Chatterbooks Activity Pack

Cosy Winter Reads

Reading and activity ideas for your Chatterbooks group
**Cosy Winter Reads**

Here’s a collection of great reads to enjoy and talk about in your groups. Read aloud from them to each other or curl up with them in your favourite reading places! In this Chatterbooks activity pack you’ll find cosy, familiar, and magical stories to keep out the winter chill – and adventures in snow and ice bringing shivers and thrills and wonder.

There are books for all ages, plus discussion and activity ideas for your Chatterbooks group, inspired by these winter reads from our children’s publisher partners.

The pack is brought to you by The Reading Agency and their publisher partnership Children’s Reading Partners.

**Chatterbooks** is a reading group programme for children aged 4 to 12 years. It is coordinated by The Reading Agency and its patron is author Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Chatterbooks groups run in libraries and schools, supporting and inspiring children’s literacy development by encouraging them to have a really good time reading and talking about books.

**The Reading Agency** is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more through programmes for adults, young people and Children – including the Summer Reading Challenge, and Chatterbooks. See [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

**Children’s Reading Partners** is a national partnership of children’s publishers and libraries working together to bring reading promotions and author events to as many children and young people as possible.

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**Cosy Winter Reads: Ideas for discussion and activities**

What are your group members' favourite winter reads? What stories do they recommend to keep out the cold – or to take you into wintry adventures?! Get together a collection of these books – and see all the reading ideas in this pack. And have sheets of flip-chart paper for collecting people’s thoughts and ideas in discussions.

**Warm ups**

**Scrambled wintry words!**

Here are words which all have something to do with winter. Unscramble them to find out what they are!

**CHART MISS**
A winter festival (9) ___________

**FIT REEF**
We decorate this (3,4) ___ __

**LASS BLOWN**
We throw these! (9) ___________

**WAKEN FLOSS**
These beautiful white ice crystals fall from the sky (10) ___________

**BIRD LAZZ**
You don’t want to be caught in this winter weather! (8) __________

**RICEKIN**
Take care not to slip here! (3, 4) ___ ___

**NAG KITS**
Icy blading! (7) __________

**BOOT GANG**
For riding down snowy hills (8) __________

**PINE GUN**
This bird lives in icy places (7) __________

**ABLE BUS**
Playing with words
Have you heard of Spoonerisms?
About 100 years ago a clergyman called the Reverend Spooner became famous for mixing up his words in a special way, by swapping the sounds at the beginning of words – e.g. Winnie the Pooh becomes Pinnie the Wooh! And the Sleeping Beauty is the Beeping Sleauty!

What are these favourite reads?
- Buss in Poots
- Baddington Pear
- The Hat in the Cat
- Sister Mink
- Dig of the Stump
- Bedsticks and Broomknobs
- The Ozard of Wiz

Talk about
Book talking
Here are some questions to choose from to get your group chatting:
- How did you feel when reading this book? And when you’d finished it?
- Which parts of the story do you remember most?
- Did you skip any parts? Which ones?
- Was there anything that took you by surprise?
- Did the story hold your interest? How did it do this?
- What did you especially like about the story?
- What were the funniest/saddest/most exciting bits for you?
- Talk about things in the book that got you thinking.
- What single word (or two!) describes this book for you?

Cosy things and cosy places
What does the word ‘cosy’ mean to you? What does it make you think of? Scarves and mittens? A mug of hot chocolate? Getting together with friends and family? Where do you like best to curl up with a good book (and maybe a bar of chocolate!)?
What are your favourite cosy reading places? Perhaps by the fire or a radiator? In a comfy arm chair? Snuggled up in bed?!
Your best cosy winter reads
What are your favourite reads? Which books do you choose for your cosy curl up?! Collect your group’s recommendations and make your list into a poster for the library. Here’s a template you could use:

COSY WINTER READS!
Recommended by Chatterbooks Group
**Winter time**

Talk about winter time: what do you like best about winter? What don’t you like? What was the best winter you’ve ever had? Why was it so good?

Get a big sheet of card and lots of coloured paper, shiny paper, magazines and other craft materials – plus scissors and glue – and make a group collage, as real or as abstract as you like, with words and pictures all about winter!

**Winter treats**

In this pack there are several books about films or plays or pantomimes at Christmas: *Angel Mae and the Christmas Baby* (Shirley Hughes), *The Secret Hen-House Theatre* (Helen Peters), and *Olivia’s Winter Wonderland* (Lyn Gardner).

What films and pantomimes have you enjoyed? Have you acted in Christmas plays?

**Digital ideas**

Join the [Chatterbooks group page on Facebook](#) and share what your group is doing.

There is a lovely video from Barry Chatterbooks group, in the Vale of Glamorgan. It’s a review of Charlotte’s Web, which they’ve created using an app called [Tellagami®](#) - a fun way to share animated messages with customised characters, created dialogue and voice recordings. You could have a go with this app to create reviews of your favourite winter reads – then share them on our Chatterbooks Facebook page.

Another great share would be pictures of your winter time collages.

**Longer activities**

**A ‘cosy winter reads’ story session**

Make a cosy corner in your library or classroom, with cushions and soft lights, and read favourite stories to each other. You could invite younger children to your session – ask in advance which picture book stories they like, and read these to them. Or cuddle up with your family. Don’t forget refreshments! How about chocolate biscuits or mince pies? In the book list below you’ll find some lovely winter reads to enjoy together.

**A snow poem**

On a flip chart collect together all the words you can think of to do with snow: white, soft, wet, crystals…. Then together, or individually, choose your favourite words to write a poem about snow. Here’s a first line you could use to get you going: *Snow fell silently through the night...*
Patterns and pictures with paper cuts
Some of the books below have beautiful illustrations created with paper cuts. Have a look at *Snowflake in My Pocket* (Bright & Rong), *Classic Fairy Tales* (Doherty & Ray – silhouette illustrations), and *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (Lagerlof).
Have a go at your own papercuts – make snowflakes to decorate your library – or your snow poem.

Or make paper lanterns, like the ones in *Angel Mae and the Christmas Baby*.
Here are a couple of websites with tips for [snowflakes](#) and [lanterns](#).

Animals in winter
Get together a collection of books about animals and birds that have to get through wintry weather. Find out, from books and the internet, the different ways in which they manage it – e.g. by storing up food, hibernating, having thick fur or skin.

Here are some creatures to research – you’ll also find them in stories in this pack.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creature</th>
<th>How it manages in winter – and keeps cosy!</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bear</td>
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<td>Goose</td>
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<td>Penguin</td>
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<td>Pyrenean Mountain Dog!</td>
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<td>Reindeer</td>
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<td>Whale</td>
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<td>Wolf</td>
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‘Cosy winter reads’ jumper
At Christmas people often wear cosy jumpers with bright designs and in bright colours – something to cheer us up in cold wintery weather! Colour in this jumper with your own design, inspired by your favourite winter read!

My Cosy Winter Reads Jumper

Design inspired by the book…………………………………………………………….
**Cosy Winter Reads – the books**

**Picture Books**

**Snowflake in My Pocket**  
Rachel Bright & Yu Rong  
Walker  
978-1406371819

The snow is coming - Bear can smell it! But then Bear suddenly falls sick. Can Squirrel still bring some silvery, sparkly, magical whiteness to his best friend? This book, with Yu Rong's papercut artwork, captures the cozy, cuddly feeling of sharing a snowy night with a loved one.

*He ran in happy circles, catching the snowflakes as they fell, until he found the perfectest one.*

Rachel Bright has written and illustrated several books, including *Love Monster*, and *The Lion Inside*.

**The Storm Whale in Winter**  
Benji Davies  
Simon & Schuster  
978-1471119989

It’s winter time and Noi’s island is covered in a blanket of snow. Even the sea is icing over. Noi is worried about the little whale he saved last summer: Can he survive the harsh conditions? Little does Noi know that it’s the little whale’s turn to save him.

*Noi didn’t know what to do. As he curled up tight he imagined the deep sea swirling beneath him and he began to feel afraid.*

Benji Davies has worked on picture books and animated short films, music videos and commercials. *The Storm Whale* was his first picture book. He lives in London.

**Angel Mae and the Christmas Baby**  
Shirley Hughes  
Walker  
978-1406372960

Christmas is coming and Mae Morgan’s mum is expecting a baby. At school, Mae is delighted to be given the part of the Angel Gabriel in the nativity play. But will the new baby steal her glory?

*I’m going to be the angel Gave-you! ... A very special angel,* said Mae proudly.

Shirley Hughes has twice won the Kate Greenaway Medal. She has published more than two hundred titles, including the much-loved picture book *Dogger*. She lives in West London.

**Little Mouse**  
Tiikka Jantti  
Scribble  
978-1925228762

A day in the life of a toddler is a busy one and Little Mouse’s day is no exception. With getting dressed, going to childcare, eating dinner - and splashing in puddles! - Little Mouse has a lot to do ... and a lot to say ‘no’ to!

*When Little Mouse woke up in the morning, he was happy. ‘It’s time to get dressed,’ said Mummy Mouse. ‘No!’ yelled Little Mouse.*

Riikka Jantti is a Helsinki-based illustrator and author. In 2009 she won the Tieto-Lauri, an award for children’s non-fiction, for her illustrations in *Viidakkotanssi (Jungle Dance).*
**Ollie’s Christmas Reindeer**  Nicola Killen  
*Simon & Schuster  978-0857076014*

When a jingling sound wakes her from her sleep, a little girl’s dreams come true: she meets a lost reindeer in the forest and a magical adventure together soon becomes a Christmas never to forget.

*They travelled over snow-covered lands and seas glittering in the moonlight. As they journeyed on Ollie shivered and the reindeer knew there was one last place he should take her.*

Nicola Killen designed Christmas cards before doing an MA in Children’s Book Illustration. Her books include *I Got a Crocodile* and she lives in Cambridge.

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**The Wish Tree**  Kyo Maclear & Chris Turnham  
*Chronicle Books  978-1452150659*

When Charles’s brother and sister tell him there’s no such thing as a wish tree, he and his trusty toboggan know better and they set out to find one. What they discover is that all you need to find a wish tree is a wish and some friends.

*The wish tree was nowhere to be found. But they did find...Fox, who was late getting berries to her burrow.*

Kyo Maclear is a novelist, essayist and children's author. She lives in Toronto. Chris Turnham is well-known for his architectural illustrations. This is his first picture book.

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**First Snow**  Bomi Park  
*Chronicle Books  978-1452154725*

Look out. Now look up. From the sky one flake falls, then another. And just like that – it’s snowing. A young girl wakes up to the year’s first snowy day.

*Pit, pit, pit against the window  Glistening, floating in the night*

Bomi Park lives in Seoul, South Korea. She started to design cards and now tells stories through her art. *First Snow* is her debut book.

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**The Not-So-Perfect Penguin**  Steve Smallman  
*QED  978-1781711347*

All of the penguins are smart and sensible. All except, Percy, who is... well... not so perfect. Each day is a struggle for Percy to behave like his peers: he means no harm, he just wants to have fun. But when Percy leaves, things just aren't the same. The penguins realise there's more to life than being perfect.

*While the other penguins waddled along seriously, Percy slid on his tummy.*

Steve Smallman has written and illustrated many children’s books. He also teaches illustration workshops in schools, including mural-painting. He is the winner of the 2009 Sheffield Children’s Book award.
Shorter fiction and story collections

*Enid Blyton’s Christmas Tales* (cover art Mark Beech)
Hodder  978-1444931136

*Enid Blyton’s Christmas Stories* are perfect for reading alone or sharing - she describes the excitement of anticipating gifts, the pleasures of making special food, singing carols, and sharing good times with friends and families. As ever with Blyton, there is mischief and mayhem but good prevails in the end!

Then he showed him a book which could turn its own pages, and a collection of farmyard animals which could moo or bleat or crow, and a doll who could brush her own hair.

**Enid Blyton** (1897-1968) was a children’s writer whose books have sold more than 600 million copies. They include the much loved series about *The Famous Five* and *The Secret Seven*.

What do you think of the unusual toys in the story *The Golden Key*? Remember these stories were written more than 50 years ago! Can you invent some more toys?

*The Fish in the Bathtub*  Eoin Colfer & Peter Bailey
Barrington Stoke  978-1781123607

A heart-warming story set in post-war Poland. Lucja’s Grandpa Feliks has seen off the German army, and the Communists, and now looks forward to a peaceful retirement. He plans to begin with a tasty Christmas Eve dinner of carp. But when the carp arrives alive and takes up residence in the bathtub and Lucja’s heart, has Grandpa Feliks finally met his match?

High quality cream paper and a special easy to read font ensure a smooth read for all.

_Last year Grandpa Feliks had taken on the duty of waiting in line for the fish for Christmas Eve dinner. He put newspapers in his shoes and stood in line for six hours outside the fish shop._

**Eoin Colfer** is the author of the Artemis Fowl series . His books have been shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal and the Irish Book of the Decade. He lives in Ireland.

**Peter Bailey**’s father worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum and this is where Peter began to draw. He has illustrated over 100 books by writers including Philip Pullman and Allan Ahlberg.

Grandpa Feliks looks forward to a fish dinner of carp at Christmas. What is your favourite meal?

*Classic Fairy Tales*  Berlie Doherty & Jane Ray  Walker
978-1406365962

Twelve well-loved fairy tales, including *Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel, Beauty and the Beast, Rumpelstiltskin, Aladdin, the Fire-bird and Snow White*, are here beautifully told and illustrated.

_She heard a fluttering as if all the leaves were unfurling at once, and the birds of the tree flew down carrying a silver dress and slippers that glittered like stars. Cinderella put them on and ran to the ball_

**Berlie Doherty** has written many books and plays, including *Granny Was a Buffer Girl* and *Dear Nobody*, which both won the Carnegie Medal. Berlie lives in Derbyshire.

**Jane Ray** has designed greetings cards, wrapping paper, book jackets and posters, but the making of picture books has now become the most important aspect of her work. She lives in London.
Try creating pictures with silhouettes – cutting them out, or drawing outlines and shading in the shapes in black.

**Winter Magic  Abi Elphinstone (curator)**  Simon & Schuster  978-1471159800

An anthology of frosty, magical short stories from writers including Michelle Magorian, Berlie Doherty, Lauren St John, Piers Torday and Katherine Woodfine, and edited by author Abi Elphinstone. This collection features snow queens, frost fairs, snow dragons and pied pipers; for all ages.  

*The ice wasn’t smooth like a rink. It was ridged and rippled where the river had frozen mid-flow, which made it less slippery than she expected. Yet despite the fire-baskets that burned at intervals along the ice, it was also quite dark so they had to tread carefully.*

**Abi Elphinstone** is author of the *Dreamsnatcher* trilogy. She also volunteers for Beanstalk charity, teaches creative writing workshops in schools and travels the world looking for her next story.

Find out about the Frost Fairs which were held on the river Thames in London when it froze over in winters in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Why did it freeze then? And what kind of activities were there on the ice?

**The Adventures of Miss Petitfour  Anne Michaels & Emma Block**  Bloomsbury  978-1408868041

Meet the irresistible Miss Petitfour (a name possibly descended from bakers of tiny delicious cakes!). She loves baking and making and dancing with her cats, but most of all she loves to fly. All she has to do is pick up a favourite tablecloth and catch the breeze, to swoosh off on an adventure - with her many cats dangling paw-to-tail behind her.

*Miss Petitfour believed firmly that every adventure past her doorstep – even just a jaunt to the grocery shop – must end with a tea party…*

**Anne Michaels** wrote the award-winning novel *Fugitive Pieces*. This is her first book for children. **Emma Block** is an illustrator - her first book, *Tea and Cake*, came out in 2011.

Think of some more stories which have cosy endings – with tea, or supper, or bed time!  How about *Where the Wild Things Are? Or The Elephant and the Bad Baby* – or Famous Five adventures?

**Santa Claude  Alex T Smith**  Hodder  978-1444926491

Claude and Sir Bobblysock think they’ve caught a burglar coming down the chimney on Christmas Eve. They clap on the handcuffs and turn on the lights. Oh no! It’s Santa Claus! Now the key for the handcuffs is lost and it’s up to our two heroes to deliver all the presents before midnight…

*Then he flung everything out of his beret and had a jolly good root round in it. Gosh! He was ever so excited!*

**Alex T Smith** is a writer and illustrator, who lives in Warwickshire. ‘Claude’ will appear in his own TV series on Disney Junior in 2017.
Look at all the things Claude manages to keep in his beret! What has your group got in their pockets!!

Longer fiction

**Maybe a Fox**  Kathi Appelt and Alison McGhee  Walker
978-1406372892
Sylvie and Jules, sisters, and best friends. Jules' favourite thing is collecting rocks, Sylvie's is running - fast. But when Sylvie runs to the most dangerous part of the river to throw in a wish rock, she is so fast that no one sees what happens when she disappears. At that moment, in another part of the woods, a shadow fox is born: half spirit, half animal. When Jules goes to throw one last wish rock into the river for her lost sister, the human and shadow worlds collide. One family's heartbreak unfolds into something epic, mythic, shimmering and, most of all, hopeful. *But for now, her kits safe inside her, she lifted her face towards the sky and cried into the morning air, a greeting to the day and the new knowledge that the falling snow had brought with it.*

**Kathi Appelt** is the author of the Newbery Honoree *The Underneath* as well as many picture books, including *Counting Crows*. She lives in Texas.

**Alison McGhee** is the author of many children’s books including *Firefly Hollow* and *All Rivers Flow to the Sea*. She lives in Minneapolis.

**Belle and Sébastien: The Child of the Mountains**  Cécile Aubrey & Helen Stephens  Alma Books  978-1847495914
The son of a Gypsy woman, Sebastien is found as a new born baby in the Alps and brought up by Guillaume and his grandchildren Angelina and Jean. Born on the same day, Belle is a beautiful white Pyrenean Mountain Dog who has been ill-treated and escapes from a kennel. When Sebastien rescues the runaway Belle, they form a lifelong friendship and embark on exciting adventures in the mountains. *It began with a cloud of powdery snow, and the whole mountain growling. Sebastien covered his face with his arms; he screamed: ‘Belle!’ And wrapping his arms about the dog’s neck, he hid his face in her fur.*

**Cecile Aubery** was a film actor who went on to write children’s books and scenarios for children’s television. She was especially known for her books and TV series about *Belle et Sebastien*.

**Helen Stephens** is an author and illustrator; her picture books include *How to Hide a Lion* and *The Night Iceberg*.

**The Wolf Princess**  Cathryn Constable  Chicken House
978-1910002094
Sophie dreams of being someone special, but she could never have imagined this ... On a school trip to Russia, she and her two friends get on the wrong train. They are rescued by the beautiful Princess Anna Volkonskaya, who takes them to her winter palace and mesmerises them with stories of lost diamonds and a tragic past. *As night falls and wolves prowl, Sophie discovers more than dreams in the crumbling palace of secrets.*
It made her feel safe to talk about her father and the book and the stories. ‘He would sit on the edge of my bed and read to me until I fell asleep.’

Cathryn Constable is a former journalist; The Wolf Princess is her first novel. She lives in London.

A Christmas Carol Charles Dickens ill. P J Lynch Walker 978-1406356663

Ebenezer Scrooge is a mean skinflint. On Christmas Eve he is visited by the ghost of his old friend Jacob Marley whose spirit has wandered the earth for seven years. To avoid the same fate, Scrooge sets off on a hair-raising journey through his past, present and future. Will he see the error of his ways before it’s too late?

No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh glorious! Glorious!

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was one of the greatest Victorian novelists. His work includes the classics David Copperfield, Oliver Twist and Great Expectations.

Author and illustrator P. J. Lynch is the fourth Laureate na nÓg, Ireland’s laureate for children’s literature. He has won many awards including the Mother Goose Award, the Christopher Medal three times, and the Kate Greenaway Medal on two occasions.

Olivia’s Winter Wonderland Lyn Gardner Nosy Crow 978-0857631343

It’s winter at the Swan Academy, and that means panto! While Olivia practises being the back end of a horse, everyone else is auditioning for a major new movie. Soon the school is full of rivalry and suspicion, nasty tricks and strange mysteries. To lighten the mood, there is a festive ice-skating trip. But as the skaters twirl among the twinkling lights, Olivia realises that the season of goodwill is anything but.

Huge mirrors reflected back the glitter of a thousand crystal drops that dripped from a vast chandelier, which hung over rows of parched burgundy seats. ‘It’s a theatre!’ breathed Olivia. ‘A forgotten empty theatre.’

Lyn Gardner is a theatre critic and journalist, and now writes the Olivia books. She lives near Richmond Park.

The Wonderful Adventures of Nils Selma Lagerlof; adapted by Kochka; ill. Olivier Latyk QED 978-1910277188

Nils is bewitched with a spell that shrinks him to the size of a thumb. He takes off on the back of a young goose named Martin, for a wonderful journey among the wild geese. This is a shortened version of a Swedish classic* with striking illustrations and die-cut pages. (For many years a picture of Nils on the back of a goose in flight appeared on the reverse of the Swedish 20 krona banknote – only recently replaced by Pippi Longstocking!)

Nils Holgersson let out a cry of joy when he saw the first pine forest, the first grey hut, the first goat and the first cat... A ballet of birds was heading south. Laplanders and reindeers were leaving the mountains too.
Selma Lagerlöf (1858-1940) was a Swedish author and the first female writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.
Kochka was a lawyer in France. She now writes and adapts children’s books.
Olivier Latyk is an illustrator. He also designs toys and works for international press such as the New-York Times.

**The Apprentice Witch**  James Nicol  Chicken House
978-1910655153
Arianwyn fluffs her witch’s assessment. Awarded the dull bronze disc of an apprentice - to the glee of her arch-rival, Gimma - she’s sent to protect the remote, dreary town of Lull. But her new life is far from boring. As she struggles with her spells, it’s soon clear there’s much more than her pride at stake. Make a new magical friend in this fascinating story! James Nicol lives in Cambridgeshire; this is his first book.

From *The Apprentice Witch’s Handbook*: ‘Witches have always used magical symbols known as glyphs to harness, control and utilise the magic around us.’
‘Charms can be effective protection against a variety of dark spirits and come in various forms, the most common being those created on small glass spheres containing natural objects and bound or activated with a series of glyphs.’

Look at the glyph designs at the end of the book, and then create a charm – maybe a wish for warm sunshine, or for something to keep you cosy in winter! Collect small items like beads, dried flowers and tiny shells. Draw your glyph design, then seal your glyph and objects in a glass jar. See pp 96 and 126 for ideas!

**The Secret Hen House Theatre**  Helen Peters  Nosy Crow
978-0857630650
Since the death of her mother, Hannah’s family life has been somewhat chaotic. Her father is absorbed by running their dilapidated farm, and the four children are increasingly left to their own devices – including writing and directing plays in a disused hen house. When the farm is threatened, Hannah determines to save it and realize her dreams at the same time.

The curtains, strung on a length of washing line that Hannah had taken from the garden, glimmered and danced as they caught the winter sunlight... ‘Now it’s really starting to look like a theatre.’
After university Helen Peters became an English and Drama teacher. She lives in London.

**The Wolf Wilder**  Katherine Rundell & Gelrev Ongbico  Bloomsbury  978-1408854853
Feodora and her mother live in the snowbound woods of Russia, and ten minutes away, in a ruined chapel, lives a pack of wolves. Feodora’s mother is a wolf wilder, and Feo is a wolf wilder in training. A wolf wilder is the opposite of an animal tamer: it is a person who teaches tamed animals to fend for themselves, to fight and to run, and to be wary of humans. When threatened by the hostility of the Russian Army, Feo has to go on the run. Here is a story of revolution and adventure, about standing up for the things you love. And, of course, wolves.
She lived in a wooden house made of timber taken from the surrounding forest. The walls were layered with sheep’s wool to keep out the Russian winter, and the inside was lit with hurricane lamps.

Katherine Rundell grew up in Africa and Europe. She is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. Her books include The Girl Savage, and Rooftoppers, which won the Blue Peter and Waterstones children’s book awards.

**The Story of a Seagull and the Cat who taught her to fly**

Luis Sepulveda & Satoshi Kitamura  
*Alma Books*  
978-1846884009

A Cat, A Seagull, An Impossible Task...Caught up in an oil spill, a dying seagull scrambles ashore to lay her final egg and lands on a balcony, where she meets Zorba, a big black cat from the port of Hamburg. The cat promises to look after the egg – and to teach the baby gull to fly. Can Zorba honour his promise and help Lucky, the adopted little seagull, the strength to discover her true nature? This is a moving story with a strong environmental theme.

Very carefully he (Zorba the cat) lay down and pawed the egg close to his belly. He felt ridiculous. He thought of the teasing he would get...But a promise is a promise, and so, warmed by the sunshine, he fell asleep with the blue speckled egg next to his big fat black stomach.

Luis Sepulveda was born in Chile – and jailed by the Pinochet regime. He worked as a crew member on a Greenpeace ship and has written many adult novels and stories for children.

Satoshi Kitamura was a commercial artist in Japan, and then London, mainly designing greeting cards. He now illustrates children’s books.

**There May Be a Castle**  
Piers Torday  
*Hodder*  
978-1848668621

Eleven-year-old Mouse is travelling to see his grandparents on Christmas Eve with his mother and two sisters. But it's snowing, and visibility is bad - the car goes off the road, and crashes. Mouse is thrown from the car. When he wakes, he's not in his world any more. He meets a sheep named Bar, and a sarcastic horse named Nonky, who is a surprising mix of his beloved toy horse and his older sister. So begins a quest to find a castle in a world of wonder - a world of monsters, minstrels, dangerous knights and mysterious wizards; a world of terrifying danger but also more excitement than Mouse has ever known. But why are they looking for a castle? As the cold grows, we realise it might just have something to do with the family he's left behind; and that Mouse's quest is more important than ever. This is a novel about love and death. It's about the power of stories to change the way we view the world - and it's about the power of a child to change their own world.

He called again, louder and louder and still. He cupped his hands around his mouth and hollered. Running back and forth – although that was hard because the snow was so deep – and shouting as his feet plunged in and out of the drifts. The more his voice echoed back across to him from the silent trees, the more desperate he became.

Have a look at the Chatterbooks activity pack featuring *The Dark Wild* by Piers Torday

**Cosy Winter Reads**  More reading

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<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PUBLISHER</th>
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Answer Sheet

Scrambled wintry words: answers

1. CHRISTMAS
2. FIR TREE
3. SNOWBALLS
4. SNOWFLAKES
5. BLIZZARD
6. ICE RINK
7. SKATING
8. TOBOGGAN
9. PENGUIN
10. BAUBLES

Playing with words: Spoonerisms

- Puss in Boots
- Paddington Bear
- The Cat in the Hat
- Mister Stink
- Stig of the Dump
- Bedknobs and Broomsticks
- The Wizard of Oz