





## Real Books in the Classroom

Getting children to pick up a book is one thing, getting them to keep picking up books into Secondary and beyond is something else...

So here we've put together a handy collection of our top Secondary titles, with useful summaries and guidance from the English & Media Centre. From dystopian fiction to thought-provoking non-fiction, heart-warming romance to edge-of-seat thrillers, inspiring stories from other cultures to the daftest comedy. You'll be sure to find something for everyone here.

And it's not all about the kids... Possibly the best way to pass on a love of reading is for teachers to become fans too, sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge of the latest books. So don't be shy about having a read yourself!

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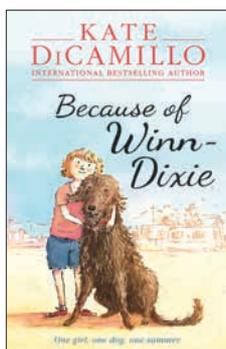
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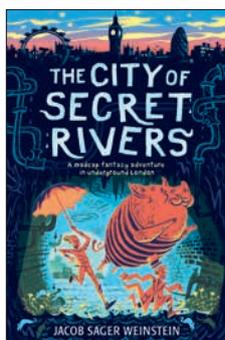


## Because of Winn Dixie

by Kate DiCamillo (Fiction)

It's no surprise that this slim novel is now considered a classic. It's a sweet, sweet story which in less expert hands might teeter into sentimentality but which is handled with a sure touch by DiCamillo. The small-town-America setting provides some great characters and a slow, thoughtful pace. The gentle plot is enlivened by plenty of laugh-out-loud moments. These are mainly provided by the eponymous Winn-Dixie, a scruffy stray dog who helps ten-year-old Opal to find some (eccentric) new friends, re-connect with her pre-occupied preacher father, and come to terms with the disappearance of her mother.

9781406357622 • Paperback • £5.99

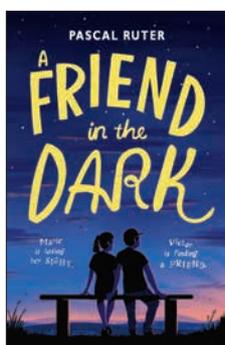


## The City of Secret Rivers

by Jacob Sager Weinstein (Fiction)

When American Hyacinth Hayward unwittingly releases a drop of magically charged water into London's underground water system she soon discovers that she must retrieve it or risk starting a second Great Fire of London. The kidnapping of her mother adds extra pressure and she must negotiate a city that is strange to her and dig into resources she didn't know she possessed. A romp through London's sewers doesn't sound terribly appealing but Hyacinth is a funny, likeable character, the surreal events unfold with more than a hint of Alice in Wonderland and the reader is never quite sure who can be trusted.

9781406378382 • Paperback • £6.99

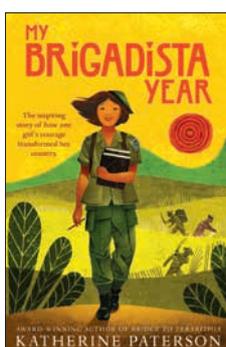


## A Friend in the Dark

by Pascal Ruter (Fiction)

Here we have a boy meets girl story with a difference: Victor and Marie strike up a close friendship despite having very different interests and approaches to life. Marie, a keen student and brilliant classical musician, seems to be the girl who has everything. Victor, meanwhile, struggles at school, feels a failure, plays music in a shambolic rock band and knows lots about old French cars. When Marie begins to lose her sight, though, she becomes totally dependent on Victor, who rises to the challenge. Translated from the French, this novel has a slightly different feel to English titles in this genre, exploring issues of trust, loyalty, identity and struggle within the context of a touching narrative.

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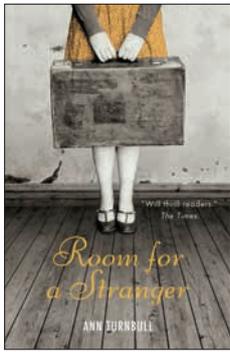


## My Brigadista Year

by Katherine Paterson (Fiction)

This tells the story of Cuba's remarkable 1961 campaign to become an 'illiteracy free' nation following the country's revolution. Lora, aged 13, is one of up to 250,000 'brigadistas', an army of teachers, most under 20, who went to live with families across the country to teach them to read. Through Lora's diary, we are transported to a fascinating moment in time and place in a novel that blends the personal with a moment of global historical importance. A quiet, fascinating read.

9781406380811 • Paperback • £6.99

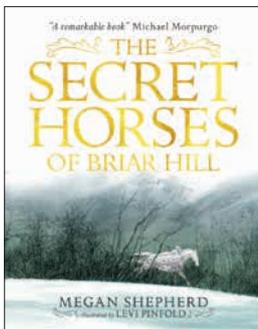


## Room for a Stranger

by Ann Turnbull (Fiction)

Set in Shropshire in 1941, the details of a mining town during wartime in *Room for a Stranger* are richly evocative but drawn very lightly, and our real focus is Doreen. Age 11, things are changing for her: older sisters having left home, she no longer feels like the baby of the family. But her mum's decision to take in an evacuee upsets things: Rhoda is older, from the city, and Doreen's new sphere of freedom seems frustratingly limited by comparison. What makes this a superb read is how powerful and well-observed are the small details which balance – and tip the balance – of relationships between friends or within a family. As the story develops, Doreen becomes conflicted: more confident of herself yet more sensitive towards others; her negotiation of the friendship with Rhoda and others is entirely convincing – and moving, and makes the book feel very fresh.

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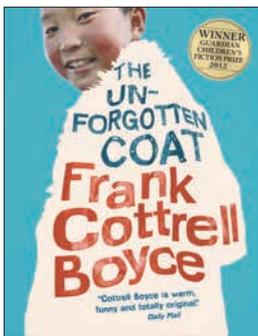


## The Secret Horses of Briar Hill

by Megan Shepherd and Levi Pinfold (Fiction)

As Michael Morpurgo says, this is 'a remarkable book'. Beautifully illustrated throughout, it tells the story of Emmeline, who is confined with other children to a TB clinic during the Second World War. Emmeline enters an alternative world, populated by winged horses. The narrative involving the horses, themselves under threat, clearly parallels that of the sick children. Are the horses real, or simply a figment of Emmeline's youthful imagination? The author deliberately leaves this puzzle unresolved in this moving exploration of childhood illness and the restorative powers of the imagination.

9781406373554 • Paperback • £8.99



## The Unforgotten Coat

by Frank Cottrell Boyce (Fiction)

A heart-wrenching story of two Mongolian immigrants who land in Bootle, Merseyside. The resulting culture clash is seen through the memories of Julie, the girl the boys appoint as their 'Good Guide' when they arrive in Year 6. This is a deftly handled tale, always thought-provoking, never patronizing, and told with Cottrell Boyce's trademark dry humour. The attractive 'notebook' format and beautiful illustrative polaroid photos will entice less enthusiastic readers to engage. The short but multilayered story, with as many mysteries as the eponymous coat, will keep any reader thinking long after they have finished the book.

9781406341546 • Paperback • £7.99

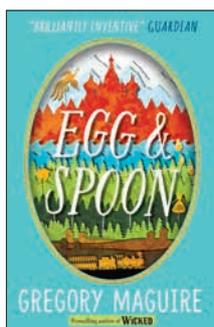


## The Wonderling

by Mira Bartók (Fiction)

Opening in the Dickensian 'Home for Wayward and Misbegotten Creatures' the novel introduces us to 'Number 13', a human-animal hybrid. He is one of the downtrodden and abandoned creatures ruled over by the awful Miss Carbunkle, destined to be enslaved when he is old enough. His good heart leads him to stand up for an even more helpless creature, who gives him his first name. The well-imagined world has elements of steam punk, Lewis Carroll and Roald Dahl. The story has warm messages about friendship and kindness, and you can't help rooting for the creatures as they make a daring escape and venture into the outside world.

9781406379907 • Paperback • £7.99

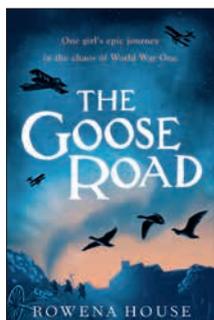


## Egg & Spoon

by Gregory Maguire (Fiction)

At first this appears to be a novel about Russia in the time of the Tsar. Peasant girl Elena is barely surviving, stealing acorns from squirrels to feed her dying mother. Then a mysterious train arrives which, rumour has it, may have the Tsar on board. In fact it doesn't, but it does bring Elena a glimpse of a different life and a friend in Cat, a girl her own age. Cat sneaks her on board to show her a Fabergé egg. For Elena the egg is proof that the famous witch, Baba Yaga, really exists. Cat scoffs, but when she falls out of the train with the egg, both girls discover that magic is not just for fairy tales. This would make a good challenge for younger able readers as well as suiting older readers who enjoy new twists on fairy tales.

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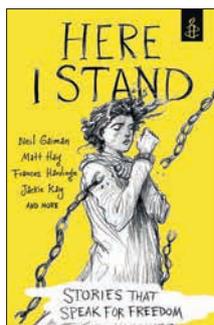


## The Goose Road

by Rowena House (Fiction)

This is a World War One story with a difference. Rather than focusing on soldiers at the front, it features the lives of mainly female French villagers left behind. One of these is the narrator, 14-year-old Angelique. Her father and brother are both away fighting, so she must help her mother to maintain the family farm. When this proves impossible, Angelique sets off on a journey across France with a flock of geese. She intends to sell them to army officers to pay off the farm's debts. The reader follows her on her remarkable adventures, all set against the background of a country whose people have been ravaged by the effects of a cruel war.

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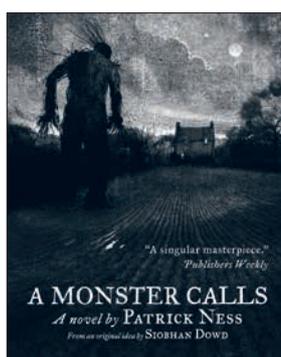


## Here I Stand: Stories that Speak for Freedom

by Amnesty International UK (Fiction)

Twenty-five contemporary stories, poems and essays explore issues around human rights in this fabulous collection, published in partnership with Amnesty International UK. Authors include favourites, such as Elizabeth Laird, Bali Rai, Sarah Crossan and Frances Hardinge. Sometimes humorous, sometimes hard-hitting, always thought-provoking, the collection covers subjects as diverse as people-trafficking, child soldiers, LGBT rights and religious discrimination.

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## A Monster Calls

by Patrick Ness (Fiction)

Tackles a child's worst nightmare - a parent being terminally ill - with verve and imagination. As Conor tries to deal with his mum's cancer, his dad's absence, his grandma and the school bullies, his dreams are invaded by a fierce and powerful yew tree who forces him to confront his very worst fear. This is a novel powered by love, anger and storytelling, which in the edition illustrated by Jim Kay is given an extra magical dimension.

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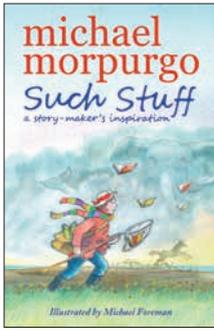


## The Next Together

by Lauren James (Fiction)

An intriguing twist on the 'boy meets girl' story. The book moves between two dates in the near future and two different periods of history as Katherine and Matthew are re-born, meet, fall in love, save the world and are tragically separated over and over again. Reincarnation? Time travel? Something else? The four stories are told in snapshots interspersed with documents (love notes, emails and so on) all of which adds pace and variety. An easy read, perfect for getting romance addicts to expand their genre horizons.

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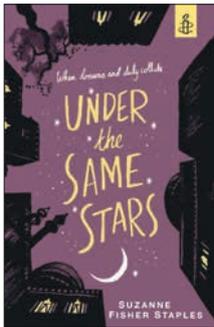


## Such Stuff: A Story-maker's Inspiration

by Michael Morpurgo and Michael Foreman (Fiction)

What a brilliant introduction to 21 of Michael Morpurgo's much-loved novels! A fascinating description of the inspiration behind each one ('the dream') is followed by a gripping extract ('the story') and then some background information about the real-life circumstances from which the writer drew inspiration ('the history'). This book cements Morpurgo's reputation as one of the greatest children's authors of recent times, and leaves the reader desperate to read the books in their entirety.

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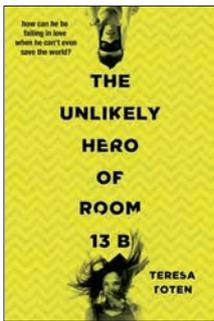


## Under the Same Stars

by Suzanne Fisher Staples (Fiction)

Shabanu started life as a nomad in the Cholistan Desert (Pakistan) in *Daughter of the Wind*. *Under the Same Stars* finds her now the favourite wife of a wealthy older man. In the circumscribed life of his compound, she keeps herself from the jealous other wives. When this becomes impossible, she flees to his house in the city. But there she faces life-or-death choices between love and duty, freedom and safety, independence and obedience. Along with the forbidden love element which would appeal to romance fans, the novel takes a thought-provoking look at the lives of women and girls in a very traditional society where they have few options.

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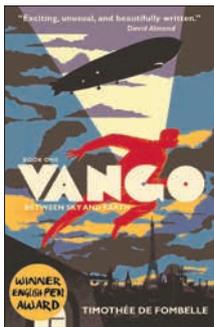


## The Unlikely Hero of Room 13B

by Teresa Toten (Fiction)

Our unlikely hero falls in love at first sight with the girl with the never-ending legs. So far so typical, except that the two meet at a support group for teens with OCD. Adam vows to cure himself, save Robyn, and win her love. Instead he finds himself lying to her and heading for a breakdown as his OCD escalates. Although Toten has clearly done her research, she ensures that the 'issues' serve the story rather than the other way around. The support group set-up provides some hilarious episodes, but you laugh with, not at, the characters and cheer them on as they battle their inner demons. In spite of some dark moments, this is a hopeful book with strong messages about self-acceptance and letting others be there for you when you need them.

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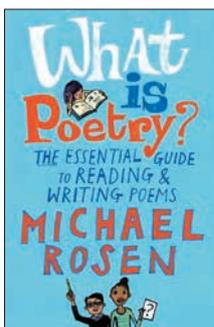


## Vango

by Timothée de Fombelle (Fiction)

Vango, a young boy, is homeless and stateless. Hunted for a murder he did not commit by an amalgam of French, German and Russian forces during the build-up to World War II, with no knowledge of his own background, and unable to find safety anywhere, he symbolises the plight of millions of young people displaced by conflicts and unable to find a place of refuge. This is a gripping adventure for lovers of the Alex Rider or Cherub books, with interest added by the use of real historical events and a starring role for a Graf Zeppelin airship!

9781406330922 • Paperback • £8.99

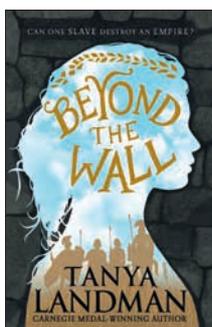


## What Is Poetry?

by Michael Rosen and Jill Calder (Non-Fiction)

Typical of Michael Rosen's own off-beat approach to poetry and life in general, his guide to poetry begins with advice about what poetry can do, rather than what it is, illustrating his ideas with examples from writers of the past, such as Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti and Thomas Hardy. The focus then switches to what readers can do with a poem, before Rosen uses examples from his own work to demonstrate the writing process, including ways to get started and strategies to keep going. Written directly to young readers, the book offers advice without ever dumbing down - so that poetry is made fun, purposeful and important.

9781844287635 • Paperback • £6.99



## Beyond the Wall

by Tanya Landman (Fiction)

Set in Roman Britain, *Beyond the Wall* is a story about power. Cassia, a British slave girl, is on the run from her abusive master; she is courageous and determined, but to manage her escape she needs to put her trust in a Roman, and Marcus is not all he seems. The story is plotted as a thriller but as it unfolds, the bigger narrative of Empire is revealed in a series of smaller portraits which dramatise the impact of oppression on different groups: most shocking, and fiercely memorable, is the unflinching examination of male violence towards women.

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## Hell and High Water

by Tanya Landman (Fiction)

Caleb's life is thrown into chaos when his father is wrongly convicted of theft and sentenced for deportation to the American colonies. This single injustice sets in motion a thrilling chain of events in this historical page-turner, set in 18th century England, around a fictional West Country sea port. Twist follows twist in a cleverly crafted novel that deals with issues of race, identity, justice, loyalty and social class.

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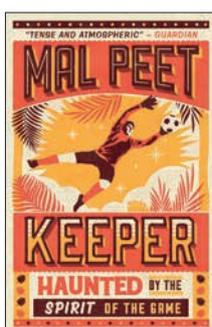


## Juvie

by Steve Watkins (Fiction)

When she takes the fall for her sister's mistake no one expects Sadie to go to jail. A judge has other ideas and she ends up in juvenile detention. Watkins brings juvie to life in convincing detail from the scratchy toilet roll, to the scratchy tempers. Chapters alternate between the present and the past, gradually filling in the story of how Sadie ended up in jail. The novel portrays young inmates with neither judgement nor sentimentality. Memorable characters, heart-warming moments and a semi-happy ending offset the portrayal of some harsh realities.

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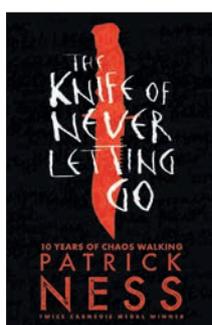


## Keeper

by Mal Peet (Fiction)

Much more than a simple story about a footballer, *Keeper* has a compelling mystery at its heart that is only finally revealed in the last pages of the novel. Set in Latin America, it tells the story of a young boy living close to the forest and his transformation into El Gato - the cat - a famous goalkeeper, thanks to the strange intervention of a ghostly figure who teaches him extraordinary skills. Though it is a book that's perfect for football lovers, it has other themes and a narrative drive that will draw in any reader, regardless of their prior interest in the beautiful game.

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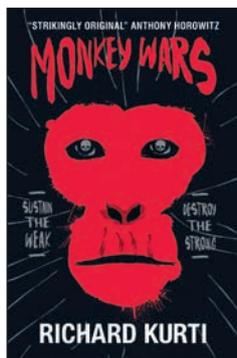


## The Knife of Never Letting Go

by Patrick Ness (Fiction)

Todd is a boy growing up in a town of men. Everyone is infected with the Noise which means they can hear each other think, all the time. Todd is about to become a man himself and must flee the town and the things he has heard. And then he meets a silence: a girl. This is a big, complex book but the kind of reader who loves to be totally immersed in an alternative world will find that it flies by. Boys and girls (and adults) alike will be carried along by the inventive narrative style, the humour, and characters to really care about. The kind of book you think about even when you are not reading it. A gripping start to the brilliant *Chaos Walking* trilogy.

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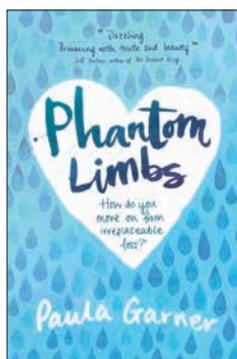


## Monkey Wars

by Richard Kurti (Fiction)

This is a brilliant book in the tradition of Orwell's *Animal Farm*, only far more gripping! Warring monkey tribes fight for supremacy on the streets of Kolkata in a brilliantly plotted, surprisingly moving novel that explores themes of leadership, loyalty, morality and trust. The characters might well be monkeys, but their motivations are all too human.

9781406368185 • Paperback • £7.99

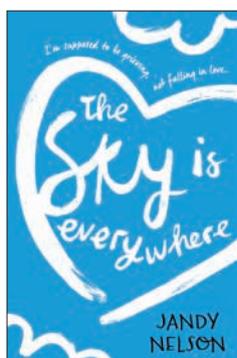


## Phantom Limbs

by Paula Garner (Fiction)

After five years of silence, Otis's old flame and ex-girl-next-door suddenly reappears in his small American town, bringing both the happiest and most painful of memories to the surface for his whole family. The type of soap-opera life events and sweet 'first kiss' moments beloved of many teen readers are underpinned by honest explorations of things like disability, sexuality and the raw pain of bereavement, making this very much a contemporary read. The f-word, explicit references to sex, alcohol and drugs, as well as prolific coffee drinking, make this one for the more mature YA reader.

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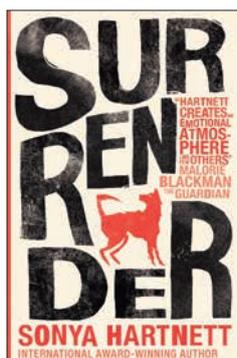


## The Sky Is Everywhere

by Jandy Nelson (Fiction)

Lennie is seventeen when her older sister dies. No longer a sibling yet finding herself unable to stop their conversation, she begins to scribble poems, and in place of late night whispering in their shared bedroom, Lennie leaves these messages to her absent sister strewn around the town. Gradually the dialogue lessens as Lennie steps forward and begins to dictate her own story; her own version of the past and her mother's disappearance, and her choices for the future. Inspired by grief and heady love – romantic and familial but also love of place and of music, this is a whimsical, breathless coming of age novel – best enjoyed in one sitting.

9781406354386 • Paperback • £7.99

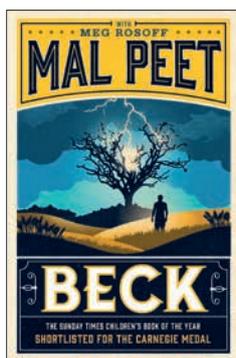


## Surrender

by Sonya Hartnett (Fiction)

A remarkable novel, in equal measures disturbing and moving, *Surrender* offers its readers a complex exploration of good and evil. Close to death, twenty year old Gabriel looks back on his short life. The years have not been kind to him, or those around him. Rejected by his family after a horrific incident in his early years, his only companionship comes from wild outsider, Finnegan, and his dog, Surrender. With alternative chapters narrated by Gabriel and Finnegan, the book provides its readers with two of the most captivating voices in YA fiction.

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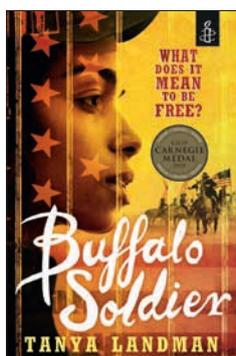


## Beck

by Mal Peet with Meg Rosoff (Fiction)

This is a powerful, sometimes disturbing story, of a young boy, known only as Beck, who is orphaned in Liverpool and sent to live with the Catholic Brothers in Canada in the early part of the 20th century. Life is never easy for Beck, and it is sometimes almost unbearable, as he travels across the North American continent, trying to find a life for himself. Teachers should read this book themselves before recommending, in case they don't think the content is suitable for particular students. Those that do read it will get a valuable insight in the power of literature to confront very difficult topics in moving, humane ways.

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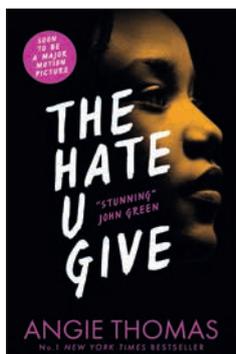


## Buffalo Soldier

by Tanya Landman (Fiction)

This novel begins where many slave stories end, with the last days of the American Civil War and the freeing of slaves in the South. In the ensuing chaos, our narrator, newly-freed Charlotte, soon discovers that no thought has been given as to how the ex-slaves might live now. She is protected for a while by two ex-house slaves, but when they are brutally lynched the last of her former life is stripped away and she is completely alone. Realising that it is safer to be a boy and that joining the army at least offers food and shelter she becomes Charley, raw recruit, in the newly formed Company W. It's a long, hard road to her happy ending and something that might genuinely be called freedom. A gritty, edge-of-the-seat history lesson with an engaging guide.

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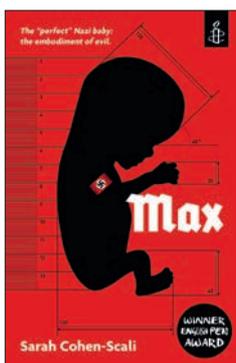


## The Hate U Give

by Angie Thomas (Fiction)

This fabulous book is perfect for young readers interested in the Black Lives Matter campaign and in issues of identity in general. It is narrated by Starr, a sixteen-year-old girl who lives in a poor, black neighbourhood, but who attends high school in the mainly white suburbs. When she witnesses the fatal shooting by police of her unarmed childhood friend, Khalil, she has her eyes opened to the lengths that authority will go to in order to cover its tracks. Aware of the delicate balance she must tread between speaking the truth and protecting her family and wider community, this memorable read explores important issues of power, justice and race.

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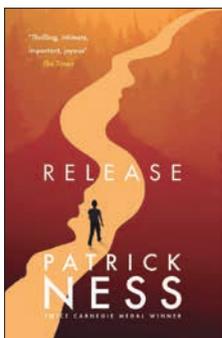


## Max

by Sarah Cohen-Scali (Fiction)

This powerful novel is narrated by Max, a boy born into a programme run by Nazi Germans to produce perfect Aryan children. This makes for tough reading: it's hard hearing about events through the eyes of a child indoctrinated with Nazi ideology. Yet somehow the author generates sympathy for him as the novel's events track the course of World War Two to disturbing yet stunning effect. This is a novel that not only tells a fascinating story, but also demonstrates to its readers the possibilities opened up by experimental narrative techniques.

9781406368253 • Paperback • £7.99

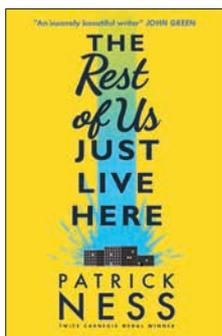


## Release

by Patrick Ness (Fiction)

Who could resist a YA novel pitched by the author as a cross between Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Judy Bloom? Patrick Ness pulls it off too, with this intimate portrayal of a single day in the life of Adam Thorn. Revelations abound in the short period narrated, as Adam's life begins to unravel: no great surprise when your dad is a hard-line Christian preacher and you haven't told him that you're gay. This book will appeal to YA readers coping with change in their own lives, but it also offers narrative challenge in its use of a hallucinogenic parallel plot involving fawns that can talk, murder victims brought back from the dead and a mysterious, powerful queen.

9781406378696 • Paperback • £7.99



## The Rest of Us Just Live Here

by Patrick Ness (Fiction)

More than just another American high school tale of teenage angst, Patrick Ness's immensely readable novel is pleasingly surreal, with each chapter prefaced by a tiny extract from a parallel story in which the school's 'indie kids' are mysteriously disappearing (taken by zombies?) – the sort of happenings that in another teenage story would take centre stage. The issues are weighty – OCD, anxiety, alcoholism, anorexia, politics, family breakdown – but the story is not issue-led and friendship (over family) fuels this witty and thought-provoking novel.

9781406365566 • Paperback • £7.99

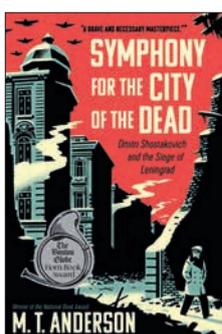


## Soonchild

by Russell Hoban and Alexis Deacon (Fiction)

Soonchild refuses to be born because she hasn't been exposed to any World Songs. Her father, John, a shaman in the frozen north, who has been neglecting his powers, must reconnect to the world of nature and his ancestors to recapture these songs for her. His quest to do so takes him into weird and wonderful places, filled with danger, demons and death. This dreamlike novel, beautifully illustrated by Alexis Deacon throughout, gives young readers an insight into how in fiction the modern can connect with the magical.

9781406344189 • Paperback • £6.99

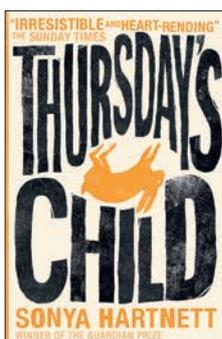


## Symphony for the City of the Dead

by M. T. Anderson (Fiction)

Part biography, part history, this book offers a fascinating insight into Russia under Stalin, the history of World War Two and the Siege of Leningrad, all through the lens of the life and work of legendary composer, Dmitri Shostakovich. It will leave readers shocked at the suffering endured by Russian people for much of the 20th century and amazed and inspired by the power of music to lift spirits even in the darkest of times.

9780763691004 • Paperback • £9.99



## Thursday's Child

by Sonya Hartnett (Fiction)

It's difficult to categorise this brilliant novel from one of the most distinctive voices in children's literature. In part, it's a realistic portrayal of an Australian family falling apart during the Great Depression of the 1920s and 30s, all told through the captivating voice of young girl, Harper. In part, though, it is a magical realist tale, with Harper's brother, Tin, disappearing to live in a network of tunnels beneath the ground. Thought-provoking and challenging, this is a book to show young readers some of the thrilling possibilities of the novel form.

9781406308525 • Paperback • £7.99