

## Books of the Year booklist for children and young people

December 2020

It's been another year full of fantastic books and we're delighted to present our Books of the Year list for 2020 for children and young people. Our staff have chosen their top recommendations of new books from the year and we hope that you'll be inspired to borrow at least one of them from the library or buy a copy for your yourself.

### Younger children



#### ***A Story About Afiya* by James Berry and Anna Cunha, Lantana, 978-1911373339**

Some people have dresses for every occasion but Afiya needs only one. Her dress records the memories of her childhood, from roses in bloom to pigeons in flight, from tigers at the zoo to October leaves falling. A joyful celebration of a young girl's childhood, written by the late Coretta Scott King Book Award-winning Jamaican poet James Berry.

#### ***I'm Sticking with You* by Smriti Halls and Steve Small, Simon & Schuster Children's UK, 978-1471182815**

*Wherever you're going, I'm going too.  
Whatever you're doing, I'm sticking with you.*

It's wonderful to have good friends to see you through the good times and the bad. But sometimes, friends can also be a bit... well... overbearing.

#### ***My Best Friend* by Rob Hodgson, Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 978-0711248359**

Meet Mouse! Mouse lives in the tree with his best friend... Giant Owl. They used to do the most fun stuff imaginable! They'd play chase and Giant Owl would nearly catch Mouse, but not quite. Giant Owl loved Mouse so much that she used to give him as many doughnuts as he wanted and the most amazing presents, including his own house (a cage)! But then one day something happened, and now Mouse has found himself stuck in a very dark place... will his best friend help come to his rescue?

***Nine Lives Newton* by Alice McKinley, Simon & Schuster Children's UK, 978-1471181184**

If Newton's got nine lives, he can be a daring dog of danger! Or can he. . .?

Meet Newton – the dog who thinks he has nine lives and infinite luck. And if Newton has nine lives, then that means he can do all his favourite things but be MUCH more daring.

But what if Newton's got it all wrong and he's not quite as invincible as he thinks he is?

***The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad, S. K. Ali and Hatem Aly, Andersen Press, 978-1783449729**

Asiya's hijab is like the ocean and the sky, no line between them, saying hello with a loud wave. It's Faizah's first day of school, and her older sister Asiya's first day of wearing hijab – made of a beautiful blue fabric. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful. In the face of hurtful, confusing words, will Faizah find new ways to be strong?

***The Undefeated* by Kwame Alexander and Kadir Nelson, Andersen Press, 978-1783449293**

From *New York Times* bestselling-author Kwame Alexander comes this powerful and important ode to black history: the strength and bravery of everyday people and the grit, passion, and perseverance of some of the world's greatest artists, athletes, and activists.

With references to lyrics and lines originally shared by our most celebrated heroes, this poem digs into the not-so-distant past to underline the endurance and spirit of those surviving and thriving in the present.

**Older children**



***Children of the Benin Kingdom* by Dinah Orji and Sonya McGilchrist, Dinosaur Books Ltd, 978-1999336332**

Ada has lived close to the great rainforest for her whole life, helping her beloved Papa Eze to heal fellow villagers when they fall sick. But when Papa Eze himself becomes unwell he knows it's time to reveal to Ada her true heritage - a closely kept secret that has so far protected his daughter from her enemies. Ada must now travel deep into the forest to discover the ancient Edo kingdom of Benin and use everything within her power to heal the terrible divisions that are tearing the kingdom apart. Pursued by those who want her dead, Ada sets off on an incredible journey which tests her strengths to their limit with just her close friends, the guidance of her ancestors and her own self-belief to help her.

***Older Not Wiser* by Sophy Henn, HarperCollins Children's Books, 978-0008268060**

Jeanie's Grandma is BAD. Not bad like a vampire or a gangster or anything, more like . . . up to no good. Sometimes she can be a bit embarrassing but most of the time she's REALLY fun, especially when she gets Jeanie involved in her mischievous schemes. Everyone says she's old enough to know better . . . but she doesn't seem to care one bit. In fact, Jeanie thinks she might quite like it!

***Tamarind & the Star of Ishta*, Chicken House Books, 978-1913322175**

Tamarind never knew her Indian mum, Chinty, who died soon after she was born. So when she arrives at her ancestral home, a huge mansion in the Himalayas surrounded by luxuriant gardens, she's full of questions for her extended family. But instead of answers, she finds an ominous silence - and a trickle of intriguing clues: an abandoned hut, a friendly monkey, a glowing star ring, and a strange girl in the garden who calls herself Ishta. Slowly, Tamarind unravels a mystery at the heart of who she is ...

***The Infinite* by Patience Agbabi, Canongate Books, 978-1786899651**

Leaplings, children born on the 29th of February, are very rare. Rarer still are Leaplings with The Gift - the ability to leap through time. Elle BÍbi-Imbelé Ifiè has The Gift, but she's never used it. Until now.

On her twelfth birthday, Elle and her best friend Big Ben travel to the Time Squad Centre in 2048. Elle has received a mysterious warning from the future. Other Leaplings are disappearing in time - and not everyone at the centre can be trusted.

Soon Elle's adventure becomes more than a race through time. It's a race against time. She must fight to save the world as she knows it - before it ceases to exist...

***The Mysteries of the Universe: Discover the best-kept secrets of space* by Will Gater, DK Children, 978-0241412473**

Every page of this captivating book reveals the secrets behind more than 100 celestial objects, from planets, asteroids to black holes and galaxies. Get ready to explore fun facts and exciting new scientific discoveries!

For centuries, the mysteries of space have captured our imaginations. This picture book will illuminate imaginations and spark curious minds to explore the vastness of space.

Take your little astronaut on a journey from our planet out into the furthest reaches of the universe! Filled with gorgeous illustrations and incredible photography, young readers will be intrigued by the detailed close-up images of each celestial body.

The engaging storybook-style descriptions and simple text shed a light on facts, myths, and key discoveries about the universe! Explore the wonders of our solar system and beyond. This educational book also includes reference pages packed with fascinating information.

***Zombierella: Fairy Tales Gone Bad* by Joseph Coelho and Freya Hartas, Walker Books, 978-1406389661**

A yellow moon hangs in a satin sky the night Cinderella, barefoot and in hand-me-downs, slips at the top of the stairs ... and dies. But not for long. The Shadow of Death arrives to breathe life back into her bones and, for three nights only, Cinderella goes forth as ZOMBIERELLA. With her skin as cold as ice and her faithful horse Lumpkin back by her side, can she seek revenge on her three cruel, fake sisters, once and for all?

Crawl out of the grave and step into your mushroom carriage for this haunting and humorous adventure of the undead girl searching for her happily ever after.

## Young People



***Black and British: A short, essential history, Macmillan Children's Books, 978-1529063394***

When did Africans first come to Britain?

Who are the well-dressed black children in Georgian paintings?

Why did the American Civil War disrupt the Industrial Revolution?

These and many other questions are answered in this essential introduction to 1800 years of the Black British history: from the Roman Africans who guarded Hadrian's Wall right up to the present day.

***Blood Moon by Lucy Cuthew, Walker Books, 978-1406393446***

During Frankie's first sexual experience with lovely Benjamin, she gets her period. It's only blood, they agree. No shame.

Then a graphic meme goes viral, turning their fun, intimate afternoon into something mortifying and damaging. And Frankie begins to wonder: is she disgusting?

As the online shaming takes on a horrifying life of its own, her universe implodes. But can laughter, bravery and the fiercest of friends help Frankie find her way out of the darkness?

***Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo, Hot Key Books, 978-1471409127***

Camino Rios lives for the summers when her father visits her in the Dominican Republic. But this time, on the day when his plane is supposed to land, Camino arrives at the airport to see crowds of crying people...

In New York City, Yahaira Rios is called to the principal's office, where her mother is waiting to tell her that her father, her hero, has died in a plane crash.

Separated by distance - and Papi's secrets - the two girls are forced to face a new reality in which their father is dead and their lives are forever altered. And then, when it seems like they've lost everything of their father, they learn of each other.

***Have Pride: An inspirational history of the LGBTQ+ movement* by Stella Caldwell and Sue Sanders, Welbeck Publishing, 978-1783125500**

This inspirational history of the international LGBTQ+ movement will teach readers to accept and have pride in themselves and others, whatever their sexuality. It details the struggles and successes of LGBTQ+ movements around the world, looking at decriminalisation, the Stonewall riots and their legacy, global Pride movements, the HIV/AIDS crisis and equal marriage. It also includes profiles of significant LGBTQ+ figures from history and messages from young, modern-day members of the LGBTQ+ community, explaining why they have pride in themselves – and why you should, too.

***Punching the Air* by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam, HarperCollins Children's, 978-0008422141**

One fateful night, an altercation in a gentrifying neighbourhood escalates into tragedy. 'Boys just being boys' turns out to be true only when those boys are white.

Suddenly, at just sixteen years old, Amal Shahid's bright future is upended: he is convicted of a crime he didn't commit and sent to prison. Despair and rage almost sink him until he turns to the refuge of his words, his art. This never should have been his story. But can he change it?

***SLAM! You're Gonna Wanna Hear* by Nikita Gill, Macmillan Children's Books, 978-1529028300**

Collected by international poetry sensation Nikita Gill, *SLAM! You're Gonna Wanna Hear* This is a joyful celebration of the ground-breaking poets making their voices heard in the spoken word scene. Empowering, inspiring and often hilarious, SLAMs are a platform for well-known and emerging talent from all walks of life where every style of poetry has a home.

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