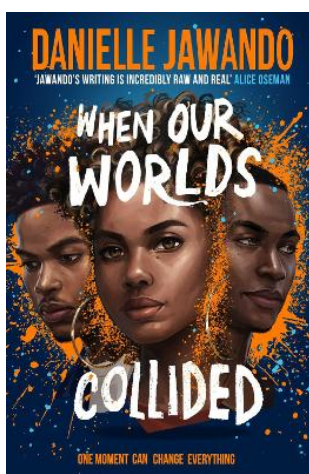
Winner of the Carnegie Medal 2014. This is a hard-hitting novel which has divided opinion since winning the 2014 Carnegie Medal. Whilst having great literary merit, in Lovereading's view it is unsuitable for younger teenagers. The Bunker Diary is award-winning, young adult writer Kevin Brooks' pulse-pounding exploration of what happens when your worst nightmare comes true - and how will you survive?



Run, Rebel

Author: Manjeet Mann **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/03/2020

Shortlisted for the CLIPPA (CLPE Children's Poetry Award) | 2021 Shortlisted for the 2021 Branford Boase Award | Shortlisted for CILIP Carnegie Medal 2021 | Winner of the UKLA Book Awards 2021 | March 2020 Debut of the Month This debut novel was inspired by the author's work creating Run the World, an organisation that empowers women and girls from marginalised backgrounds through sport and storytelling and the authenticity of this, at times harrowing story, is palpably evident. As is the skill of the accomplished writing which makes great use of typography and layout to really make every word count. This speeds the reader through the narrative, but it also cuts deep to reveal the emotions experienced by our narrator. Amber Rai is only 'truly alive' when running and shows great potential. But her alcoholic, abusive, misogynistic father refuses to allow her on the track. She has seen her older sister Ruby denied university and married off against her will and her downtrodden, abused mother is literally powerless to help, trapped as much by illiteracy and lack of English as the violence of her equally illiterate, unemployed husband. Amber has friends and teachers who believe in her, but she cannot explain what really goes on at home. She is a complex and believable character with very real flaws that she painfully recognises: 'inflicting pain on others/halves your own hurt'. But the story is cleverly structured on *The Anatomy of a Revolution* and inspired by her reading about revolutions for history, Amber, Ruby and her mother gradually empower each other to take small steps to freedom. This is an important, rewarding, highly empathetic read which, despite the dark subject matter, offers hope but no simplistic solutions.

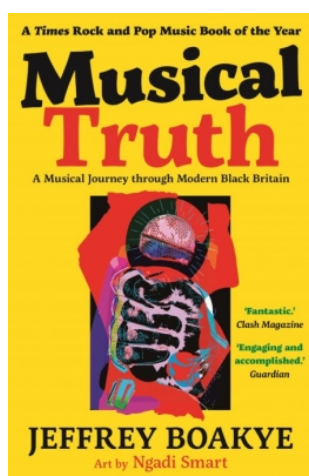


When Our Worlds Collided

Author: Danielle Jawando **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 31/03/2022

Winner of the YA Book Prize 2023 | Winner of the Jhalak Children's & Young Adult Prize 2023 Following her highly acclaimed debut novel, *And The Stars Were Burning Brightly*, we have another powerful story depicting an authentic story of young lives impacted upon by the institutional and everyday racism experienced here in the UK; which makes it an even more important and challenging read. Narrated by three very different teenagers brought together by a moment of terrible violence when they witness a stabbing and for whom the overwhelming impact of this experience is exacerbated by what they are forced to confront. For rich and privileged Jackson at an exclusive school, the casual assumption of his classmates and potential girlfriend that the crime is gang related and the victim blamed, together with police failures and the subsequent biased media coverage, really opens his eyes and draws him closer to Chantelle and Marc. They live in Manchester's Moss Side and attend the same school as the victim, but

even there, the school will not challenge this biased view and it is where we see Chantelle struggle to overcome negative teacher assumptions about her abilities. When Jackson becomes a victim too, we see the ultimate failure of the justice system. But this is not just an angry novel, although it should indeed spark anger and awareness of white privilege, it is a nuanced portrayal of three individuals and those around them and emphasises the importance of family and friendship. Marc, after a life in care, finds his family with these friends and both he and Chantelle gain confidence that they can make something of themselves. The touching, gentle romance between Chantelle and Jackson and the strength of his own family ties gives him and the reader hope that his life has not been ruined by injustice. An absolute must have for schools.



Musical Truth

Author: Jeffrey Boakye **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/04/2022

Winner of the UKLA Book Awards 2023: Information Books 3 - 14+ An outstanding combination of musical and Black British history which shows the strength and cultural significance of Black music and reveals the people behind the music, what they're really saying and why.



The Blue Book of Nebo

Author: Manon Steffan Ros **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/01/2022

Winner of the Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing 2023 | Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2023: 11 - 14 At first glance this looks like a short, light novel but how wrong anyone would be to think that. Translated from the original Welsh, this is a deep thought-provoking novel – filled with actions and philosophical questions that create a lasting impression. Dylan was only 6 when the world as he knew it stopped. The electricity went off, everyone left – and just him and his Mum were left to survive on a remote Welsh mountainside above the village of Nebo – with no services. Now 14, Dylan has learned new survival skills and is as wise as any adult. On a scavenging raid into Nebo, they find a blank notebook with a blue cover and decide to use it to record their thoughts and actions – neither reading the others' writings. The two voices in the notebook show the scale, horror, and commitment to survive for each other – and the secrets they both keep. The background to the story is so strange, quite unsettling in places, that the reader is entirely caught up in their day-to-day struggles, their fears, and their triumphs. Set in such a bleak scenario the book could be

very dark – but although it does have moments of darkness, the love and sense of hope pervading the story wins out creating an immersive, emotive experience. A difficult read in terms of its subject matter but one that will live with the reader in a very positive way.



Furious Thing

Author: Jenny Downham **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/02/2021

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021 | Shortlisted for the

Costa Children's Book Award 2019 Empathetic, insightful and buzzing with drama, the brilliant Jenny Downham has done it again in this vital, true-to-life treasure about a young woman's struggle to stand up to her bully-boy stepfather. "She threw things and slammed things and swore. She was clumsy and rude and had no friends. Her teachers thought her dim-witted. Her family despaired." On the verge of turning sixteen, Lexi is a firework of frustration. Her furious outbursts are getting worse now John, her soon-to-be-stepdad, has taken over their family home, and his son – Lexi's best friend (and long-time crush...) – has moved away to uni. On top of that, her younger half-sister is John's favoured child, while she's blamed for everything that goes wrong, including – most viciously of all – what happened to her beloved granddad. It's no coincidence that the intensification of Lexi's rage coincides with John's increasingly coercive behaviour. Thanks to his constant criticism and angry desire to have everything exactly how he likes it, Lexi can see that her mum has become a shadow of herself. Trapped in this unbearable situation – one in which no one listens or believes her – what else can Lexi do but kick out? Interwoven with fairy tale motifs that combine to create a satisfying whole at the novel's heartrending climax, this is a brilliantly exacting exposé of coercive control and emotional abuse, and a powerful portrayal of a young woman's refusal to give in. Lexi is a dazzlingly-created character that readers will root for and empathise with. Her battle to break the abuse elicits much compassion and sympathetic fury, while her irrepressible wit provokes plenty of laughs.



Seven Million Sunflowers

Author: Malcolm Duffy **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/02/2024

February 2024 Book of the Month “Thursday 24 February 2022. The day the Russians came” was the day everything changed for 15-year-old Kat and her family. Beginning at this fateful moment, and informed by the author and his family having hosted refugees from Ukraine, Malcolm Duffy’s *Seven Million Sunflowers* is incredibly moving, authentic and perfectly-pitched. Two months on from the February missile strike on her Kharkiv hometown, Kat lands in the UK with her Mama and brother Marko, while her website designer dad stays behind to fight, his designer shoes replaced with combat boots. In the UK, Kat finds a friend (and more) in Felix, who’s as reluctant to talk about his family as Kat is about her dad. At the same time, Kat feels guilty about her newfound happiness while her father and compatriots back home are risking everything as they fight for her country. Conflict, in all its forms, is poignantly evoked when devastating news comes from home just as Kat experiences troubles in her new UK life — the politics of war becomes excruciatingly personal, with all the challenges of being a teenager heightened by the conflict. Written in attention-grabbing style — a potentially direct first-person narrative with poetic impact — *Seven Million Sunflowers* is charged with empathy and utterly un-put-down-able.

Glasgow Boys

Author: Margaret McDonald **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/05/2024

June 2024 Debut of the Month Finlay and Banjo have both grown up in care, once as close as brothers, now they don’t speak at all. Finlay has recently aged out of the care system and has just started a nursing degree; but without a safety net and completely alone in the world, writing essays comes second to keeping his head above water. Banjo has just been placed with yet another set of foster parents and is starting yet another new school, unsurprisingly he’s full of anger and fear. As both boys struggle with impending adulthood and uncertain futures, will the hope of new friends, the pain of past trauma and the possibility of future love, help them find each other again? Raw and unflinchingly honest, *Glasgow Boys* will make you fall in love with its vulnerable main characters, and make you want to scream at the injustices some young people face. McDonald writes with authenticity and a beauty that is startlingly, especially for a debut author. Her nuanced depiction of the care system and the reality of a life without foundations is a lesson in empathy building. The powerful impact that a hug has on boys starved of physical affection is heartbreaking to read, whilst Banjo’s delight at having a photo of himself for the first time makes you want to weep for all he deserves but has never had. This is the type of skilful character development that will have you laughing

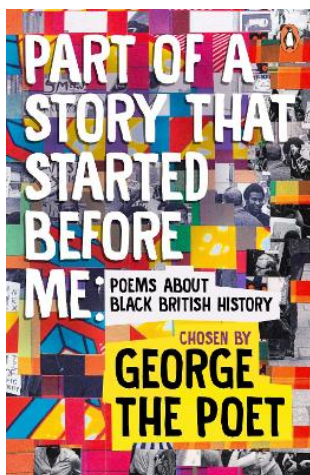
one minute and crying the next. As readers we are occasionally lucky enough to read a book that is not just good, or even great, but so strikingly beautiful that it irreversibly slightly changes who we are and will live on forever in our hearts. Glasgow Boys is one such book. Right now, I'm deeply envious of all those readers who still have the pleasure of meeting Finlay and Banjo for the first time, and bracing my heart for my own imminent reread. Exceptional in every way, this is a book that you want to consume whole, but also linger over. I predict great things and many accolades for Glasgow Boys. Perfect for fans of Brian Conaghan and resolutely not to be missed.



Stealing Happy

Author: Brian Conaghan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 13/03/2025

In Sonny Gilmour we have another classic Conaghan character who will steal your heart and live long in your memory. There is nobody who can capture the authentic voice of young people growing up in a working-class community, quite like Brian Conaghan and this new novel is absolutely pitch perfect. Both the banter between family and friends and Sonny's hilarious internal monologue, are unmistakeably authentic. It is another book that is obviously firmly grounded in his own lived experience growing up in Coatbridge, but it is even more of an Own Voices authentic read this time since our hero has Tourette's, as does Brian. Sonny also dreams of being a stand-up comedian and of the gorgeous Carolina Swift but is mainly preoccupied with keeping his OCD and tics under control. This is difficult when there is so much in his life to make him anxious and not just the bully Archie Burns. His dad has Long Covid, his mum is struggling to cope, and he has just discovered that she took a loan from the dreaded Chick Lennon and now their debts are spiralling out of control. His best pal, the true crime obsessed Jonah suggests they recruit the 'gorgeous brainbox' Carolina Swift to make a get-rich-quick plan. But when the plan is robbing Chick Lennon and paying him back with his own money and when subterfuge of any sort is impossible when Tourette's makes you blurt out 'ROB CHICK LENNON' any time you are stressed, can disaster be far away? Despite the obvious humour the underlying seriousness of the situation is never downplayed. These are very real contemporary issues vividly brought to life: poverty, food banks, Long Covid, Social Security injustices and how easily families can get sucked in by predatory loan sharks. It was refreshing to see a positive portrayal of school support for Sonny and how well he was able to relate to Mr Kalinski the school counsellor(aka Special K) and even more myth-bustingly delightful to discover Sonny is a Reading Ambassador! Genuinely moving as well as funny, this is an absolute must have.



Part of a Story That Started Before Me

Author: George the Poet **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 22/08/2024

July Book of the Month From Ancient Rome to the Tudors to the 2020 Euros football final, Black people have always lived and contributed to British society. In this exceptional anthology George the Poet has collected poems and examples of the Black British experience. The impressive list of contributors includes: Patience Agbabi, Jeffrey Boakye, Sophie Thakur, Derek Walcott and Benjamin Zephaniah. A number of the poems are new and written specifically for this anthology, whilst others have been curated from older collections, such as *Sunrise* by Grace Nicholls, first published 1993. Throughout the collection historical notes are added for each era by writer and historian Dr Christienna Fryar. In addition, a number of the poems benefit from enlightening notes from the poets themselves, giving context and further info about their subjects. The subjects covered by the poems are varied and full of interest – from celebrating Black trailblazers, such as Maggie Aderin-Pocock, to commemorating Belly Mujinga. I challenge anybody to read this anthology without being inspired to learn more! And there's an extensive reading list provided to guide you forwards. Not only are the subjects of the poems varied and interesting, but innovative use of style and formats mean the structures of the poems themselves add further depth. Highly recommended, this is an anthology to contemplate, revisit and relish.



Odd Girl Out

Author: Tasneem Abdur-Rashid **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/04/2025

April 2025 Debut of the Month Maaryah has enjoyed a life of luxury and privilege growing up in Dubai. With designer clothes, prestigious cars and expensive cars her norm, she has wanted for very little. So, when her parents divorce and she is uprooted to a tiny house in dreary Essex with her mum, she is left reeling by the sudden change. Being the new student is always hard, but as the only hijabi in her mostly-white new school Maaryah has a huge challenge ahead. Can she build a new life whilst remaining true to herself? This was a gripping read from the very first page, one of those wonderful books that keep you up way past bedtime and lingers for days afterwards. This was largely due to the wonderfully compelling main character, Maaryah, who is fierce, funny and just a little frustrating. Her determination to stay true to herself even when vulnerable and targeted by racist bullies, whilst hugely admirable, will also be an eye-opener for many readers into the relentless hostility and microaggressions that the Muslim community endures daily. Whilst undoubtedly admirable, Maaryah is also a perfectly flawed, authentic teen who doesn't always make the best decisions; there were many times I wished I could shake it her into making different choices, but I was always on her side. As family secrets

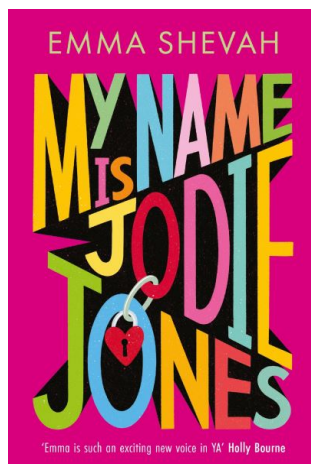
were revealed and loyalties tested, I found it increasingly hard to put this down. An absolute must-read and timely coming-of-age story, with a powerful message of justice and love.



The Romantic Tragedies of a Drama King

Author: Harry Trevaldwyne **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/07/2026

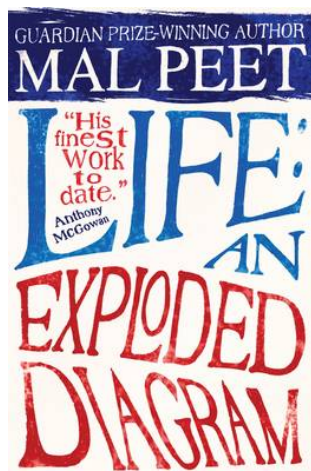
June 2026 Debut of the Month Harry Trevaldwyne's *The Romantic Tragedies of a Drama King*, first book in the Patch Simmons series, is likely to be loved by anyone who has a heart and sense of humour. YA rom-coms have rarely been so relentlessly funny and authentic. I laughed, I cried, I cried laughing, and I defy any 13+-year-old (including adults) to not have the same response. Patch (don't call him Patrick!) is determined to bag himself a boyfriend by the end of the year, and it seems his luck is in when two new boys, Sam and New Yorker Peter, join his drama club. But despite his best manifesting efforts, Patch's road to his desired relationship nirvana is anything but smooth, with more heartache hitting hard when he falls out with Jean, his best friend. Huge-hearted, with a sequinned "Viva La Vulva!" bag, and bedroom festooned with inspirational LGBTQ+ allyship memos, Jean is an absolute joy. Alongside being endlessly entertaining and of-the-moment, *The Romantic Tragedies of a Drama King* also tackles timeless coming-of-age themes with tremendous heart, including friendship, the pain of falling out with your bestie, the longing to find that special someone, and the joy of feeling totally comfortable in your skin, even as you wobble a little on the road to becoming an adult. There are also some very cute moments, and excellent observational details, especially when it comes to showing how you can never really know the complexities of what people are thinking or feeling. All of which means, *The Romantic Tragedies of a Drama King* will be adored by fans of exuberant YA rom-coms — think *Adrian Mole*, *meets Bridget Jones*, *meets Georgia Nicolson*.



My Name is Jodie Jones

Author: Emma Shevah **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 11/09/2025

October 2025 Debut of the Month Jodie Jones is super intelligent but failing at school. Jodie Jones will only answer you if you call her by her full name: Jodie Jones. Jodie Jones loves words but struggles to talk openly with most people. Life is not easy for 15-year-old Jodie Jones, she is still struggling in the aftermath of a violent, traumatic event 5 years ago. Her family grows further apart everyday and even her best friend, Becca, is growing exasperated with her. With a super-skilled pen, Shevah slowly reveals Jodie Jones' full truth, ensuring she will remain with readers long after the last page. My Name is Jodie Jones is a masterclass in character development and characterisation, with even secondary characters feeling real enough to leap from the page. Jodie Jones herself is impossible not to empathise with and be impressed by. Her toxic mother is a literary villain that will make eyes pop and head shake. Alongside these incredibly realised characters is an expertly crafted tense plot that skilfully builds to an unforgettable climax. Adding light and humour to Jodie Jones' world is her obsession with finding words and sentences that she finds beautiful enough to collect. Her entertaining wordplay and thoughtful observations about the absurdities of language will be a welcome vocabulary stretch for even the most erudite of readers, as well as bringing many a smile. Above all else though, this is an unflinching look at the pain and torture of growing up with an abusive, manipulative and wholly inadequate parent. These are not the type of characters regularly met in fiction, certainly not in YA, but we should all be thankful that Emma Shevah and her publishers have had the bravery to shine a light on such unpalatable truths. Only occasionally are we lucky enough as readers to find a book that is written with such skill and clarity that it feels like it is talking directly to us, this is one of those books. I cannot recommend it highly enough.



Life An Exploded Diagram

Author: Mal Peet **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/06/2011

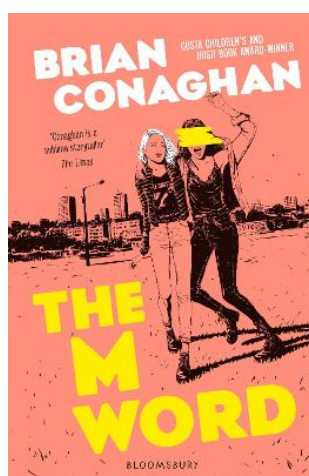
This is a brilliant coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of the Cold War and events leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis. The story is told in flashback by Clem when he is living and working in New York City as a designer, and moves from the past of his parents and grandmother to his own teenage years. Not only the threat of explosions, but actual ones as well, feature throughout in this latest novel from one of the finest writers working today.



Moonrise

Author: Sarah Crossan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 12/07/2018

Shortlisted for the YA Book Prize 2018 | Shortlisted for the Centre for Literacy in Primary Poetry Award 2018 | One of Our Books of the Year 2017 | Shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award 2017 | A book to break your heart, quicken your blood and stir your soul by one of the most outstandingly distinctive writers to have emerged in a long, long time. New Yorker Joe Moon was only seven when he took the call in which his big brother Ed told him he'd been arrested because "they think I done something real bad". That "something" led to Ed winding up on death row, convicted of murdering a cop, though he insists he's innocent. Ten years later, now Ed's execution date has been set, Joe travels to Texas to say goodbye. The sublimely-formed structure slips between present and past, recounting the brothers' troubled upbringing - how their Mom took off; how Aunt Karen took control and decided that Bible study and never mentioning Ed again was the only route to their salvation. While she insists that there's no point wasting life or money helping someone who wasn't sorry, Joe sees things differently. "He's my brother," and that's really all that matters. He has to see him. Lawyer Al, who's taken on Ed's case for free, offers some hope, but time is running out. "It's better to be guilty and rich, I reckon," Joe remarks, as he experiences the excruciating injustices of a legal system in which the harshness of a sentence depends on where a crime takes place, who the victim was, and who you can afford to pay to represent you (crucially, Ed had no representation when he was first arrested). Once again, Crossan's free verse form is breathtakingly powerful - always the right word, in the right place, at the right time. Yes, this is harrowing and heartbreaking, but the kindness of the strangers Joe meets in Texas is achingly uplifting, as is the deep bond of love between Joe and Ed. This really is a magnificent feat of writing.

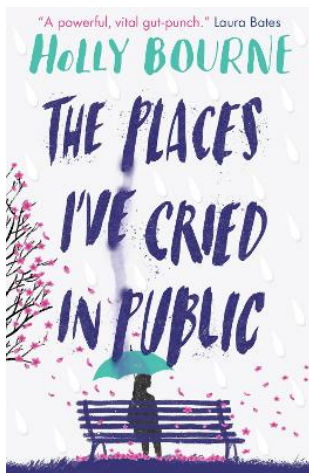


The M Word

Author: Brian Conaghan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/04/2020

September 2019 Book of the Month Hitting rock bottom, hanging on, and coming back from the edge. Brian Conaghan has an incredible talent for telling it like it is. His characters are authentic and absorbing; flawed underdogs with serious troubles, like 17-year-old Maggie whose dad "drank his liver into a spreadable pâté", and whose laid-off dinner lady mum is "gifted in the art of attracting pure dickheads". And Maggie? Maggie's "an island: the way I dress; the music I listen to; the patter my brain discharges; everything". Maggie's struggling to deal with the tragic loss of her best friend Moya whose death she feels excruciatingly guilty about. Moya was a "mad riot" of a girl, but as Maggie "couldn't be arsed with all the love-struck vom" Moya was

spewing, because she didn't speak out against the Internet trolls, she believes she was a "failure friend". Alongside her grief, guilt and self-harm, Maggie struggles with her mother's severe depression, but also tingles with the hope that comes from starting art college: "now's the time to make something of myself." Indeed, she soon forms a band with new friends. Throughout, Maggie's love of bands like The Smiths looms large, as does her relationship with her depressed mother. Maggie's rage at her mother's condition derives entirely from her primal love for her. She's desperate for Mum to be happy, and her scheme to help her find happiness is heart-achingly poignant. Grief, depression, self-harm, online abuse, this novel is no walk in the park, yet it never drags the reader down. On the contrary. It's sensitive, insightful, funny (Maggie is a master of biting one-liners), and genuinely uplifting as Maggie and Mum begin to find their way back to the world, with glinting prospects of love and new life.



The Places I've Cried in Public

Author: Holly Bourne **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 30/09/2019

An authentic, raw, disturbing portrait of a teenage girl and her descent into a coercive, controlling relationship with an important message about self-belief



Blood Moon

Author: Lucy Cuthew **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/07/2020

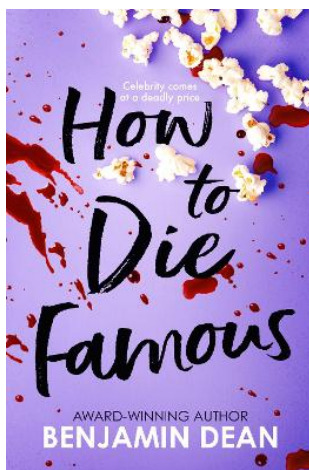
Nominated for the 2021 CILIP Carnegie Medal - Shortlisted for the 2021 Amazing Book Awards A brilliant and empowering verse novel about feminism, menstruation, and bullying.



Punching the Air

Author: Ibi Zoboi, Yusef Salaam **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/09/2020

Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 11-14 | September 2020 Book of the Month | Shortlisted for the Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022 Co-written by award-winning novelist Ibi Zoboi and Dr Yusef Salaam, a prison reform activist, poet and one of the Exonerated Five, *Punching the Air* is a timely, heartachingly powerful free verse novel. Through its shatteringly succinct lyricism, Amal's story is a mighty call to action that rouses readers to question the deep-rooted and damaging consequences of racially biased societal systems, while radiating the light and hope of art and Amal himself. Sixteen-year-old Amal is a talented poet and artist, but even at his liberal arts college, he's victimised by destructive preconceptions, deemed disruptive by people who "made themselves a whole other boy in their minds and replaced me with him." Amal's budding life careers off-course when he's wrongfully convicted of a crime in a gentrified area. Even in the courtroom it feels to him "like everything that I am, that I've ever been, counts as being guilty". Standing before judgemental eyes in his specially chosen grey suit, he's aware that "no matter how many marches or Twitter hashtags or Justice for So-and-So our mind's eyes and our eyes' minds see the world as they want to/Everything already illustrated in black and white." In the detention centre, Amal considers his African ancestry: "I am shackled again," he says. "Maybe these are the same chains that bind me to my ancestors. Maybe these are the same chains that bind me to my father and my father's father and all the men that came before." He expresses society's double standards with searing clarity too - Black boys are "a mob/a gang ghetto/a pack of wolves animals/thugs hoodlums men" while white boys "were kids having fun home loved supported protected full of potential boys." But through the beatings and despair, through anger and frustration, Amal finds solace in the supportive letters he receives from a girl in his school, and his "poet, educator and activist" teacher. By turns soul-stirring and inspiring, this sharp exposure of injustice and testament to the transformative power of art comes highly recommended for readers who love the work of Jason Reynolds and Elizabeth Acevedo. Find a selection of recommended books that celebrate difference in our blog, *Diverse Voices*.

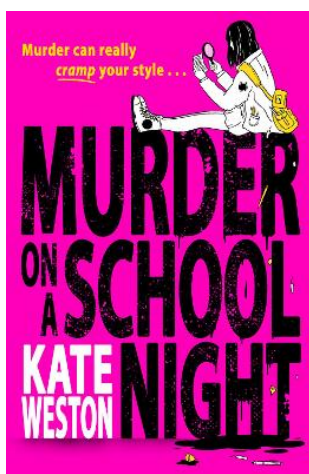


How To Die Famous

Author: Benjamin Dean **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 20/07/2023

Shortlisted for the YA Book Prize 2024 | Shortlisted for the Children's & YA Jhalak Prize 2024

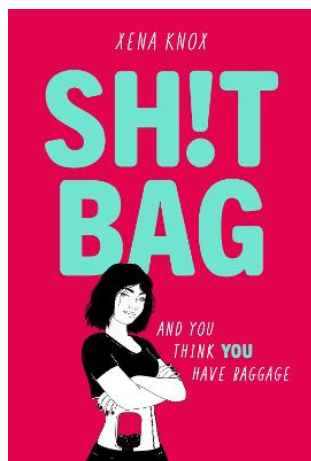
Fame, beauty, success, happiness...the stars of soon-to-be hit TV show Sunset High seemingly have it all. But behind the glitz and glamour the truth is very different - scandal, rivalry, secrets and possibly even murder reign supreme in the land of Hollywood dreams. British Abel is thrown into the world of celebrity culture when he is cast as the new teen star of a blockbuster Hollywood TV show reboot. Joining his fellow cast mates, Lucky, Ryan and Ella, he soon discovers that all is not as it seems. Between them the glamorous foursome have more off-screen drama than on-screen: secret affairs, addictions, controlling parents, buried grief and a ruthless production company. When an obsessed stalker starts leaving ominous messages, they soon realise that it's not just the tabloids after them. An addictive, dark, queer thriller full of drama. With a background in celebrity journalism Dean skilfully brings to life the fake world of high stakes TV production, and the lives of the rich and famous. Alongside this he sensitively handles issues of grief and addiction. The story is told in alternating chapters from the four main characters, plus podcast excerpts, building a rounded picture of the action and keeping the reader on their toes. Fans of Karen McManus will love this. Full of twists, this is a pacy book you'll want to read in one sitting. Unputdownable!



Murder on a School Night

Author: Kate Weston **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/07/2023

Shortlisted for the YA Book Prize 2024 Aspiring sleuths Kerry and Annie are just starting sixth form, but both have much better things to think about than their studies. Annie is obsessed with making this the year she finally becomes popular, and Kerry is smitten by new boy, Scott. When the most popular girl in school tasks them with finding her cyberbully things start looking up. But when a failed kiss leads to the discovery of a dead classmate, choked with a menstrual cup, things turn serious. The Menstrual Murderer is on the hunt and the bodies soon start piling up. This is a whip-smart, hilarious, feminist YA thriller. The main characters are endearingly awkward as they muddle through killings and crushes, whilst the popular crowd are deliciously dramatic. With tampons and period pads as the murder weapons of choice, there's an ongoing theme of periods throughout the novel; this is handled openly, with lots of humour and honesty. Likewise, Kerry and Annie are proud feminists and Weston expertly calls into question the sexism they face as teenage girls. A fresh take on the YA thriller, mixing suspense with hilarity and social commentary. Perfect for fans of A Good Girl's Guide to Murder and the books of Holly Bourne.



SH!T BAG

Author: Xena Knox **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 22/06/2023

July 2023 Debut of the Month After collapsing during her exams and waking with a temporary ileostomy bag, Freya is angry. She's meant to be enjoying the summer of her life before she starts sixth form. But instead of hot summer holidays abroad with her best friends and fit boyfriend, she's at a midge-infested "Poo Camp" for young people with bowel problems. Unable to accept that her life has irreversibly changed and sickened by her own body, Freya is resentful, miserable, and self-absorbed. Slowly though, new friends and a potential new love interest help her see that her future may be different, but it can still be hopeful. This is a sharp book full of dark humour, that doesn't shy away from the truth about an often-taboo subject: poo. When Freya returns to school not everybody reacts with kindness, instead she must deal with cruel bullies and a deceitful ex. She does so with strength and an impressive level of sass. With authentic disability representation, Sh!t Bag highlights a subject rarely covered in YA and is a refreshing read, perfect for empathy building. Full of embarrassing moments to make you cringe, Freya's journey is far from easy, but it's definitely worth travelling with her. A fresh, fierce book about self-acceptance that older teens will love.

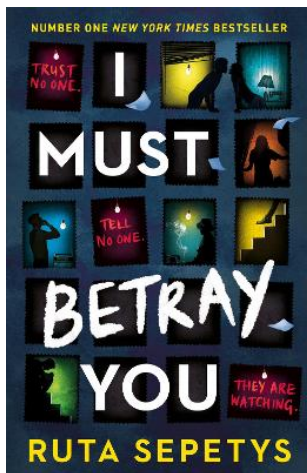


Where the Light Goes

Author: Sara Barnard **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/05/2023

May 2023 Book of the Month YA Book Prize winner, Sara Barnard, writes fearlessly about some really tricky issues, but always with great emotional honesty and depth. This extraordinary novel is no exception since it is tackling the issue of suicide and the impact on those left behind. The book opens with an appropriate trigger warning because these are difficult issues to read about. The book also explores the causes of this particular young girl's death and in doing so we find out just how toxic and damaging fame can be for young women. Lizzie Beck is the lead singer for a band that rose to dizzying heights of fame at a very young age and the media follow her every move, every relationship, every stint in rehab. The novel does not flinch from showing the misogyny with which young women are treated. But Lizzie is also Beth, a beloved sister and daughter and the agony of the family's grief and the way it changes everything in their lives is heartbreakingly laid out. The story is told from the perspective of Emmy, the equally talented younger sister who wanted nothing more than to emulate her big sister, but skilfully uses lots of different media- text messages, articles, interviews, and emails to show a wider view. The story is divided by poignant black pages noting: 1 day gone etc and very, very subtly, more light appears until we see Emmy at 5 years gone living her life in the limelight but having learned so much from having had Beth as sister. This difficult journey towards finding light in the darkest of times is both truthful and hopeful. This powerful multi-layered and important

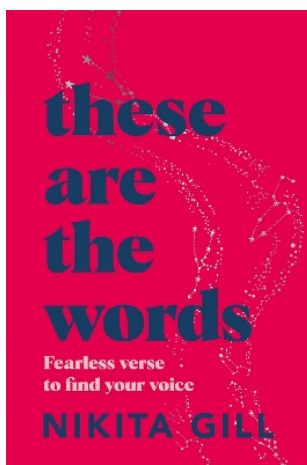
novel is enthralling, moving and utterly compelling.



I Must Betray You

Author: Ruta Sepetys **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/08/2022

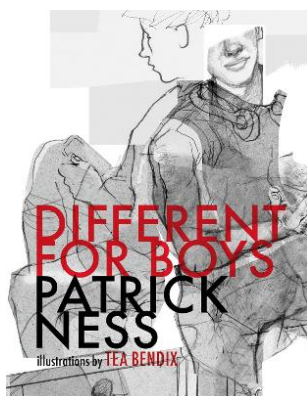
Shortlisted for the Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing 2023 Trapped by an evil dictatorship, will Cristian be forced to betray his family or will he risk everything he loves to resist? A bestselling YA thriller based on real events, from a prizewinning author.



These Are the Words

Author: Nikita Gill **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 18/08/2022

Shortlisted for the CLIPPA 2023 | Longlisted for the Jhalak Children's & Young Adult Prize 2023 From international poetry sensation Nikita Gill comes her highly anticipated YA debut These Are the Words: an empowering, feminist and beautifully illustrated poetry collection exploring all the things Nikita wished someone had told her when she was younger.

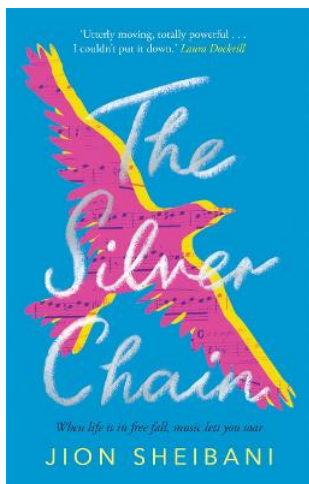


Different for Boys

Author: Patrick Ness **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 02/03/2023

Authentic, inclusive and refreshingly candid, Patrick Ness' Different for Boys packs mighty punch as it relates the pitch-perfect story of teenage boys grappling with questions around sex, sexuality, friendship and masculinity, with Tea Bendix's cool, evocative illustrations enhancing its already-considerable clout. Ant is friends with three very different boys – camp and confident Jack, Charlie, who's a tinderbox of alpha-male confusion, and Freddie, who's returned to their school after moving away. The boys were inseparable through primary school, but people change, and not everyone handles change well, especially Charlie, who's outright homophobic. At the same time, Ant is awash with big questions: "Are there degrees of virginity?" Is he still a virgin? Is virginity different for boys. Is it different again for boys who like boys? In

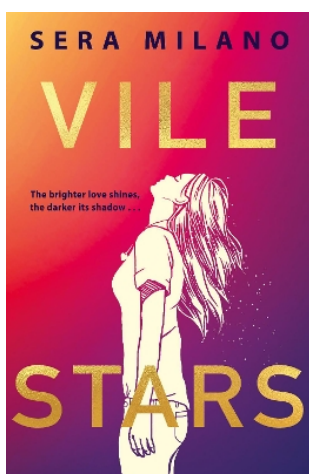
this context, Ant and Charlie's especially intense, confusing relationship sees them come to blows before Ant comes to some clarity. Suffused in empathy, and funny with it, *Different for Boys* is a brilliantly incisive account of how it feels to be a boy who likes boys, battling homophobia while grappling with big questions around sex and relationships. It's also a fine story of courage and support.



The Silver Chain

Author: Jion Sheibani **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 23/06/2022

An uplifting coming-of-age story told in verse, about mental health, family and the restorative power of music.



Vile Stars

Author: Sera Milano **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 14/04/2022

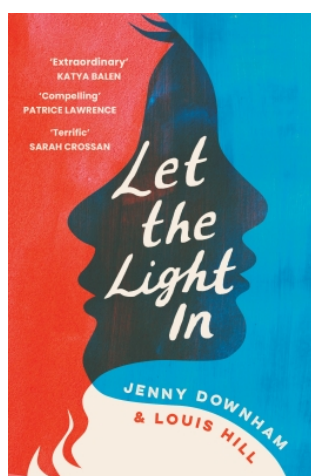
A unique look at coercive teen relationships during the 2020 covid lockdowns. Told through multiple viewpoints, this is an important and inclusive novel about obsession, friendship and grief.



Us in the Before and After

Author: Jenny Valentine **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/06/2024

June 2024 Book of the Month A new YA novel from Jenny Valentine is always something to celebrate. She writes with beautiful economy, there is never a wasted word, and her books will always leave an indelible impression upon the reader and will have them thinking deeply about what they have just experienced. This is a mesmerising story about friendship, love, loss and grief. Elk and Mab are sixteen, on the cusp of independence, with everything ahead of them. They met at age eleven and have been inseparable ever since. They have the sort of friendship that everyone dreams of. In an instant, a tragic accident takes that away from them, but they are not ready to leave each other and in their ghostly conversations we learn about their lives, their families, how they met, what they wanted and what led up to the accident. We see Elk reluctantly falling in love with Mab's brother France and the threat that this situation presents to the friendship, and a relationship which ultimately becomes the catalyst for the tragedy, with all the guilt this brings in its aftermath. Sensitive, utterly compelling and profound, with a twist that will leave you reeling, this superbly crafted novel is an absolute must read.

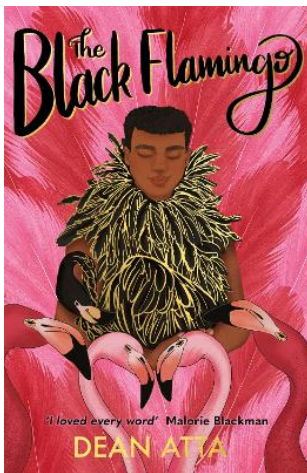


Let the Light In

Author: Jenny Downham, Louis Hill **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/01/2025

January 2025 Book of the Month Jenny Downham is one of our foremost writers for young adults, winning national and international awards with her extraordinary debut, *Before I Die*, also becoming an Hollywood blockbuster, and now she here she is with another debut! This time as a coauthor for the first time with a novel which began as a lockdown writing challenge with her actor and playwright son, Louis Hill. Together they have written an unforgettable and deeply moving novel about siblings Leah and Charlie, with each taking on one of the narrative voices. Both are trying to cope, in their very different ways, with the aftermath of the untimely death of their father from cancer. Leah is bearing the weight of familial responsibility since their mother collapsed into deep depression, unable to work and often unable even to leave her bed. The family were forced into eviction and rehousing and live a hand to mouth existence in deep poverty. Leah is academically gifted with a bright university future ahead but doesn't know how she could escape her responsibilities and has found the ultimate escape in a secret relationship with Alex, an older, married art gallery owner. Charlie is suffering real mental health issues which have caused him to self-isolate from his friends. Art is his escape and where he can confront his feelings about his Dad, but these drawings are secret too, for fear of adding to his sister's burden or his mother's depression. The intensity of Leah's passion for Alex and how Charlie can lose himself in his art is brilliantly

evoked. The light in all their lives is their 7 year old sister Abby and her unquashable zest for life, despite everything. Perceptive and hilarious, Abby is often the catalyst for change as their secrets collide in ways which will change all their lives completely. The way each alternating narrative builds up the back story and progresses the plot is stunningly well crafted. All the supporting characters, even the bad guys, are nuanced and credible. This compelling, sensitive novel is ultimately and very realistically hopeful, demonstrating how family, friends and community can pull you through the worst of times. Powerful, relatable and thought provoking, this is a story with profound impact and staying power. Join LoveReading4Kids Editorial Expert Joy Court and LoveReading4Kids Ambassador Sophie Hall in conversation with authors Jenny Downham and Louis Hill.

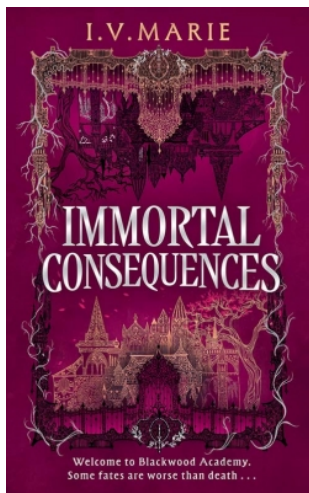


The Black Flamingo

Author: Dean Atta **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/03/2020

Shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020 | August 2019

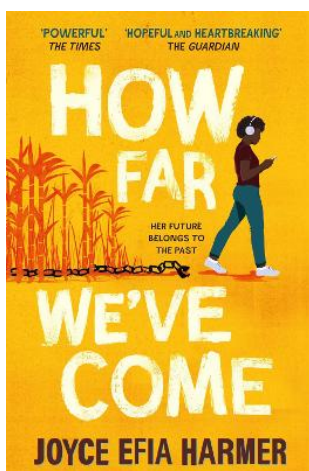
Debut of the Month Uplifting and dazzlingly unique, this coming-of-age treasure explores identity and sexuality with an emboldening message to remember that “you have the right to be you”. As a young Barbie-loving boy, mixed race Michael wonders if he’s “only half” of everything, to which his mother poignantly replies: “Don’t let anyone tell you/that you are half-black/and half-white. Half-Cypriot/ and half-Jamaican./ You are a full human being.” But he doesn’t feel like a whole human being. Dubbed a “queerdo and weirdo” by bullies and subjected to “batty bwoy” taunts through his teenage years, he leaves London for Brighton University with hope in his heart. But even here Michael feels “like Goldilocks; trying to find a group of people/the perfect fit for me”. He doesn’t feel black enough for the Caribbean Society, or Greek enough for Hellenic Society, or queer enough for the LGBT Society. Then Michael finally finds a fit at Drag Society where he becomes The Black Flamingo, “someone fabulous, wild and strong. With or without a costume on.” Michael’s journey is complex, moving and told with a raw vitality that makes the soul soar and the heart sing, with Anshika Khullar’s magnificent illustrations and the smart design adding further depth, prompting the reader to pause for thought as his story requires.



Immortal Consequences

Author: I. V. Marie **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 31/07/2025

July 2026 Debut of the Month School stories have been a popular genre ever since Blyton's Chalet School, via Harry Potter to what is known in YA fantasy circles as Dark Academia and this is a prime example of everything that fans require. It has rivalries, alliances, romantic relationships and a difficult challenge to win an ultimate prize, where all the main characters must compete against each other. But Blackwood Academy has a unique setting – a boarding school where all the pupils are dead! It is located on the fringes of the afterlife and students are learning magical skills to enable them to fulfil their role in guiding lost souls to The Other Side. Nobody knows how or why they ended up here, but there is no escape other than to be selected for the Decennial Challenge, which grants the winner the choice to Ascend into the elite of Blackwood or pass to The Other Side. All other students over time will gradually fade into the Ether. The six main characters each have their own narrative, and each have their own reasons for needing to win. The story is told through the multiple points of view of each of these diverse characters, which is a difficult feat for a writer to pull off, but the reader definitely becomes engaged with all of them. The interactions between them are fascinating, with bitter rivals, a girl haunted by past love, a ruthless strategist, and a flirt with surprising depth and, of course, the always enjoyable enemies to lovers trope. The plot is full of twists and turns and thrills. The world building is very well thought through, but we are left in anticipation of further revelations to come. Atmospheric, mystical and gripping, this is a cracking start to a very possibly addictive new series.



How Far We've Come

Author: Joyce Efi Harmer **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 28/03/2024

June 2023 Debut of the Month At once a thrilling historical adventure, a harrowing account of life on a brutal Barbados plantation for our heroine Obah and an excoriating examination of the legacy of slavery on our society today. Both how far we have come in a technological sense and yet how little progress has been made in terms of equality or reparation. This is achieved through the clever use of a timeslip device which links the plantation to its wealthy owner's heirs living in the UK today. Descendants who wish to make amends and think they can do so by rescuing Obah from life in 1834 and bringing her to the twenty-first century. This may not have been the first intention of Jacob when he travels to the past in order to understand the family legacy, but he cannot stand by and leave her at the hands of the brutal overseer. We then skilfully get to see our society through Obah's eyes, and her confusion and dismay is both amusing and shocking. Obah gets to witness racism and injustice and we can all see why she chooses to return to lead a slave rebellion in her own time. Obah's voice just leaps

off the page and the reader is gripped from the first sentence. Both worlds are vividly and convincingly evoked as is the logic of the timeslip device. A really thought-provoking novel that will inspire lots of valuable discussion around important themes of equality and justice and will be a really valuable addition to any school library.



Foes and Cons

Author: Georgia Bowers **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/06/2026

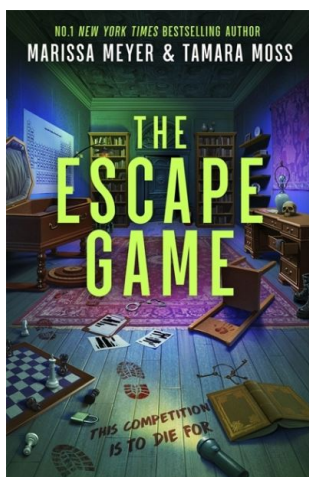
Brimming with feel-good energy, and boasting an adorable heroine who actually does wear a cape at every opportunity, Georgia Bower's *Foes and Cons* celebrates the joy of friendship and euphoric fandom in a gloriously uplifting fashion. After bonding over their shared love of cult TV show *Vampire Falls*, Eliza and Charlie's relationship has gone off the boil as a result of Charlie reinventing himself as a ripped popular guy who mocks the very fandom he was formerly obsessed with. Still reeling from Charlie's betrayal, Eliza and her other best friend Roxy throw themselves into enjoying the highlight of their year: the annual *Vampire Falls* convention, where they're well and truly among their tribe. A cat is set amongst the pigeons when Charlie turns up to chaperone his little sister and becomes Eliza's rival in a fiercely-fought competition to win all-expenses paid trip to San Diego Comic Con. At the same time, a hot werewolf-costumed American comes into Eliza's circle, along with a wonderful pensioner, setting the stage for all manner of fabulously funny farcical scenes. Alongside being outrageously funny, *Foes and Cons* explores themes of friendship ("It feels like he's hugging my heart"), change ("Change doesn't just mean bad; it can mean good too"), and first love ("I can't click back into place because there's a jagged Charlie Chamberlain-shaped splinter sticking out of my soul") through a life-affirming lens. In addition to being a brilliant book for readers who are obsessed with conventions and cos-play, it comes hugely recommended for 14+-year-olds who love humorous, wholesome stories and shows that centre friendship.



The Summer After the Night Before

Author: Lisa Williamson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/05/2026

June 2026 Book of the Month Authentically voiced by a trio of teenage characters through alternating narratives, Lisa Williamson's *The Summer After the Night Before* is a nuanced and profoundly thought-provoking YA novel that explores themes of consent, self-esteem, coercion, and the damaging impact of perennial people-pleasing alongside themes of friendship and family, love, longing and loyalty, and finding the strength to trust your own instincts. Molly, as described by her best friend Rhiannon, is "the kind of pretty that people just can't seem to get enough of — blonde, blue-eyed and angel-faced". Molly is also a "chronic people-pleaser" who can never say no to boys who want to take her Snap handle because "they might feel bad", which leads Rhiannon to wonder why Molly "needs to seek validation from some random guy she can't possibly be interested in". One guy Molly isn't romantically interested in is Ben, Rhiannon's brother, who also feels like a brother to her. For his part, Ben has been in love with Molly for as long as he can remember. As a result, he can't believe his luck when Molly kisses him at a party. Drunk at the time, when memories of the night start to re-surface, Molly begins to wonder whether it might be true that good guys like Ben can do bad stuff. Molly's journey to learning to trust her own instincts is powerfully authentic, with positive representations of relationships and sex serving as encouraging counterparts to portrayals of predatory behaviour, and questions around coercion. As a result, *The Summer After the Night Before* comes heartily recommended for 15+-year-olds who relish relatable stories that explore friendship, relationships, and first experiences of love and sex.



The Escape Game

Author: Marissa Meyer, Tamara Moss **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/04/2026

July 2026 Book of the Month Season 4 of *The Escape Room* had ended in tragedy with contestant Alicia Angelos found murdered on set, with her fellow teammate and sister Sierra deemed to be the killer who got away with it, since she was never charged. Season 5 has just begun, and Sierra has been brought back to the show and teamed up with Adi, a celebrity's son and cryptography expert; Carter, a maths genius and influencer; and Beck, an aspiring game designer, all of whom have their own hidden agendas that slowly unravel as the competition progresses. They all want to win, but Sierra wants to find justice for her sister most of all. When they start uncovering clues about the true killer, the game turns into a fight for survival for all of them. The story is told from the multiple points of view of each of the team, which not only adds depth and complexity to the plot, but it allows each character and their fascinating relationship dynamics to develop as suspicion and rivalry give way to friendship and respect. The escape room element works

really well with scene setting illustrations, brilliant descriptions of the mentally challenging puzzles and the nail-biting tension of wondering whether the contestants will crack the clues in time. There is a thought-provoking hint of The Hunger Games in the exposure of the audience and contestant manipulation behind the scenes of the reality TV show, and we are genuinely left guessing who the real villain is until the jaw dropping conclusion. Although there is a complete and satisfying resolution to the mystery, we are left with a hint of more puzzles to come, and I am sure readers will be keen to see more of this diverse and engaging bunch of protagonists. A clever, intricate thriller which is addictively enjoyable and highly recommended.



Georgie

Author: Malachy Doyle **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/03/2026

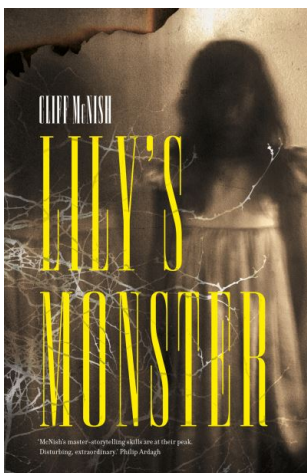
April 2026 Book of the Month Beautiful, boldly brutal, and seared with hope, Malachy Doyle's *Georgie* is a remarkable story of the transformative power of kindness. Published under the Firefly Classics from Wales banner, a series dedicated to shining a light on notable Welsh stories "told in many voices, grown from the many layers of the rich and surprising loam that is the land and the people of Wales", as Nicola Davies, Children's Laureate for Wales, shares in her introduction, the novel serves as an extraordinary reminder of the power of well-crafted words as it follows fourteen-year-old Georgie's journey from trauma-induced rage, self-loathing and self-destruction to realising that somewhere down the line, he might just be OK. On the eve of moving to a new home in Aberant, West Wales, "where they send you when they've run out of ideas, when there's nowhere left to try", Georgie is overcome by anger ("Leave me alone. I want to be alone. I'm a nasty horrible boy and I don't want anyone near me") and feelings of betrayal, abandonment and powerlessness. While he hasn't spoken for years, Georgie's internal voice reveals his vulnerability, his desire for "someone, anyone, to come and put their arms around me. To tell me it's just a bad dream. To tell me it's all right. But it's not all right. And no one comes". Then, after arriving in Aberant, where he has a new room "full of beautiful things", his new teacher Tommo and a girl called Shannon really see Georgie, and understand what he needs. Softly-spoken Tommo gives him a book about birds ("You're mine, beautiful birds! All mine, Tommo said") and they take nature walks together. At the same time, perceptive Shannon sees herself in Georgie, and he sees himself in her. She brings him hope: "She's like me, really. I hadn't seen that before. Further down the line, of course, but I've this sneaky feeling that in a whole lot of ways she's just like me." Slowly, Georgie finds the strength to release his grief and traumatic memories as the story shifts to a moving note of hope. Potently direct and relatable, the writing and story cut to the core of what understanding and kindness can do.



Capitana

Author: Cassandra James **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 12/02/2026

February 2025 Debut of the Month Though billed as romantasy, Cassandra James' *Capitana* debut is so much more than that classification suggests. Yes, there are fantastical elements, and simmering frissons of romance through a thrilling adventure that sees a young woman, Ximena, fight pirates in the name of the law. But *Capitana* is, at its core, a story of intense conflict between family bonds and loyalties to its protagonist's zealous dedication to her empire. While Ximena is devoted to her ambition to become a cazador — a highly-skilled, fearless seafarer whose mission it is to rid the Luzan Empire of pirates — she also faces the personal issue of her parents having been executed as pirates. After serving the empire, they switched sides, leaving Ximena fiercely faithful to the laws of her land, and to proving she's different from her parents, and deserving of cazador rank. Into this, Gasparilla, the most feared pirate from way back in the empire's history seems to have risen to capture the Luzan capital and Ximena is set on capturing him in exchange for receiving her longed-for cazador rank. Add to that having to compete with the irritating, entitled Dante de Leon, being thrown into navigating notoriously treacherous waters, and discovering shock revelations that compel Ximena to question everything she believes in, and *Capitana* amounts to an exhilarating edge-of-your-seat voyage of a novel. Bring on book two in a duology that defies romantasy conventions and tackles themes of imperialism.



Lily's Monster

Author: Cliff McNish **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/11/2025

November 2025 Book of the Month Brutally direct and psychologically rich, Cliff McNish's *Lily's Monster* is YA horror at its most genuinely horrifying. What begins as a story that sees a family all-but ruined by grief swerves fast into a disturbing tale of terrors in the form of a creepy little girl, a family possessed, and a house seething with strange sounds. Just when you think things couldn't possibly get worse — bam! Picture the opening of a menacing matryoshka, with each doll unleashing escalating terrors ahead of a fight for resolution fuelled by all-consuming love. After heading to Gant House near the seaside, hoping to come together in the wake of the tragic death of a beloved son and brother, teenager Holly and her family are visited by a silent little girl called Lily. One by one, Lily manipulates the family like marionettes, exerting an uncanny power over everyone but Holly, who's horrified by the monster her father is transformed into, and wracked by guilt over her brother's death. Then there's the strange noise emitted by the house, and the centuries-old discovery Holly makes during her perilous effort to save her loved ones. *Lily's Monster* should come with an advisory: read this if you're into hard-hitting horror and ghost stories

that pack psychological punch.

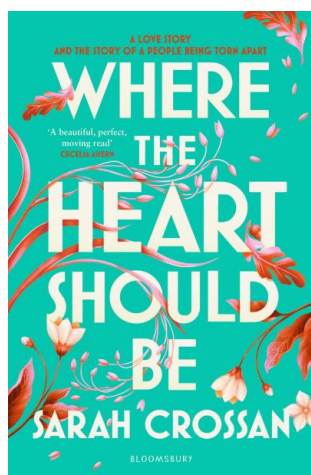


The Hate u Give

Author: Angie Thomas **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/04/2017

Awarded the Amnesty CILIP Honour commendation from the Carnegie shortlist 2018 | Shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2018 | One of Our Books of the Year 2017 | Longlisted for the UKLA 2018 Book Award | April 2017 Debut of the Month |

Stunning, vital wake-up call of a novel about racism, social inequality and not giving up told through the eyes of an incredible, unforgettable sixteen-year-old. Starr straddles two very different worlds. She has one foot in Garden Heights, a rough neighbourhood ruled by gangs, guns and dealers, and the other in an exclusive school with an overwhelmingly wealthy white student population. One night she's at a party when gunshots are fired and Khalil, her friend since childhood, takes her to his car for safety. Khalil is unarmed and poses no threat, but he's shot dead by an officer right in front of her. It will take a lot of courage to speak to the police, and to face the media who choose to highlight that Khalil was a "suspected drug dealer", while omitting to mention that he was unarmed. But, with their neighbourhood under curfew and a tank on the streets, Starr risks going public. Danger escalates as the hearing approaches (and beyond), but Starr isn't about to give up fighting for Khalil, and for what's right. Alongside the intense struggles and conflicts faced by Starr's family and community, there are some truly heart-melting moments between Starr and her white boyfriend Chris (their shared love of the Fresh Prince of Bel Air is super cute), and also between Starr and her parents. Complex, gripping, stirring and so, so important – I can't recommend this remarkable debut enough.

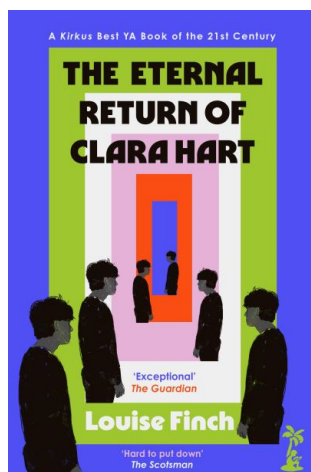


Where the Heart Should Be

Author: Sarah Crossan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 13/02/2025

March 2024 Book of the Month Every new novel from the Carnegie Medal winning author and past Laureate na nÓg is a highly anticipated event and fans will certainly not find themselves disappointed by this outstanding offering. Set in 1846 as the potato famine swept across Ireland, it introduces us to Nell, the eldest daughter of a family that are tenants on the estate of Lord Wicken, a wealthy English aristocrat. She has been forced to give up her studies and start work as a scullery maid in his home to keep her family from starvation. It is here she meets John Browning, the nephew and heir of Wicken, and they fall in love despite the fact that class and nationality should keep them apart. But whilst Lord Wicken, is the ultimate malignant landlord, completely without feeling for his starving tenants, Nell sees that Johnny is different. It is an extraordinary achievement to be able to use the verse novel form to

powerfully present an unflinching account of the hardship and horror of the Great Hunger, while at the same time telling a compelling love story full of hope. The verse form is both accessible and immersive and creates a very intense and unforgettable reading experience. This is a powerful exploration of love in all its forms and a profound and eloquent evocation of a devastating period in Ireland's history.



The Eternal Return of Clara Hart

Author: Louise Finch **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 14/05/2026

Shortlisted for the Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing 2023 | Shortlisted for the YA Book Prize 2023 | Shortlisted for The Branford Boase Award 2023 Groundhog Day meets #MeToo in this compelling account of sexual assault and complicity.



Twenty-Four Seconds from Now

Author: Jason Reynolds **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 08/10/2024

November 2024 Book of the Month In 24 seconds Neon will have sex for the first time with his girlfriend Aria, right now he's in the toilet trying to calm his nerves. 24 minutes ago he was knocking on Aria's front door, full of love and anticipation. 24 hours before that he was working on his school year book project and receiving romance advice from his big sister. Twenty-Four Seconds From Now continues in this unique style, moving back through Neon's story in increments of 24. Hours, days, weeks and months. As we travel back through his life we learn not only the story of his relationship with Aria, but also the stories of his friends, family and community. With Jason Reynolds's unique gift for conjuring up with only a few words the very essence of a character, Neon's world and history is laid before us. From Aria's pushy parents to Neon's grandparents's own love story, Reynolds once again shows that he can say more in a couple of lines than most authors can in numerous chapters. In his acknowledgements Reynolds states that Black boys deserve love stories too, and wow has he delivered. Full of all the tender hopes and fears of first love, Neon's story is honest, authentic and beautifully. A welcome antidote to toxic masculinity, here we have a main character who cries when others cry, and loves without embarrassment. Whilst the friends and family who surround him are equally well-developed, not least his hilariously direct Mum and full-of-wisdom Gammy. At one point Neon's Grandy ponders "But I don't know if you can really be great if you can't... do... romance." If romance is a

qualification for greatness, rest assured Reynolds is one of the greatest writers for young people we have. A must read.
