



EMMA CARPENDALE

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.fcgb.org.uk



Cover illustration by Emma Carpendale. www.emmacarpendale.co.uk



ONCE UPON A STORYTIME



National Year of Reading 2026

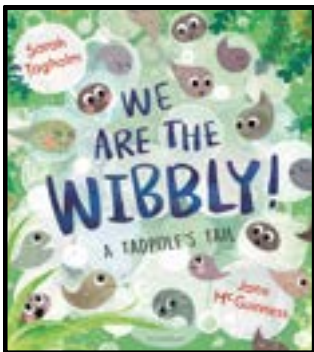
Favourite books to Read Aloud

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

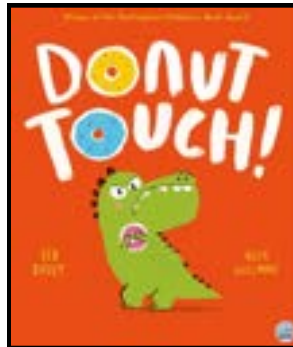
We Are The Wibbly by Sarah Tagholm & Jane McGuinness



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

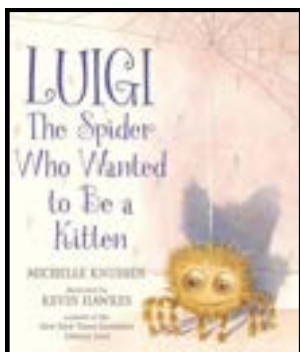


PICTURE BOOKS



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

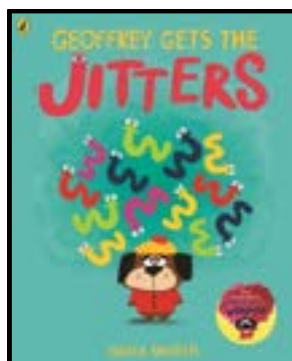
Luigi the Spider who Wanted to be a Kitten by Michelle Knudsen and Kevin Hawkes



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

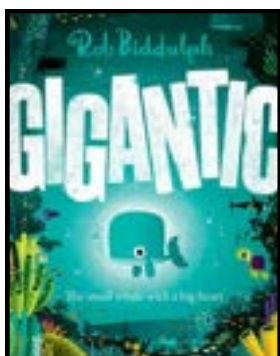
My Rice is Best by Selina Brown and Maxwell A. Oginni



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

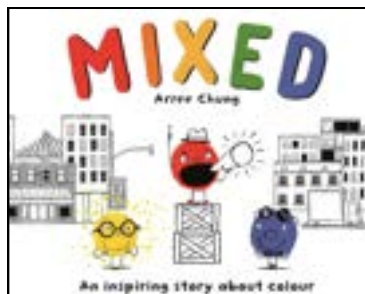
Gigantic by Rob Biddulph



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

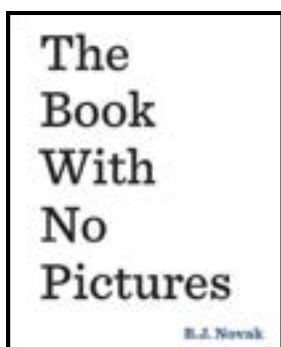
Mixed by Aree Chung



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

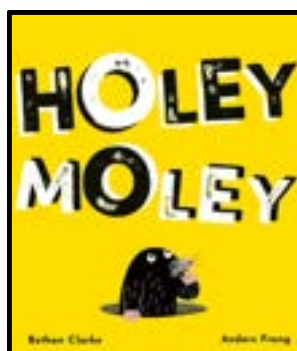
The Book with No Pictures by B J Novak



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

PICTURE BOOKS



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

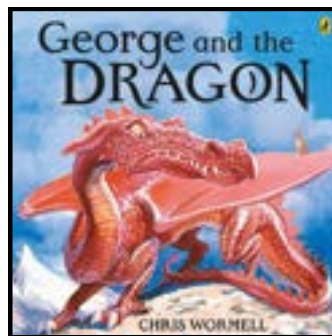
Grotti by Leonie Lord



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

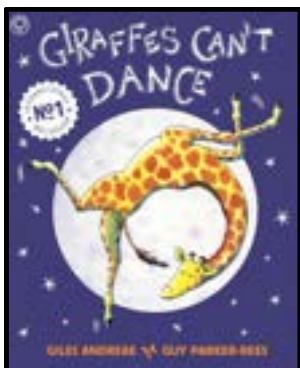
George and the Dragon by Chris Wormell



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

Puffin (2018)
ISBN 9780241370407

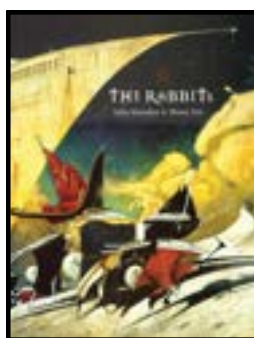
Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae & Guy Parker Rees



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

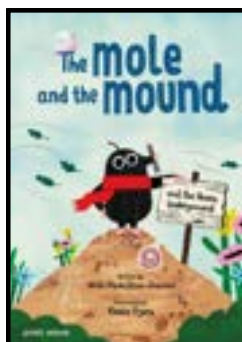
Gozzle by Julia Donaldson & Sarah Ogilvy



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

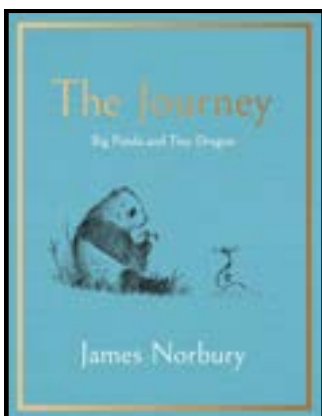
The Mole and the Mound: and the House Underground by Will Hamilton-Davies and Kasia Fryza



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

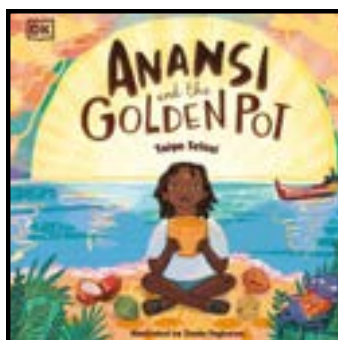
The Journey: A Big Panda and Tiny Dragon Adventure by James Norbury



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'.

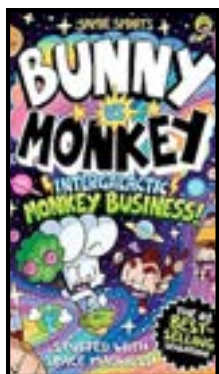
DK Children's (2023)
ISBN: 9780241625910

GRAPHIC NOVELS



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

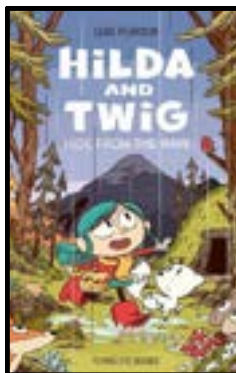
Bunny vs Monkey by Jamie Smart



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

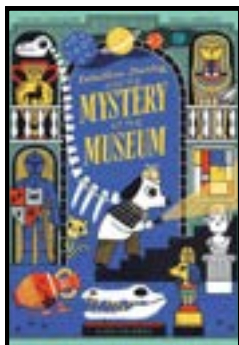
Hilda and Twig by Luke Pearson



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

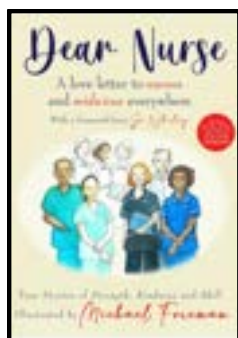


An exciting and adventurous graphic novel about cross-cultural encounters with a feisty heroine who won't take no for an answer and a rumbustious cast of characters each with a distinctive voice.

Eken Press (2020) Age 8+
ISBN: 9781908233288

SHORT STORIES

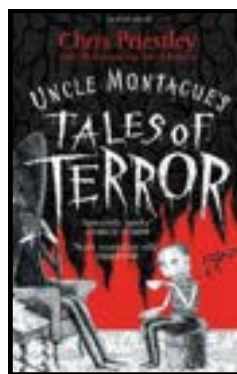
Dear Nurse: True Stories of Strength, Kindness and Skill by Royal College of Nursing & Michael Foreman



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

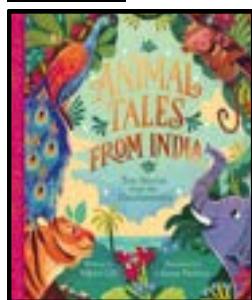
Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror by Chris Priestley and David Roberts (Illustrator)



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

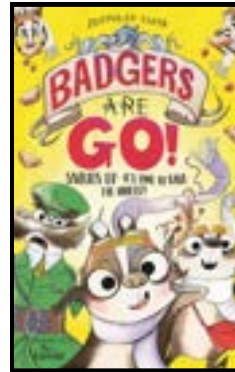
Rumaysa by Radiya Hafiza



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

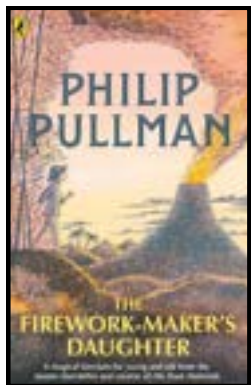
Badgers Are Go! by Susannah Lloyd & Nici Gregory



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



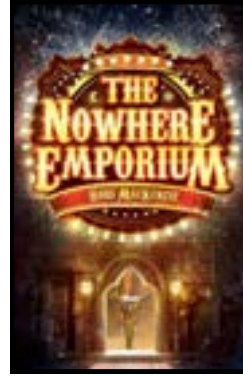
The Girl Who Stole an Elephant by Nizrana Farook



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

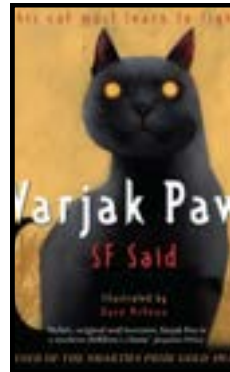
The Secret of Golden Island by Natasha Farrant



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

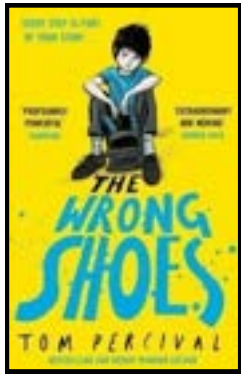


A heartwrenching adventure story about a dog who will do whatever it takes to save the human he loves, written in expressive read aloud language from the perspective of the dog.

Walker Books (2024)
Age 9+
ISBN: 9781529502909



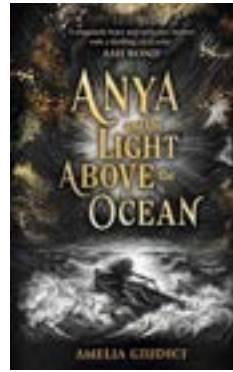
The Wrong Shoes by Tom Percival



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

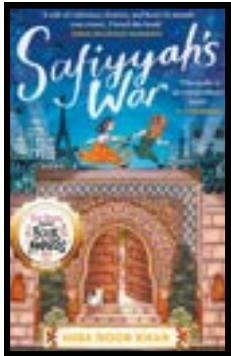
Anya and the Light above the Ocean by Amelia Giudici



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

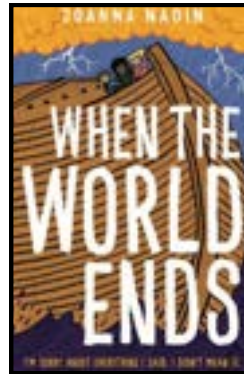
Safiyah's War by Hiba Noor Khan



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

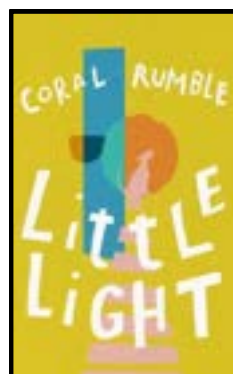
Front Desk by Kelly Yang



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



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

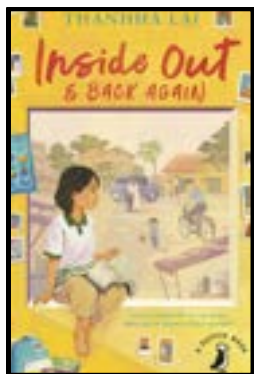
The Final Year by Matt Goodfellow, Illustrated by Joe Todd-Stanton



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

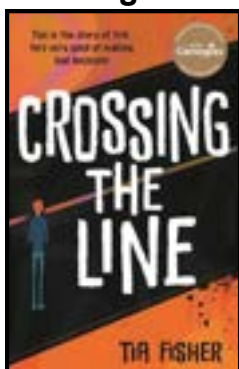
Gone for Good by Sarah Crossan



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

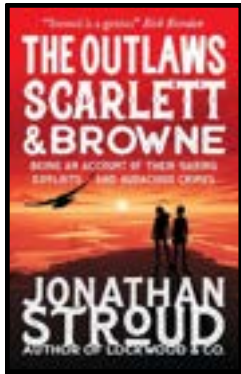


Amber is trapped by family expectations and a domineering father but she's ready to fight, even though freedom will come at a price. Economical, rhythmic poems shoot to the heart of important emotions.

Penguin (2020) Age 13+
ISBN: 9780241411421



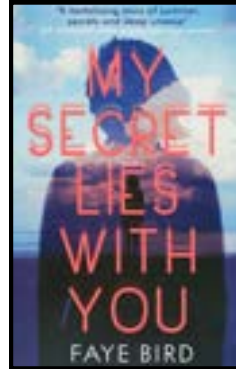
The Outlaws Scarlett and Browne by Jonathan Stroud



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

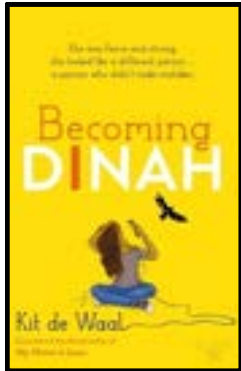
My Secret Lies with You by Faye Bird



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

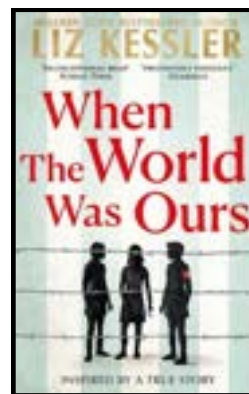
Becoming Dinah by Kit de Waal



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.
www.fcbg.org.uk/nssm

Design by Jasmine Brown
Cover artwork by Emma Carpendale
www.emmacarpendale.co.uk

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

