

THE READING AGENCY

125 brilliant books for children and young people by Black authors and illustrators

TACKLING LIFE'S BIG CHALLENGES THROUGH THE PROVEN POWER OF READING

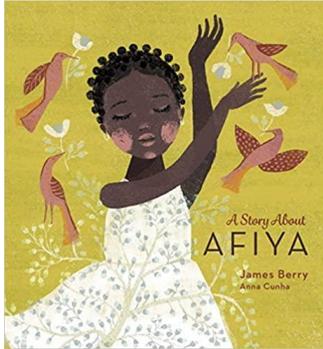
The Reading Agency is a national charity that tackles life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. We work closely with partners to develop and deliver programmes for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Reading Agency is funded by Arts Council England. <https://readingagency.org.uk/>

October is Black History Month so is the perfect time to celebrate some brilliant books for children and young people created by black authors and illustrators. Our list of 86 titles includes fiction, non-fiction, poetry and graphic novels for all children, young people and adults to enjoy reading. Find out more about Black History Month here: <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>.

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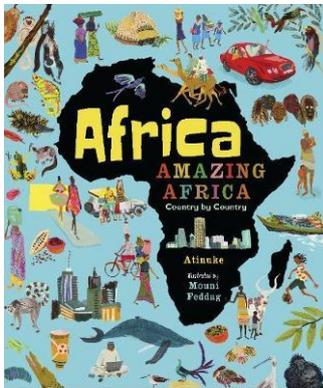
Picture books



A Story About Afiya by James Berry and Anna Cunha

978-1911373339, Lantana Publishing

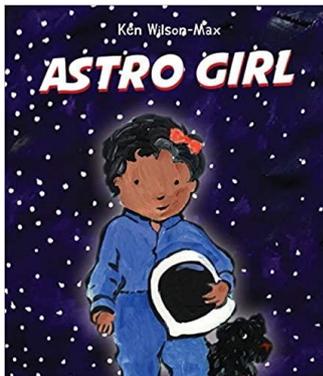
Some people have dresses for every occasion but Afiya needs only one. Her dress records the memories of her childhood, from roses in bloom to pigeons in flight, from tigers at the zoo to October leaves falling. A joyful celebration of a young girl's childhood, written by the late Coretta Scott King Book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



Africa, Amazing Africa: Country by Country by Atinuke and Mouni Feddag

9781406376586, Walker Books

Africa, Amazing Africa is Atinuke's first introduction to the African continent – an exciting starting point for young children aged 4+. With double pages to introduce the different regions of Africa (South, East, West, Central and North), each country is then represented on one page with a colourful half-page illustration from artist Mouni Feddag, a paragraph of descriptive text and then one to three facts, geared towards readers aged four and up.

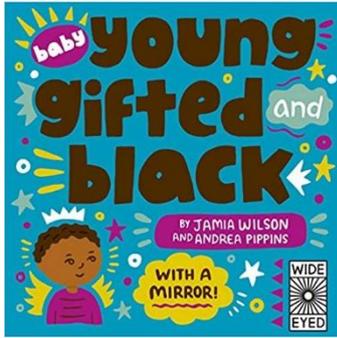


Astro Girl by Ken Wilson-Max

978-1910959213, Otter-Barry Books

Astrid has always loved the stars and space. While Mama is away, Papa and Astrid have fun acting out the challenges an astronaut faces on a space mission – eating food from a tube, doing science experiments, living and sleeping in near-zero gravity. Astrid can do it all! Then it's time to meet Mama at the airbase. But where has Mama been?

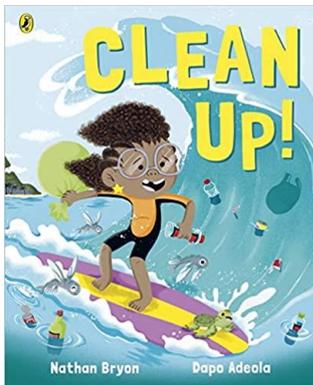
125 Brilliant books for children and young people by black authors and illustrators



Baby Young, Gifted, and Black: With a Mirror! by Jamia Wilson and Andrea Pippins

978-0711261419, Wide Eyed Editions

Meet icons of colour from past and present in this baby board book celebration of inspirational achievement. A collection of positive, yet simple, affirmations to encourage the next generation. Highlighting the talent of Black leaders and changemakers from around the world, young dreamers will develop confidence, self-assurance, and self-belief.



Clean Up! by Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeola

978-0241345894, Puffin

When Rocket goes for a holiday to visit her grandparents, she's shocked by the pollution that is spoiling their island home and putting the local sea life at risk. Can she think of a way to save the day? This is a heart-warming, timely and empowering picture book, showing how we ALL can make a difference.

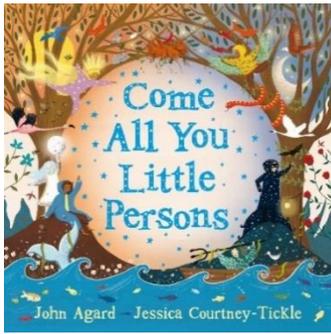


Cocoa Girl Awesome Hair by Serlina Boyd

9780755504329, HarperCollins Publishers

A celebration of textured hair, this book is about beautiful, black and all-natural hair, featuring real-life girls who love their hair. Spreads include care tips for keeping your hair in tip-top condition, photographic step-by-step tutorials, ranging from easy to difficult styles and positive affirmations packed with reasons to love your amazing hair.

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Come All You Little Persons by John Agard and Jessica Courtney-Tickle 978-0571324163, Faber

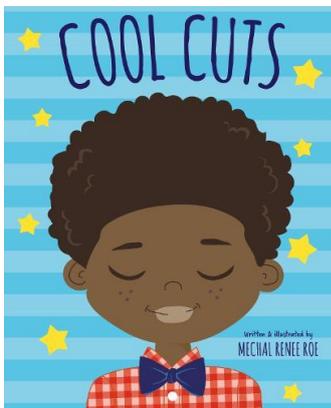
Come little bird person, come little bee person, come little tree person – little persons from all over the world join together to celebrate the dance of life and love in this stunning poem from John Agard. Stunningly illustrated by Jessica Courtney-Tickle, this is a book that both little persons and big persons will treasure and pore over for a lifetime and is a true poem of our time.



Coming to England by Floella Benjamin

978-1529009415, Macmillan Children's Books

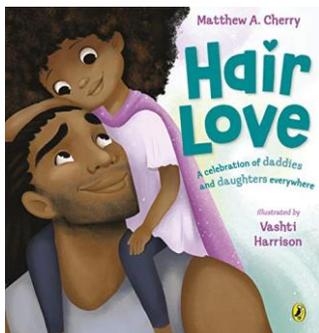
Follow ten-year-old Floella as she and her family set sail from the Caribbean to a new life in London. Alone on a huge ship for two weeks, then tumbled into a cold and unfriendly London, coming to England wasn't at all what Floella had expected . . . What will her new school be like? Will she meet the Queen?



Cool Cuts by Mechal Renee Roe

978-1783128235, Wellbeck Publishing Group

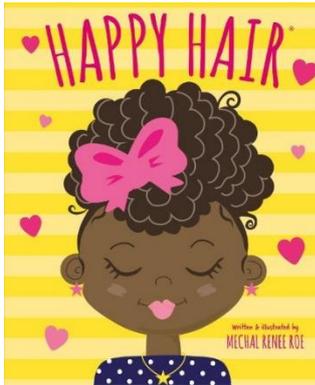
This gift book is the perfect way to celebrate the diversity and imagination of boys' natural Black hairstyles. Including every style from afros to cornrows, with positive, easy-to-read text, it's a fantastic book for any boy who loves their hair.



Hair Love by Matthew Cherry and Vashti Harrison

978-0241406427, Puffin

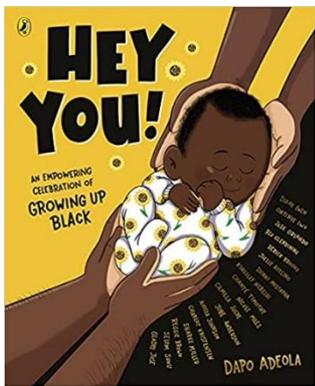
Zuri knows her hair is beautiful, but it has a mind of its own! It kinks, coils, and curls every which way. Mum always does Zuri's hair just the way she likes it – so when Daddy steps in to style it for an extra special occasion, he has a lot to learn. But he LOVES his Zuri, and he'll do anything to make her, and her hair, happy.



Happy Hair by Mechal Renee Roe

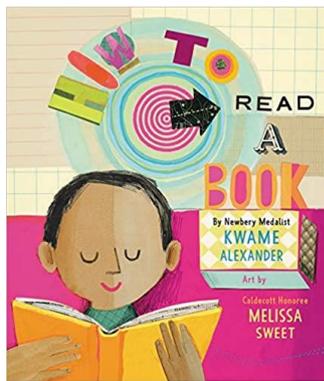
978-1783128228, Wellbeck Publishing Group

This gift book for girls showcases all kinds of beautiful Black hairstyles – from braids to pom-pom puffs. With simple affirmational text and wonderfully cute illustration from acclaimed creator Mechal Renee Roe, this is a great first reading title to promote positivity for girls everywhere.



Hey You!: An empowering celebration of growing up Black by Dapo Adeola and various, 978-0241521946, Puffin

This ground-breaking picture book is a lyrical, inspirational exploration of growing up Black, written by award-winning illustrator Dapo Adeola, and brought to life by some of the most exciting Black illustration talents working today. This book addresses – honestly, yet hopefully – the experiences Black children face growing up with systemic racism, as well as providing hope for the future, delivering a powerful message to a new generation of dreamers. It's a message that is both urgent and timeless – and offers a rich and rewarding reading experience for every child.



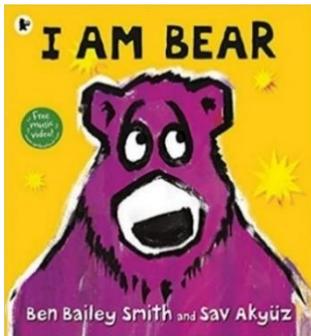
How to Read a Book Hardcover by Kwame Alexander and Melissa Sweet

978-0062307811, HarperCollins Publishers

*Find a tree—a
black tupelo or
dawn redwood will do—and
plant yourself.*

(It's okay if you prefer a stoop, like Langston Hughes.)

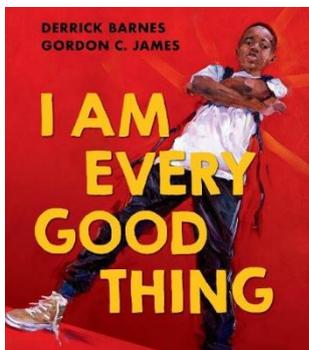
With these words, an adventure begins. Kwame Alexander's evocative poetry and Melissa Sweet's lush artwork come together to take readers on a sensory journey between the pages of a book.



I Am Bear by Ben Bailey Smith and Sav Akyuz

978-1406373059, Walker Books

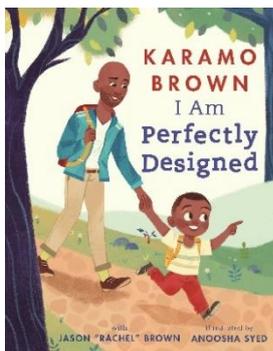
If there's trouble, one thing is certain: Bear was there. In (and out) of his outrageous purple outfit, Bear can do anything – steal honey from the bees, do magic tricks, steal doughnuts from a police officer, and annoy a certain pesky squirrel. This hilarious picture book debut of actor Ben Bailey Smith (aka rapper Doc Brown) and artist Sav Akyuz will keep young mischief-makers in stitches.



I Am Every Good Thing by Derrick Barnes and Gordon C James

978-0755502707, HarperCollins Publishers

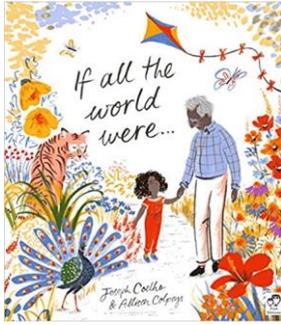
Step inside the mind of the confident narrator of this book! He is proud of everything that makes him who he is. He's got big plans, and will see them through. He's creative, adventurous, smart, funny. A good friend. A superhero. Sometimes he falls, but he always gets back up. And other times he's afraid, because he's often misunderstood. So, slow down, look and listen as he shows you who he really is . . .



I Am Perfectly Designed by Karamo Brown, Jason "Rachel" Brown and Anoosha Syed, 978-1529036145, Macmillan Children's Books

I Am Perfectly Designed is an empowering story about loving who you are, exactly as you are – and a celebration of the love between parent and child. From Karamo Brown, star of the hit Netflix series *Queer Eye*. Written by Karamo and his son Jason, this touching, funny story follows a boy and his father, as they spend the day together. Walking through the city, they chat about all the ways in which they are perfectly designed for each other.

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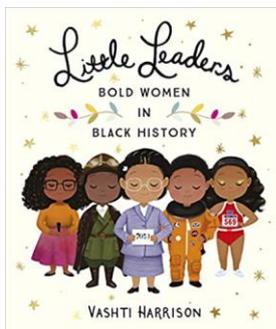


If All the World Were... by Joseph Coelho and Allison Colpoys

978-1786036513, Frances Lincoln Publishers

A moving, lyrical picture book about a young girl's love for her granddad and how she copes when he's gone, written by poet and playwright Joseph Coelho.

This beautifully illustrated, powerful and ultimately uplifting text is the ideal way to introduce children to the concept of death and dying, particularly children who have lost a grandparent.

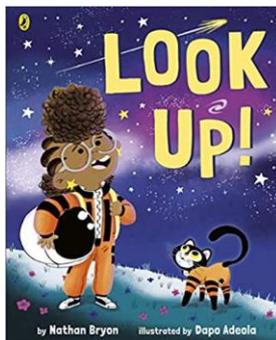


Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History by Vashti Harrison

978-0241346846, Puffin

Did you know the treatment for leprosy was developed by a young scientist called Alice Ball? And Josephine Baker – world famous cabaret singer and dancer – was also a spy for the French résistance?

Featuring 40 trailblazing Black women in the world's history, this book educates and inspires as it relates true stories of women who broke boundaries and exceeded all expectations.

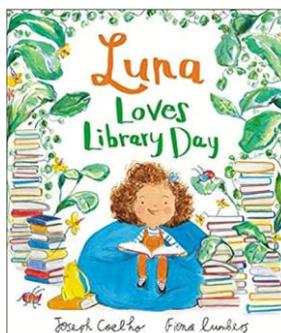


Look Up! by Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeola

978-0241345849, Puffin

Meet hilarious, science-mad chatterbox, Rocket – she's going to be the greatest astronaut, star-catcher, space-traveller that has ever lived!

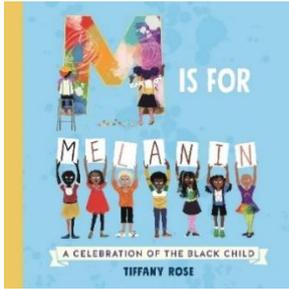
But . . . can she convince her big brother to stop looking down at his phone and start LOOKING UP at the stars?



Luna Loves Library Day by Joseph Coelho and Fiona Lumbers

978-1783445950, Andersen Press

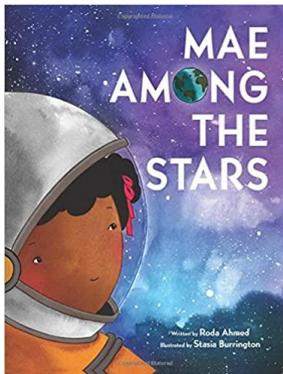
Every week Luna looks forward to one special day: the day when she discovers magic among the library shelves; the day she gets to spend with her dad. Exploring the books, Luna and her dad find magic, mystery and even start to mend their own history.



M is for Melanin: A Celebration of the Black Child by Tiffany Rose

978-1529062502, Macmillan Children's Books

M is for Melanin is an empowering alphabet book that teaches kids their ABC and celebrates black children. Each letter of the alphabet contains affirming, black-positive messages, from E is for Empowerment, to L is for Lead to W is for Worthy. This joyful book, written and illustrated by Tiffany Rose, teaches children their ABC and encourages all kids to love the skin they're in.



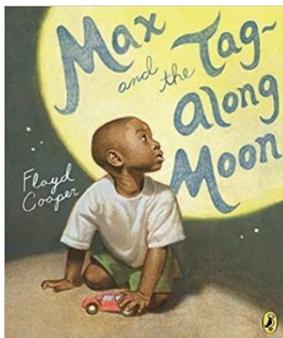
Mae Among the Stars by Roda Ahmed

978-0062651730, HarperCollins Publishers

When Little Mae was a child, she dreamed of dancing in space. She imagined herself surrounded by billions of stars, floating, gliding, and discovering. She wanted to be an astronaut.

Her mom told her, If you believe it, and work hard for it, anything is possible."

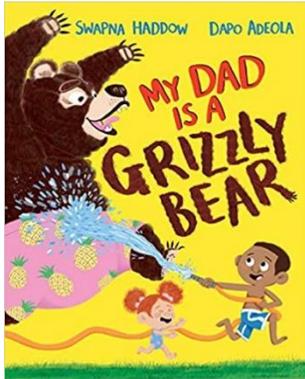
Little Mae's curiosity, intelligence, and determination, matched with her parents' encouraging words, paved the way for her incredible success at NASA as the first African American woman to travel in space.



Max and the Tag-Along Moon by Floyd Cooper

978-0147515469, Puffin

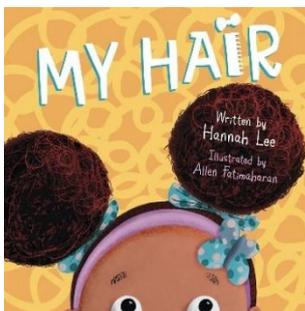
Max loves his grandpa. When they must say goodbye after a visit, Grandpa promises Max that the moon at Grandpa's house is the same moon that will follow him all the way home. On that swervy-curvy car ride back to his house, Max watches as the moon tags along. But when the sky darkens and the moon disappears behind clouds, he worries that it didn't follow him home after all. Where did the moon go – and what about Grandpa's promise?



My Dad Is A Grizzly Bear by Swapna Haddow, Dapo Adeola

978-1529013979, Macmillan Children's Books

In this family, it's just possible that Dad is a grizzly bear . . . He has fuzzy fur, enormous paws and loves the outdoors. He sleeps a lot even in the cinema and when he's awake, he's always hungry, usually eating up all the honey. What else could Dad be? But sometimes, when it's scary at night, a lovely big bear hug is just what is needed.

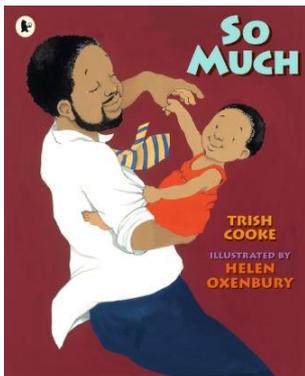


My Hair by Hannah Lee and Allen Fatimaharan

978-0571346875, Faber

*My birthday's coming up so soon,
I'll need new clothes to wear.
But most of all, I need to know,
How shall I style my hair?*

Will it be dreads or a twist out? Braids or a high-top fade? Joyous and vibrant, this captures perfectly the excitement of getting ready for a celebration, as well as showcasing a dazzling array of intricate hairstyles.

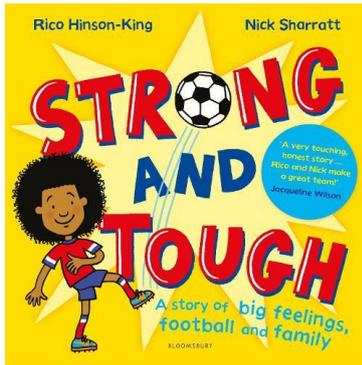


So Much by Trish Cooke and Helen Oxenbury

978-1406390728, Walker Books

Mum and baby are home alone when – DING DONG! – Auntie and then Uncle and Nannie and Gran-Gran and the cousins come to visit. And they all want to hug and kiss and squeeze and eat the baby right up . . . because everybody loves the baby SO MUCH!

A special 25th anniversary edition of a multiple award-winning story, *So Much* is a celebration of family life.

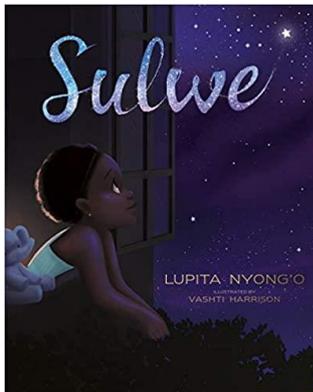


Strong and Tough by Rico Hinson-King and Nick Sharratt

978-1526648631, Bloomsbury

A story of hope and resilience, this gentle, inspiring picture book tells the tale of Charlie, a little boy who was taken into care when he was very small. Charlie dreams of finding his forever home to share with his sisters. Sometimes he feels scared. Sometimes he wants to scream and cry (and he does, just a little). But he is strong. He is tough. *Strong and Tough* is

by the amazingly talented ten-year-old Rico Hinson-King. Rico, like Charlie, found strength and resilience along the journey to find his forever family (and played lots of football along the way!).



Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o and Vashti Harrison

978-0241394328, Puffin

From Academy Award-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o comes a powerful, moving picture book about colourism, self-esteem and learning that true beauty comes from within.

Sulwe's skin is the colour of midnight. She's darker than everyone in her family, and everyone at school. All she wants is to be beautiful and bright, like her mother and sister. Then a magical journey through the night sky opens her eyes and changes everything.

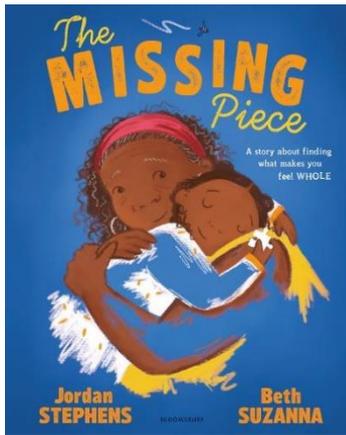


The Mega Magic Teacher Swap by Rochelle Humes and Rachel Suzanne 9781787416017, Bonnier Books

Mai discovers that although change might feel scary it can be a good thing. A heart-felt picture book about starting a new year at school which will resonate with young audiences and their parents alike. When best friends Mai and Rose return to school for a new year, they don't want to leave Mrs Bee, the best teacher ever!

With a wish and some help from My Little Coco, Mai and Rose find themselves back in Mrs Bee's class.

They quickly discover that it's less fun without their friends, and they've already learnt these subjects before! When they meet their new teacher, Ms Daly, they quickly find out that change can be a good thing - and they even make a new friend!

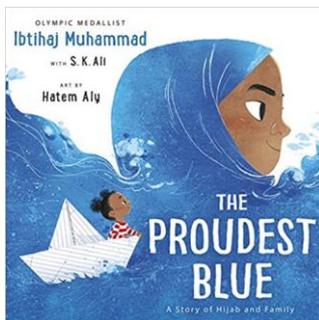


The Missing Piece by Jordan Stephens and Beth Suzanna

978-1526618139, Bloomsbury

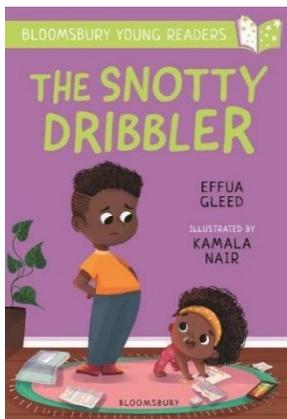
Sunny loves jigsaw puzzles – the bigger the better. When she completes one, she gets a warm, happy honeybee buzz. One day, her Gran gives her a ONE-THOUSAND-PIECE puzzle. Piece after piece, all by herself, she puts together the picture, until . . . DISASTER! The final piece is missing. Sunny may be small, but she is very determined – so she sets off to find it. As the day whizzes by in a whirl of new places and friends, Sunny discovers that looking for something is every bit as fun as finding it, and

that perhaps the missing piece was there all along . . .



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

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?



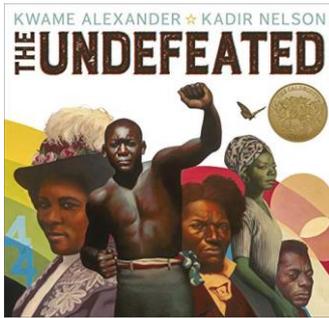
The Snotty Dribbler by Effua Gleed and Kamala Nair

978-1801990752, Bloomsbury

A heart-warming story about siblings, ideal for children practising reading at home or in school.

Blay thinks being an older brother is so uncool. He finds his baby sister Bethany boring, annoying, and very snotty. But when Bethany is taken to hospital one night, Blay starts to worry. Maybe he does care about Bethany just a little bit . . .

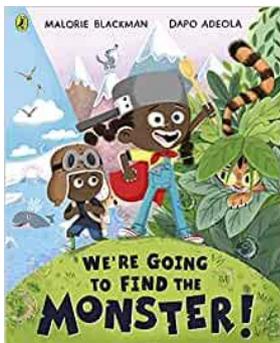
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The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander, Kadir Nelson

978-1783449293, Andersen Press

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.

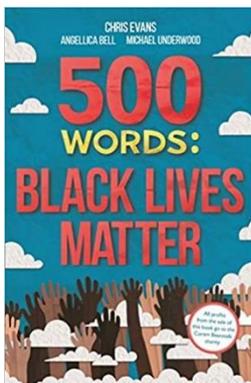


We're Going to Find the Monster by Malorie Blackman and Dapo Adeola

978-0241401309, Puffin

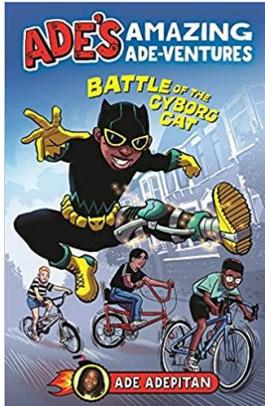
Join two intrepid adventurers as their imaginations transform their house into a wild wonderland – and their big brother becomes a mighty monster. A joy to read-aloud with its cumulative refrain, and full of funny, relatable characters, this is a contemporary celebration of creativity, fantasy and family.

Middle grade books



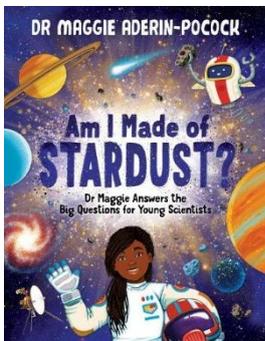
500 Words: Black Lives Matter written by various and edited by Chris Evans, Angellica Bell and Michael Underwood, 978-1787419605, Bonnier Books

A collection of 100 inspiring, moving and poignant short stories, submitted to the 500 Words: Black Lives Matter competition which ran on Virgin Radio in July 2020. *500 Words: Black Lives Matter* features a foreword from Chris Evans, analysis of the writing from Oxford University Press and writing tips from judges Malorie Blackman, Charlie Higson, Francesca Simon and Frank Cottrell-Boyce.



Ade's Amazing Ade-ventures: Battle of the Cyborg Cat by Ade Adepitan, 978-1787413252, Piccadilly Press

When Ade moves to London from Nigeria, he knows things will be different, but nothing can prepare him for the ups and downs of his Parson's Road adventures. Ade doesn't always feel welcome in his new community; fitting in is hard, especially as he looks different to everyone else. But Ade is brave and takes on the school bullies, surprising himself and the kids on his new street. His heroic acts and super football skills quickly help him make new friends who will always be there for him.

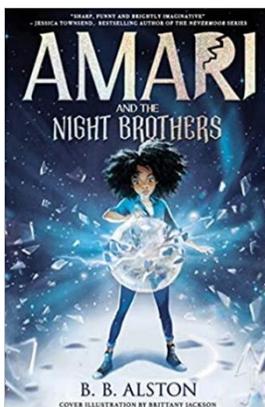


Am I Made of Stardust? by Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock and Chelen Ecija

978-1780557540, Michael O'Mara

Award-winning scientist and BBC broadcaster Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock (MBE) is here to answer all the questions curious kids will ever have about the Universe.

How long would it take me to fly to a star? What would happen if I fell inside a black hole? Would I get a phone signal in space? From whether there are rainbows on other planets to what dinner tastes like on the International Space Station, this book is packed full of fabulous facts, mind-blowing insights and engaging explanations from the renowned space scientist.



Amari and the Night Brothers by BB Alston

978-1405298193, Farshore

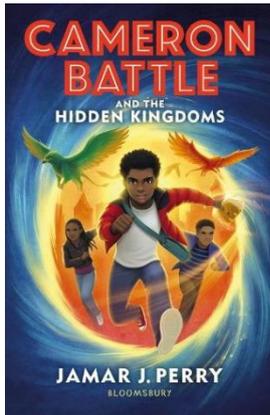
An epic middle grade supernatural adventure series, soon to be a major movie starring Marsai Martin.

Amari Peters knows three things.

Her big brother Quinton has gone missing.

No one will talk about it.

His mysterious job holds the secret . . .

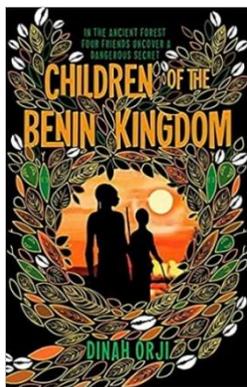


Cameron Battle and the Hidden Kingdoms by Jamar J. Perry

978-1526646859, Bloomsbury

Cameron Battle grew up reading *The Book of Chidani*, cherishing stories about the fabled kingdom that cut itself off from the world to save the Igbo people from danger. Passed down over generations, the Book is Cameron's only connection to his parents, who disappeared one fateful night two years ago. Ever since, his grandmother has kept the Book locked away, but it calls to Cameron.

When he and his best friends, Zion and Aliyah, decide to open it again, they are magically transported to Chidani. Instead of a land of beauty and wonder, they find a kingdom in extreme danger, as the queen's sister seeks to destroy the barrier between worlds. The people of Chidani have been waiting for the last Descendant to return and save them . . . is Cameron ready to be the hero they need?

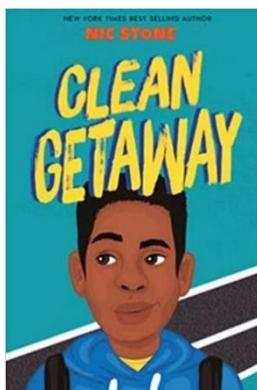


Children of the Benin by Dinah Orji

978-1999336332, Dinosaur Books

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 ill, he knows it's time to reveal to Ada her true heritage – time for her to travel deep into the forest to discover the ancient Edo kingdom of Benin, and to use everything within her power to heal the terrible divisions that are tearing the kingdom apart.

Relying on her close friendships, the guidance of her ancestors and her own self-belief, Ada sets off on an incredible journey which tests her strengths to their limit.



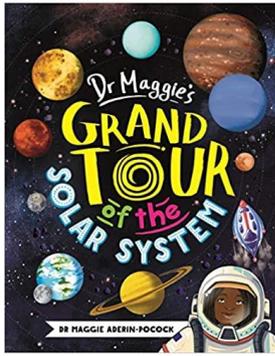
Clean Getaway by Nic Stone and Camilla Ru

978-1913311025, Knights Of

How to Go on an Unplanned Road Trip with Your Grandma:

Grab a Suitcase: Prepacked from the big spring break trip that got CANCELLED. Fasten Your Seatbelt: G'ma's never conventional, so this trip won't be either. Use the Green Book: G'ma's most treasured possession. It holds history, memories, and most important, the way home. What Not to Bring: A Phone. Avoid contact with Dad at all costs.

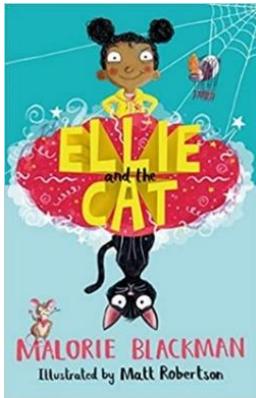
Even when G'ma starts acting stranger than usual. Set against the backdrop of the segregation history of the American South.



Dr Maggie's Grand Tour of the Solar System by Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock and Chelen Ecija, 978-1780555751, Buster Books

This mind-blowing book invites readers to join BBC presenter and renowned space scientist Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock (MBE) on an epic journey through the Solar System – visiting planets, moons, asteroids and satellites, and travelling to places where no human has been before. Along the way, kids can discover how we could live on Mars, learn about the hunt for a mysterious super-Earth, have a snowball fight on Mercury, climb the tallest mountain in the Solar System and

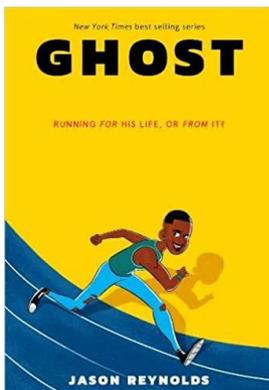
much, much more.



Ellie and the Cat by Malorie Blackman and Matt Robertson

978-1781128244, Barrington Stoke

Ellie is the rudest, most spoiled child her grandma has ever met and it's time that she learnt a lesson! So with a little bit of magic and some help from Jolly the cat, Grandma's going to make sure that Ellie changes her ways. Can Ellie work hard to prove that she can be good? Or is she destined to spend the rest of her days trapped in the body of a mean old cat? Particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant or dyslexic readers aged 8+.



Ghost by Jason Reynolds and Selom Sunu

978-1999642525, Knights Of

Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons – until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medallist who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent. If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past finally catch up to him?

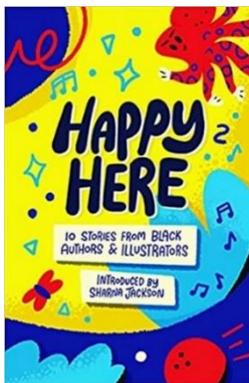
125 Brilliant books for children and young people by black authors and illustrators



Granny Ting Ting by Patrice Lawrence and David Dean

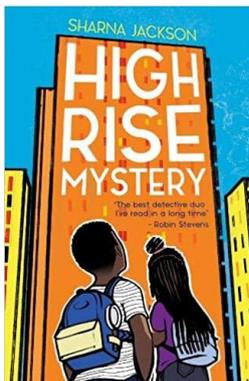
978-1472967718, Bloomsbury

Shayla can't wait to see her cousin Michael again. Last time, they had great fun chasing Granny's chickens and playing hide-and-seek in the bamboo by the river. But Michael thinks everything in London is better than in Trinidad where Shayla lives, which makes him better than her, doesn't it? Soon everything's a competition, especially when there's hot pepper sauce involved!



Happy Here: 10 stories from Black British authors & illustrators by various, 978-1913311162, Knights Of

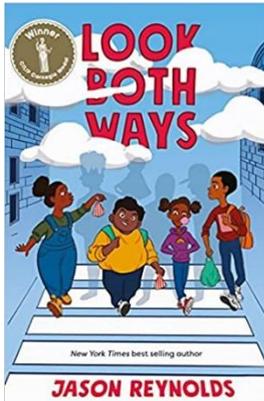
With an introduction from bestselling author Sharna Jackson, *Happy Here* features stories and poems by 10 Black British authors for readers aged 7+. Exploring themes of joy, home and family through a wide range of genres and styles, each author has been paired with a different illustrator to spotlight Black British artistic talent. With stories by Dean Atta, Joseph Coelho, Kereen Getten, Patrice Lawrence, Theresa Lola, E.L. Norry, Jasmine Richards, Alexandra Sheppard, Yomi Sode, and Clare Weze.



High-Rise Mystery by Sharna Jackson

978-1999642518, Knights Of

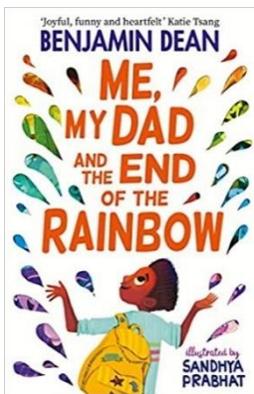
The detective duo everyone is dying to meet! Summer in London is hot, the hottest on record, and there's been a murder in THE TRI: the high-rise home to resident know-it-alls, Nik and Norva. Who better to solve the case? Armed with curiosity, home-turf knowledge and unlimited time – until the end of the summer holidays anyway.



Look Both Ways by Jason Reynolds and Selom Sunu

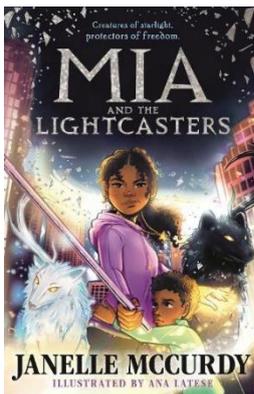
978-1999642594, Knights Of

When the bell rings and school is finished for the day, the walkers are finally set free. For ten blocks they have no-one telling them what to do; they can talk about bogies, skateboard, plan dramatic escapes, make jokes, face bullies, and hear about the school bus that fell from the sky . . . In ten stories (one per block), find out what really happens on the walk home from school, when there are no parents or teachers to supervise (or stop the fun!).



Me, My Dad and the End of the Rainbow by Benjamin Dean and Sandhya Prabhat, 978-1471199738, Simon & Schuster

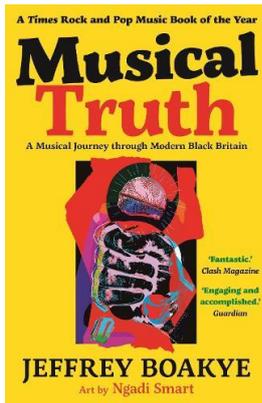
Things aren't going great for Archie Albright. His dad's acting weird, his mum too, and all he wants is for everything to go back to normal, to three months before when his parents were happy and still lived together. When Archie sees a colourful, crumpled flyer fall out of Dad's pocket, he thinks he may have found the answer. Only problem? The answer might just lie at the end of the rainbow, an adventure away. Together with his best friends, Bell and Seb, Archie sets off on a heart-warming and unforgettable journey to try and fix his family, even if he has to break a few rules to do it . . .



Mia and the Lightcasters by Janelle McCurdy and Ana Latese

978-0571368433, Faber

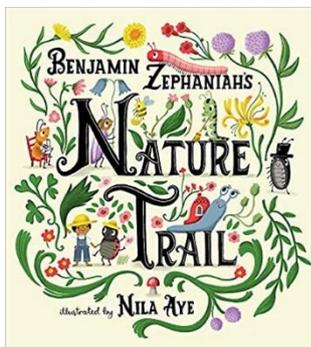
Mia always dreamed of being an umbra tamer until she met the wild creature on the Nightmare Plains. Since that day, she prefers to stay safe within the walls of Nubis. Safe, that is, until a surprise attack. With her parents captured, Mia's only hope is to travel to the City of Light to find help. But with only her little brother, two friends and one solitary tamed umbra, the journey feels impossible. Mia not only has to overcome her fears, she also has to learn to harness her umbra taming abilities if they are to complete the quest in time.



Musical Truth: A Musical Journey Through Modern Black Britain by Jeffrey Boakye and Ngadi Smart, 978-0571366491, Faber

Music can carry the stories of history like a message in a bottle. Lord Kitchener, Neneh Cherry, Smiley Culture, Stormzy . . . Ground-breaking musicians whose songs have changed the world. But how? This exhilarating playlist tracks some of the key shifts in modern British history, and explores the emotional impact of 28 songs and the artists who performed them. This book redefines British history, the Empire and postcolonialism, and will invite you to think again about the narratives and key moments in history that you have been taught

up to now.



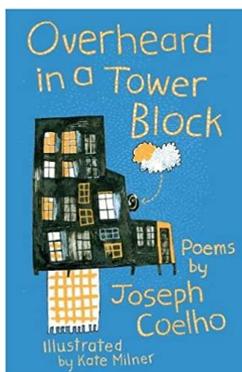
Nature Trail by Benjamin Zephaniah and Nila Aye

978-1408361252, Orchard Books

All around us, from parks to gardens and flowerpots to pavements, there's a world of wonder just waiting to be discovered. Why not look a little closer and see what you find?

This joyful celebration of nature reminds us all to take a closer look at the world around us, and enjoy the wonder of nature

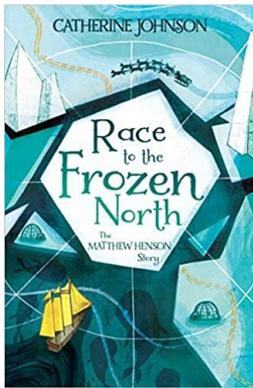
wherever we find it. Packed with animals and minibeasts galore, this imaginative rhyming text is perfect for reading aloud.



Overheard in a Tower Block: Poems by Joseph Coelho and Kate Milner

978-1910959589, Otter-Barry Books

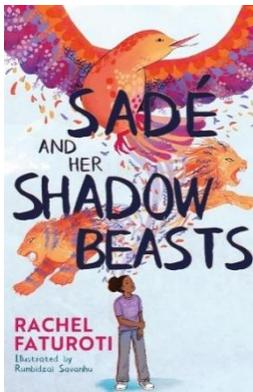
Gazing at the stars from five storeys up, smelling the bins from five storeys below. Overheard arguments, overheard laughter. A disappearing father and a Mermaid-Queen mother; statues that sing for flesh and blood; bullies who kick you under the table; perfect red trainers – and the things that lurk in the library . . . Award-winning poet Joseph Coelho's astonishing new collection is a powerful and moving poetic narrative about growing up in the city.



Race to the Frozen North: The Matthew Henson Story by Catherine Johnson, 978-1781128404, Barrington Stoke

Matthew Henson was simply an ordinary man. That was, until Commander Robert E. Peary entered his life, and offered him a chance at true adventure. Henson would become navigator, craftsman, translator, and right-hand man on a treacherous journey to the North Pole. Defying the odds and the many prejudices that faced him to become a true pioneer. This is his incredible and often untold story. Particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant or dyslexic readers aged

8+.



Sade and Her Shadow Beasts by Rachel Faturoti

978-1444963571, Hachette Children's

Twelve-year-old Sade has been escaping to an imaginary world ever since her mum passed away – with its candy-floss lilac sky, she goes on endless adventures atop her purple-winged bird, Nix. But soon she discovers that frightening shadow beasts live here too and they are seeping into the real world. Luckily, when her sister signs her up to an anonymous grief counselling group, Sade finds her anxiety gets better. But then she's asked to perform spoken word in the talent show. The

beasts won't let her get on stage: Tiger appears with her long sharp claws, Lion with his piercing blue eyes, and Fox stands on his giant hind legs.

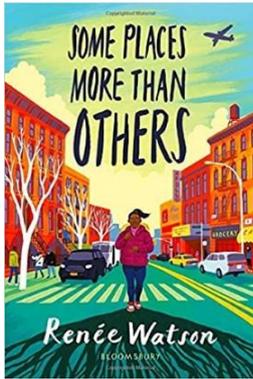
Will Sade find the courage to say what she needs to – can she banish the shadow beasts for good?



Shuri by Nic Stone

978-0702301834, Scholastic

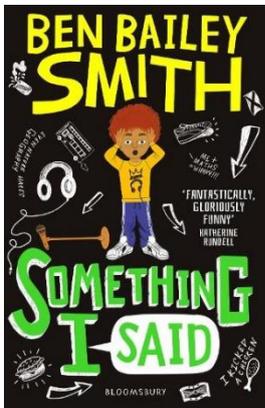
For centuries, the Chieftain of Wakanda (the Black Panther) has gained his powers through the juices of the Heart-Shaped Herb. Much like Vibranium, the Heart-Shaped Herb is essential to the survival and prosperity of Wakanda. But something is wrong. The plants are dying. No matter what the people of Wakanda do, they can't save them. And their supply is running short.



Some Places More Than Others by Renée Watson

978-1526613684, Bloomsbury

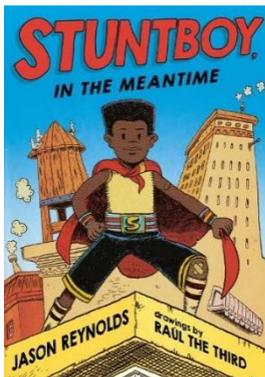
All Amara wants for her birthday is to visit her father's family in New York City – Harlem. She can't wait to finally meet her Grandpa Earl and cousins in person, and to stay in the brownstone where her father grew up. Maybe this will help her understand her family – and herself – in a new way. But New York City is not exactly what Amara thought it would be. It's noisy, crowded, confusing, and her cousins can be mean. Plus her father is too busy working to spend time with her and too angry to fix his relationship with Grandpa Earl. Amara can't help wondering, even if she does discover more about where she came from, will it help her know where she belongs?



Something I Said by Ben Bailey Smith

978-1526628688, Bloomsbury

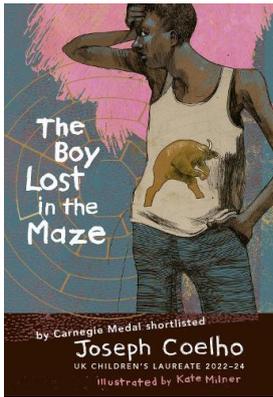
For thirteen-year-old Carmichael Taylor, life is one big joke – in a good way. He just can't understand why no one else seems to find everything as funny as he does. When Car accidentally delivers a piece of hilarious stand-up at the school talent show, targeting his family and his school, it goes viral. As fame and fortune beckon, it's up to Car to decide what or who he's willing to risk in pursuit of his comedy dream.



Stuntboy, In The Meantime by Jason Reynolds

9781913311247, Knights Of

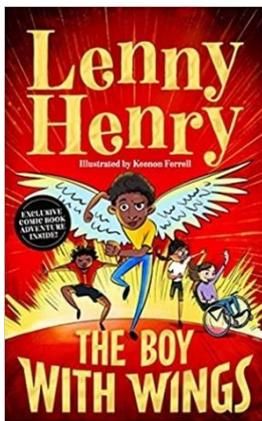
Meet Stuntboy. He's the newest superhero in town. Or at least in his own head. He'll save you from baddies like Herbert Singletary The Worst and the Frets. Or at least he'll TRY to. And maybe someone will end up saving him too . . . From two superheroes, 2021 CILIP Carnegie Medal winning author Jason Reynolds and super illustrator Raul the Third, comes a never-before-seen tale featuring acts of daring and courage . . . and one mysterious cat.



The Boy Lost in the Maze by Joseph Coelho and Kate Milner

978-1913074333, Otter-Barry Books

In his new verse novel, Joseph Coelho brilliantly blends Greek myth with a 21st century quest. In Ancient Greece Theseus makes a dangerous and courageous journey to find his father, finally meeting the Minotaur in the Labyrinth. While Theo, a modern-day teenage boy, finds himself on a maze-like quest to find his own father. Each story tells of a boy becoming a man and discovering what true manhood really means.

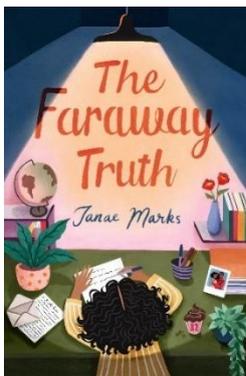


The Boy With Wings by Lenny Henry and Keenon Ferrell

978-1529067835, Macmillan Children's Books

An ordinary kid is about to become an EXTRAORDINARY hero!

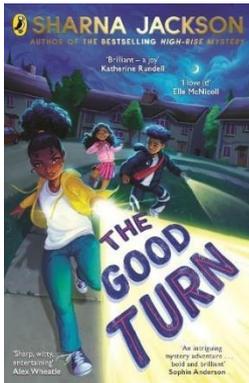
When Tunde sprouts wings and learns he's all that stands between Earth and total destruction, suddenly school is the least of his problems. Luckily, his rag-tag group of pals have got his back, and with his new powers, Tunde is ready to fly in the face of danger. So what if he can't even stand up to the school bully? He's the boy with wings – this is his destiny. No pressure then . . .



The Faraway Truth by Janae Marks

978-1912626380, Chicken House

Zoe Washington never met her father, who was sent to prison right before she was born. When she receives a letter from him on her twelfth birthday, it's a huge surprise. Zoe's mom always told her that Marcus was a liar, a monster, but he sounds . . . nice. Zoe starts to investigate the crime – and the deeper she digs, the more she doubts the conviction. Is her father innocent? Or is he a liar? Zoe is determined to find out.



The Good Turn by Sharna Jackson

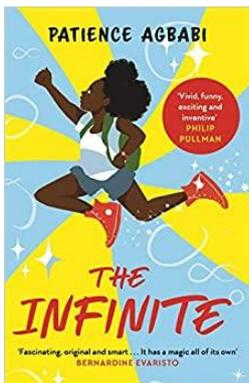
9780241523599, Penguin Random House Children's

Josephine Williams is a future-focused, internet-loving eleven-year-old who is desperate to explore the world beyond her cul-de-sac – and her browser.

When she learns about Josephine Holloway – a woman who started the first Girl Scout Troop for Black girls in America – she's certain she must start her own.

Enlisting her friends Margot Anderson and Wesley Evans, the trio begin their quest for their Camping Badge. Drawn to an abandoned factory nearby, they stumble across something strange. A square, ancient television and two tatty armchairs. Beside it, a wooden sideboard with an old photograph of a young, happy couple.

What is this? Who, or what, lives here – and why?

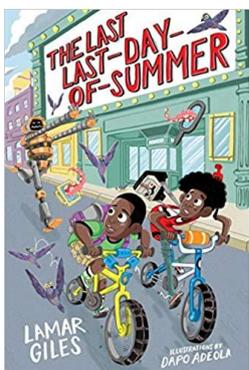


The Infinite by Patience Agbabi

978-1786899651, Canongate

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 Bìbi-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 . . .

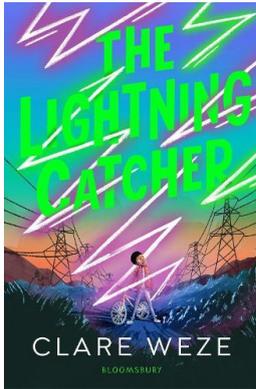


The Last Last-Day-Of-Summer by Lamar Giles and Dapo Adeola

978-1328460837, Versify

Otto and Sheed are the local sleuths in their zany Virginia town, masters of unraveling mischief using their unmatched powers of deduction. And as the summer winds down and the first day of school looms, the boys are craving just a little bit more time for fun, even as they bicker over what kind of fun they want to have. That is, until a mysterious man appears with a camera that literally freezes time. Now, with the help of some very

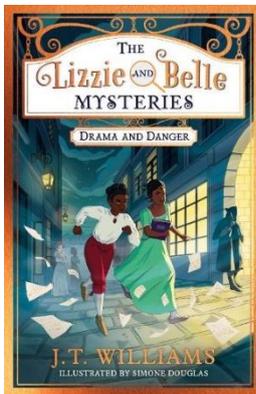
strange people and even stranger creatures, Otto and Sheed will have to put aside their differences to save their town – and each other – before time



The Lightning Catcher by Clare Weze

978-1526622174, Bloomsbury

Alfie has noticed a few things since his family moved to Folding Ford. He really misses life in the city. He and his sister don't exactly fit in here. But the most interesting one is that the weather is BONKERS. One frost-covered branch on one tree in the middle of June? A tiny whirlwind in a bucket in the garden? Only in Folding Ford. Armed with his bike, a notepad and his new best mate Sam, Alfie is going to investigate.

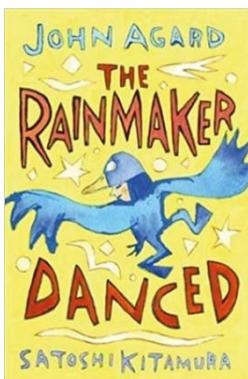


The Lizzie and Belle Mysteries: Drama and Danger by J. T. Williams

978-0008485252, HarperCollins Publishers

Twelve-year-olds Lizzie Sancho and Dido Belle are from different worlds – Lizzie lives in Westminster in her dad's tea shop, while Belle is an heiress being brought up by her aunt and uncle at grand Kenwood House – but they both share a love of solving mysteries. And when their eyes meet in the audience of the Drury Lane theatre one night, both girls are sure they've seen something suspicious on stage.

Lizzie and Belle soon find themselves on the trail of a mystery – and becoming best friends. But can they work out what's going on in time to prevent a murder?



The Rainmaker Danced by John Agard and Satoshi Kitamura

978-1444932607, Hodder Children's Books

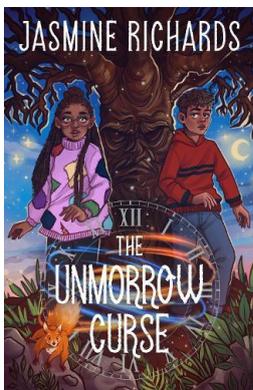
From nature and science to identity, prepare to be transported on a journey through past and present. This collection from John Agard, winner of the Queens Medal and the Eleanor Farjeon Award, explores the wonders of the world – inviting your child to ponder life's questions with lots of fun along the way!



The Truths We Hold by Kamala Harris

Bodley Head, 978-1847927019

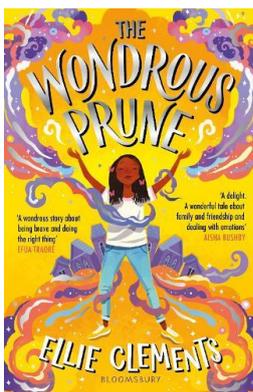
In this young reader's edition of Kamala Harris's memoir, we learn about the impact that her family and community had on her life, and see what led her to discover her own sense of self and purpose. *The Truths We Hold* traces her journey as she explored the values she holds most dear—those of community, equality, and justice. An inspiring and empowering memoir, this book challenges us to become leaders in our own lives and shows us that with determination and perseverance all dreams are possible.



The Unmorrow Curse by Jasmine Richards

978-1912979882, UCLan Publishing

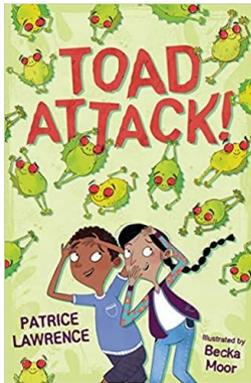
Two friends awaken a world of myth and magic in this epic middle grade fantasy perfect for fans of Rick Riordan. It's not every day that you find a famous weather woman bound by magic to a tree deep in the woods. Or discover that the weatherwoman is in fact Sunna, the Norse Goddess of the Sun, and one of the seven day guardians who keep time in order. But that's just what happens to new friends Buzz and Mari – and it's only the start of their adventure. Now, as humanity are forced into a lockdown called the Unmorrow Curse and are forced to repeat the same Saturday over and over again, Buzz and Mari must journey to collect the Runes of Valhalla and awaken the other day guardians, before vengeful god Loki can get to them first.



The Wondrous Prune by Ellie Clements

978-1526638328, Bloomsbury

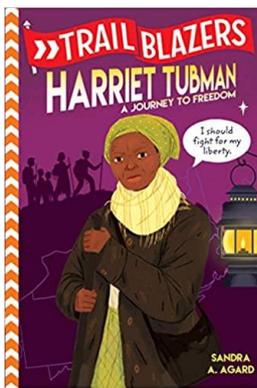
Uprooted by her single mum along with her troublesome older brother, eleven-year-old Prune Robinson is trying to settle in a new town. She figures she can't burden her hard-working mother with the fact she's being bullied. Or the fact that her drawings have started coming to life. But with her brother soon in danger, Prune comes to realise that she can't hide her power forever; in fact, it might just be the one thing that brings her family back together and saves them all.



Toad Attack! by Patrice Lawrence and Becca Moor

978-1781128442, Barrington Stoke

After a toad lands on his head as he leaves his house one morning, Leo is determined to find out where it has come from and why. Together with his friend Rosa, he needs to come up with some answers before the angry residents of Upper Dab take matters into their own hands and the toads become toast! A brilliantly quirky comedy caper with a diverse and inclusive cast of characters. Particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant or dyslexic readers aged 8+.



Trailblazers: Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom by Sandra A. Agard, 978-1788952224, Stripes Publishing

How did Harriet Tubman help hundreds of enslaved people reach freedom? Born into slavery on a Maryland plantation, Harriet's life was full of hardship. In 1849, she made the brave decision to run away, journeying north on the Underground Railroad. Despite the dangers, she returned to the South again and again, leading many others to safety. Discover the story of this amazing abolitionist and find out how she overcame every obstacle in the fight for freedom.

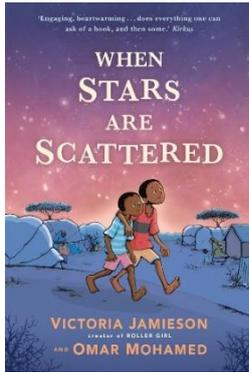


When Life Gives You Mangoes by Kereen Getten

978-1782692645, Pushkin Children's Books

Nothing much happens in Sycamore, the small village where Clara lives – at least, that's how it seems. She loves eating ripe mangoes fallen from trees, running outside in the rainy season and escaping to her secret hideout with her best friend Gaynah. There's only one problem: she can't remember anything about the previous summer. When a quirky girl called Rudy arrives from England, everything starts to change. Gaynah stops acting like a best friend, while Rudy and Clara roam across the island and uncover an old family secret. As the summer reaches its peak and the island storms begin, Clara's memory starts to return and she must finally face the truth of what happened last year.

125 Brilliant books for children and young people by black authors and illustrators



When Stars are Scattered by Omar Mohamed and Victoria Jamieson

978-0571363858, Faber

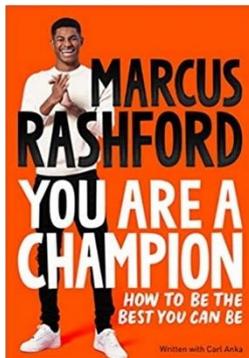
Omar and his brother Hassan, two Somali boys, have spent a long time in the Dadaab refugee camp. Separated from their mother, they are looked after by a friendly stranger. Life in the camp isn't always easy. The hunger is constant . . . but there's football to look forward to, and now there's a chance Omar will get to go to school . . .



Windrush Child by Benjamin Zephaniah

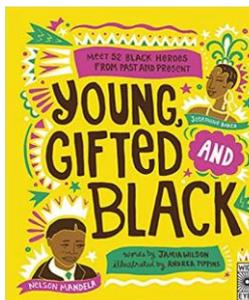
978-0702302725, Scholastic

Leonard is shocked when he arrives with his mother in the port of Southampton. His father is a stranger to him, it's cold and even the Jamaican food doesn't taste the same as it did back home in Maroon Town. But his parents have brought him here to try to make a better life, so Leonard does his best not to complain, to make new friends, to do well at school – even when people hurt him with their words and with their fists.



You Are a Champion: How to Be the Best You Can Be by Marcus Rashford and Carl Anka, 978-1529068177, Macmillan Children's Books

Marcus Rashford MBE is famous worldwide for his skills both on and off the pitch – but before he was a Manchester United and England footballer, and long before he started his inspiring campaign to end child food poverty, he was just an average kid from Wythenshawe, South Manchester. Now the nation's favourite footballer wants to show YOU how to achieve your dreams, in this positive and inspiring guide for life.



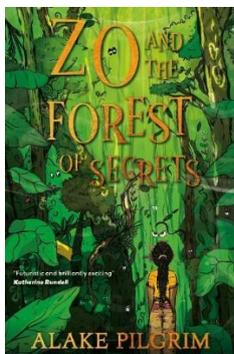
Young, Gifted and Black by Jamia Wilson and Andrea Pippins

978-1786030887, Wide Eyed Editions

Meet 52 icons of colour from the past and present in this celebration of inspirational achievement—a collection of stories about changemakers to encourage, inspire and empower the next generation of changemakers. Jamia Wilson has carefully curated this

125 Brilliant books for children and young people by black authors and illustrators

range of black icons and the book is stylishly brought together by Andrea Pippins' colourful and celebratory illustrations.

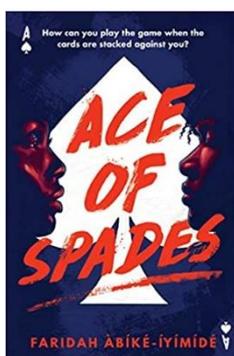


Zo and the Forest of Secrets by Alake Pilgrim

978-1913311292, Knights Of

When Zo decides to run away from home, she isn't scared; after all, she knows the island like the back of her hand. But, as she journeys through the once-familiar forest, terrifying creatures and warped visions begin to emerge. With a beast on her heels and a lost boy thrown into her path, could a mysterious abandoned facility hold answers? Zo must unravel the secrets of the forest before she is lost in them forever. . .

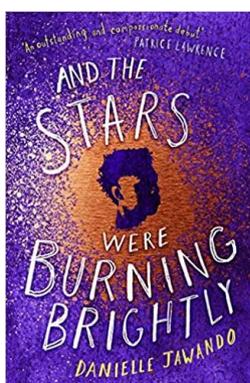
Young Adult



Ace of Spades by Faridah Abike-Iyimide

978-1474967532, Usborne

Welcome to Niveus Private Academy, where money paves the hallways, and the students are never less than perfect. Until now. Because anonymous texter, Aces, is revealing the darkest secrets of two students. Talented musician Devon buries himself in rehearsals, but he can't escape the spotlight when his private photos go public. Head girl Chiamaka isn't afraid to get what she wants, but soon everyone will know the price she has paid for power. Someone is out to get them both. Someone who holds all the aces. And they're planning much more than a high-school game . . .



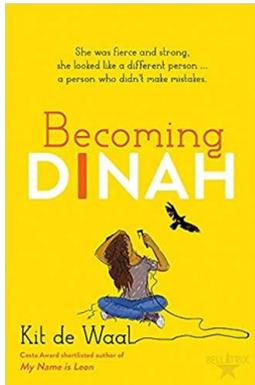
And the Stars Were Burning Brightly by Danielle Jawando

978-1471178771, Simon & Schuster

When fifteen-year-old Nathan discovers that his older brother Al, has taken his own life, his whole world is torn apart.

Convinced that his brother was in trouble, Nathan decides to retrace Al's footsteps. As he does, he meets Megan, Al's former classmate, who is as determined as Nathan to keep Al's memory alive. Together they start seeking answers, but will either of them be able to handle the truth about Al's death when they eventually discover what happened?

Warning – this novel contains themes that some readers may find upsetting, including suicide and intense bullying.

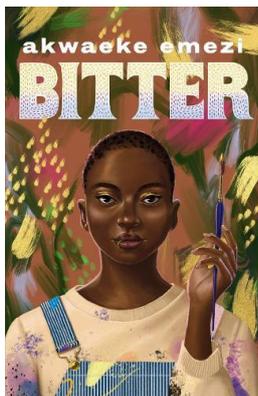


Becoming Dinah by Kit de Waal

978-1510105706, Orion Children's

Seventeen-year-old Dinah needs to leave her home, the weird commune where she grew up. She needs a whole new identity, starting with how she looks, starting with shaving off her hair, her 'crowning glory'. She has to do it quickly, because she has to go now.

Dinah was going to go alone and hitch a ride down south. Except, she ends up being persuaded to illegally drive a VW campervan for hundreds of miles, accompanied by a grumpy man with one leg. This wasn't the plan. But while she's driving, Dinah will be forced to confront everything that led her here, everything that will finally show her which direction to turn . . .

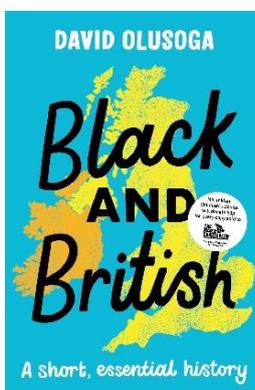


Bitter by Akwaeke Emezi

978-0571371198, Faber

Bitter is thrilled to have been chosen to attend Eucalyptus, a special school where she can focus on her painting surrounded by other creative teens. But outside this haven, the streets are filled with protests against the deep injustices that grip the town of Lucille. Bitter's instinct is to stay safe within the walls of Eucalyptus . . . but her friends aren't willing to settle for a world that the adults say is 'just the way things are.'

Pulled between old friendships, her creative passion, and a new romance, Bitter isn't sure where she belongs – in the art studio or in the streets. And if she does find a way to help the revolution while being true to who she is, she must also ask: at what cost?



Black and British: A short essential history by David Olusoga

978-1529063394, Macmillan Children's Books

A short, essential introduction to Black British history

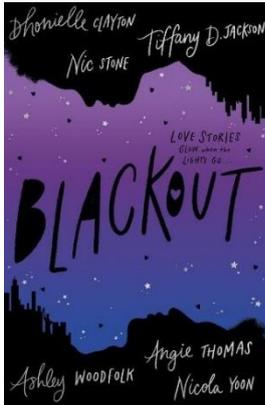
When did Africans first come to Britain?

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

Why did the American Civil War disrupt the Industrial Revolution?

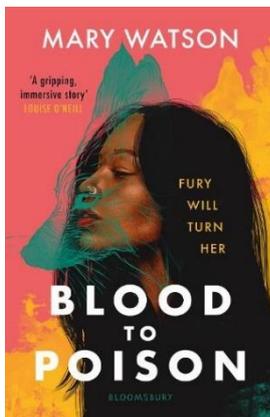
These and many other questions are answered in this essential introduction to 1800 years of the Black British history: from the Roman

Africans who guarded Hadrian's Wall right up to the present day.



Blackout by Dhoneille Clayton, Tiffany D Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk and Nicola Yoon 978-0755503063, HarperCollins Publishers

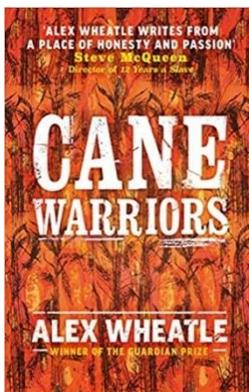
When a heatwave plunges New York City into darkness, sparks fly for thirteen teenagers caught up in the blackout. From the exes who have to bury their rivalry and walk from Manhattan to Brooklyn in time to kick off a block party, to the two boys trapped on the subway who come face-to-face with their feelings and the pair of best friends stuck in the library and surrounded by love stories and one very big secret, they are all about to see that when the lights go out, people reveal hidden truths, love blossoms, friendship transforms, and all possibilities take flight.



Blood to Poison by Mary Watson 978-1526619174, Bloomsbury

Seventeen-year-old Savannah is cursed. It's a sinister family heirloom; passed down through the bloodline for hundreds of years, with one woman in every generation destined to die young. The family call them Hella's girls, named for their ancestor Hella; the enslaved woman with whom it all began.

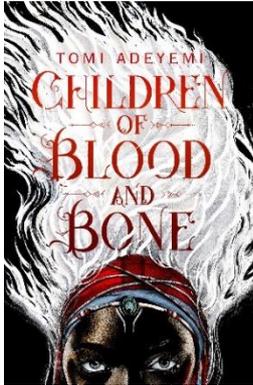
Hella's girls are always angry, especially in the months before they die. The anger is bursting from Savannah – at the men who cat-call her in the street, at her mother's disingenuous fiancé, even at her own loving family. Each fit of rage is bringing her closer to the edge and now Savannah has to act to save herself. Or die trying. Because the key to survival lies in the underbelly of Cape Town, where the sinister veilwitches are waiting for just such a girl.



Cane Warriors by Alex Wheatle 978-1783449873, Andersen Press

Nobody free till everybody free.

Moa is fourteen. The only life he has ever known is toiling on the Frontier sugar cane plantation for endless hot days, fearing the vicious whips of the overseers. Then one night he learns of an uprising, led by the charismatic Tacky. Moa is to be a cane warrior, and fight for the freedom of all the enslaved people in the nearby plantations. But before they can escape, Moa and his friend Keverton must face their first great task: to kill their overseer, Misser Donaldson. Time is ticking, and the day of the uprising approaches . . .



Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

978-1509871353, Macmillan Children's Books

Zélie remembers when the soil of Orisha hummed with magic. When different clans ruled – Burners igniting flames, Tiders beckoning waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoning forth souls. But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, anyone with powers was targeted and killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Only a few people remain with the power to use magic, and they must remain hidden.



Cinderella is Dead by Kalynn Bayron

978-1526621979, Bloomsbury

It's 200 years since Cinderella found her prince, but the fairytale is over.

Sophia knows the story though, off by heart. Because every girl has to recite it daily, from when she's tiny until the night she's sent to the royal ball for choosing. And every girl knows that she has only one chance. The lives of those not chosen by a man at the ball are forfeit.

But Sophia doesn't want to be chosen – she's in love with her best friend, Erin, and hates the idea of being traded like cattle. And when Sophia's night at the ball goes horribly wrong, she must run for her life. Alone and terrified, she finds herself hiding in Cinderella's tomb. And there she meets someone who will show her that she has the power to remake her world . . .



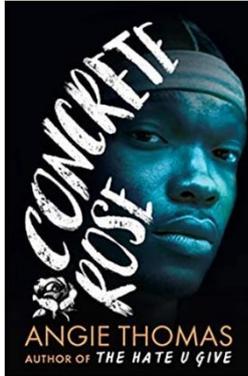
Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

978-1471409127, Hot Key Books

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.

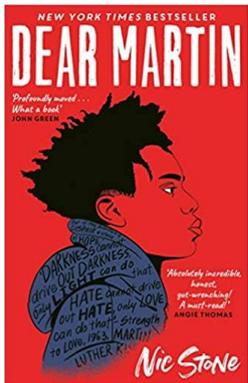


Concrete Rose by Angie Thomas

978-1406384444, Walker Books

From international phenomenon Angie Thomas comes a hard-hitting return to Garden Heights with the story of Maverick Carter, Starr's father, set seventeen years before the events of the award-winning *The Hate U Give*. With his King Lord dad in prison and his mom working two jobs, seventeen-year-old Maverick Carter helps the only way he knows how: slinging drugs. Life's not perfect, but he's got everything under control. Until he finds out he's a father. . . Suddenly it's not so

easy to deal drugs and finish school with a baby dependent on him for everything. So when he's offered the chance to go straight, he takes it. But when King Lord blood runs through your veins, you don't get to just walk away.



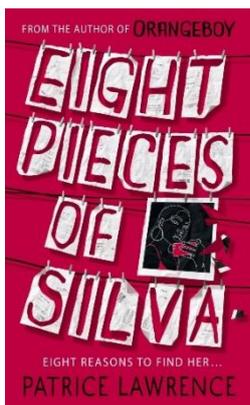
Dear Martin by Nic Stone

978-1471175565, Simon & Schuster

Justyce McAllister is top of his class and set for the Ivy League – but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. And despite leaving his rough neighbourhood behind, he can't escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates.

Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find

out. Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up – way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty police officer beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. Justyce and Manny are caught in the crosshairs. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.



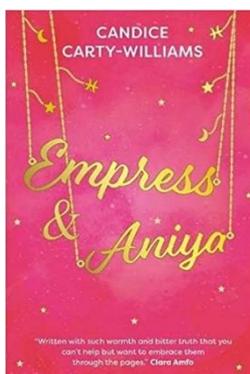
Eight Pieces of Silva by Patrice Lawrence

9781444954746, Hodder Children's Books

Becks is into girls but didn't come out because she was never in. She lives with her mum, stepdad and eighteen-year-old Silva, her stepdad's daughter. Becks and Silva are opposites, but bond over their mutual obsession with K-pop.

When Becks' mum and stepdad go on honeymoon to Japan, Becks and Silva are left alone. Except, Silva disappears. Becks ventures into the forbidden territory of Silva's room and finds the first of eight clues that help her discover her sister's secret life.

Meanwhile, Silva is on a journey. A journey to make someone love her. He says he doesn't, but he's just joking. All she has to do is persuade him otherwise . . .

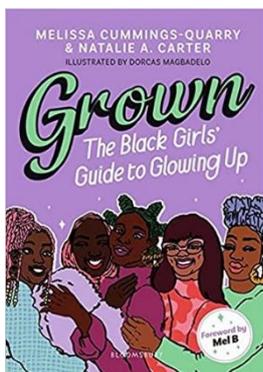


Empress & Aniya by Candice Carty-Williams

978-1913311100, Knights Of

When Empress starts at Aniya's school, they're not exactly best friends. But, when the two teenage girls accidentally cast a spell on their 16th birthday and end up switching bodies, they quickly learn that friendship is the most important magic of all. South London's answer to 'Freaky Friday', *Empress and Aniya* is a moving portrayal of the importance of real friendship and the ups and downs of being a

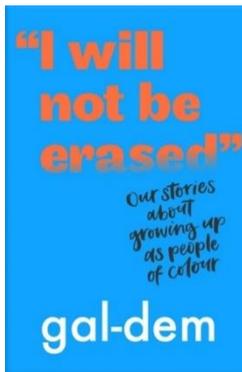
teenager.



Grown: The Black Girls' Guide to Glowing Up by Melissa Cummings-Quarry, Natalie A Carter and Dorcas Magbadelo, 978-1526623713, Bloomsbury

Being a teenager and trying to understand who you are and what you stand for is hard. Period. But if you're a Black girl and don't always see yourself represented in the books you read, the films you watch, the adverts you see or the history you're taught, it can be even tougher. *Grown: The Black Girls' Guide to Glowing Up* was written with one thing in mind sis. You.

From understanding identity to the politics of hair to maintaining squad goals to dealing with microaggressions to consent to figuring out what career you might want, Grown has got your back.



"I Will Not Be Erased": Our stories about growing up as people of colour by gal-dem, 978-1406386370, Walker Books

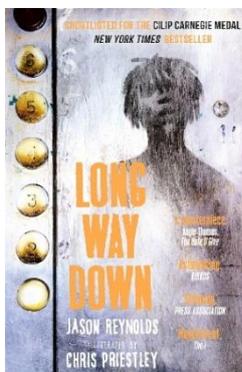
gal-dem, the award-winning online and print magazine, is created by women and non-binary people of colour. In this life-affirming, moving and joyous collection of fourteen essays, gal-dem's talented writers use raw material from their teenage years – diaries, poems and chat histories – to give advice to their younger selves and those growing up today.



Lark & Kasim Start a Revolution by Kacen Callender

978-0571375875, Faber

Lark Winters wants to be a writer, and for now that means posting anything and everything on their social media accounts – just to build their platform. When former best friend Kasim accidentally posts a thread on Lark's Twitter declaring his love for a secret, unrequited crush, Lark's tweets are suddenly the talk of the school. To protect Kasim, Lark decides to take the fall, pretending they accidentally posted the thread in reference to another classmate. It seems like a great idea: Lark finally gets the courage to ask out their crush, Kasim keeps his privacy and Lark's social media stats explode. But living a lie takes a toll – as does the judgement of thousands of Internet strangers. Lark tries their best to be perfect at all costs, but nothing seems good enough for the anonymous hordes – or for Kasim, who is growing closer to Lark, just like it used to be between them . . . In the end, Lark must embrace their right to their messy emotions and learn how to be in love.



Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds and Chris Priestley, 9780571335121, Faber

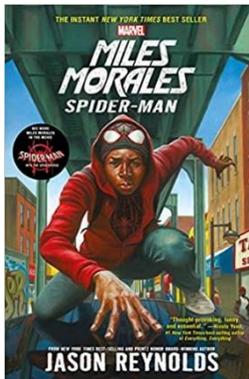
After Will's brother is shot in a gang crime, he knows the next steps. Don't cry. Don't snitch. Get revenge. So he gets in the lift with Shawn's gun, determined to follow The Rules. Only when the lift door opens, Buck walks in, Will's friend who died years ago. And Dani, who was shot years before that. As more people from his past arrive, Will has to ask himself if he really knows what he's doing.



Love Radio by Ebony LaDelle

978-1801313452, Usborne

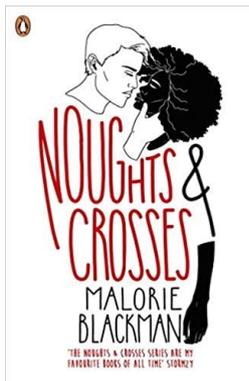
Prince Jones is passionate about music and romance, dishing out relationship advice on his Love Radio show. But his own love life is looking kind of quiet . . . until he meets Dani Ford. Dani isn't checking for anybody. She's focused on her plan to move to New York City to become a famous author, and avoiding dealing with what happened at that party a few months ago. When the two meet, sparks fly – but Dani's not looking to get derailed. So she gives Prince just three dates to convince her that he's worth falling for . . . sometimes the best love story is the one you write yourself.



Miles Morales: Spider-Man by Jason Reynolds

978-1484788509, Marvel Press

Miles Morales is just your average teenager. Dinner every Sunday with his parents, chilling out playing old-school video games with his best friend, Ganke, crushing on brainy, beautiful poet Alicia. He's even got a scholarship spot at the prestigious Brooklyn Visions Academy. Oh yeah, and he's Spider Man. But lately, Miles's spidey-sense has been on the fritz. When a misunderstanding leads to his suspension from school, Miles begins to question his abilities.



Noughts & Crosses by Malorie Blackman

978-0141378640, Penguin Random House Children's

Sephy is a Cross: she lives a life of privilege and power. But she's lonely, and burns with injustice at the world she sees around her. Callum is a nought: he's considered to be less than nothing – a blanker, there to serve Crosses – but he dreams of a better life. They've been friends since they were children, and they both know that's as far as it can ever go. Noughts and Crosses are fated to be bitter enemies – love is out of the question. Then – in spite of a world that is fiercely against them – these star-crossed lovers choose each other. But this is love story that will lead both of them into terrible danger . . . and which will have shocking repercussions for generations to come.



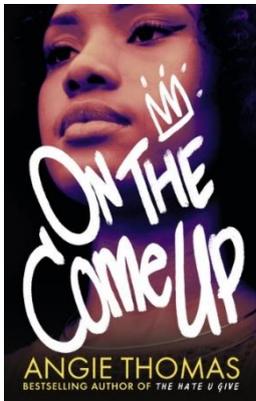
Oh My Gods by Alexandra Sheppard

978-1407188737, Scholastic

She's just moved in with her dorky dad and self-absorbed older siblings – who happen to be the ancient Greek gods, living incognito in London!

Between keeping her family's true identities secret, trying to impress her new friends, and meeting an *actually* cute boy, Helen's stress levels are higher than Mount Olympus. She needs to rein in her chaotic family before they blow their cover AND her chances at a half-normal social

life.



On the Come Up Paperback by Angie Thomas

978-1406372168, Walker Books

Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. As the daughter of an underground hip hop legend who died right before he hit big, Bri's got massive shoes to fill. But when her first song goes viral for all the wrong reasons, Bri finds herself at the centre of controversy and portrayed by the media as more menace than MC. And with an eviction notice staring her family down, Bri no longer just wants to make it – she has to. Even if it means becoming the very thing the

public has made her out to be.



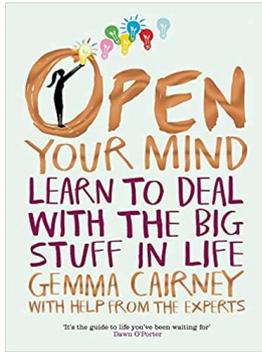
Only on the Weekends by Dean Atta,

978-1444960563, Hachette Children's

Fifteen-year-old Mack is a hopeless romantic – he blames the films he's grown up watching. He has liked Karim for as long as he can remember, and is ecstatic when Karim becomes his boyfriend – it feels like love. But when Mack's dad gets a job on a film in Scotland, Mack has to move, and soon he discovers how painful love can be. It's horrible being so far away from Karim, but the worst part is that Karim doesn't make the effort to visit. Love shouldn't be only on the

weekends.

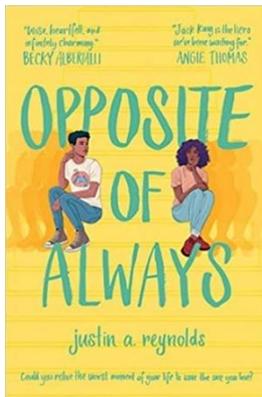
Then, when Mack meets actor Finlay on a film set, he experiences something powerful, a feeling like love at first sight. How long until he tells Karim – and when will his old life and new life collide?



Open Your Mind: Your World and Your Future by Gemma Cairney

978-1509877003, Macmillan Children's Books

Full of honest and practical advice from Gemma Cairney and a whole host of trained professionals and real people, *Open Your Mind* is the best friend of a book everyone needs. From stress, trauma and anxiety to your place in the world and everything in between.



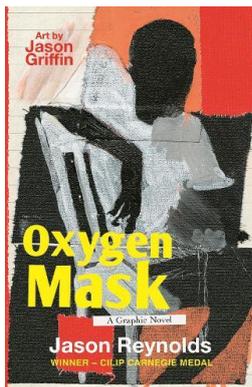
Opposite of Always by Justin Reynolds

978-1509870042, Macmillan Children's Books

When Jack and Kate meet at a party, he knows he's falling – hard. Soon she's meeting his best friends and Kate wins them over as easily as she did Jack. But then Kate dies. And their story should end there.

Yet Kate's death sends Jack back to the beginning, the moment they first meet, and Kate's there again. Healthy, happy, and charming as ever. Jack isn't sure if he's losing his mind.

Still, if he has a chance to prevent Kate's death, he'll take it. Even if that means believing in time travel. However, Jack will learn that his actions are not without consequences. And when one choice turns deadly for someone else close to him, he has to figure out what he's willing to do to save the people he loves.

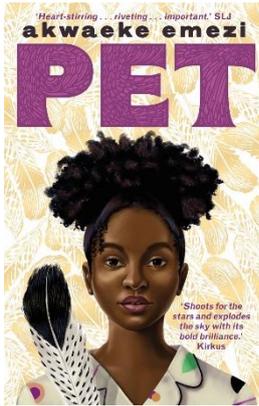


Oxygen Mask by Jason Reynolds and Jason Griffin

978-0571374748, Faber

Intimately set within the walls of a family home, this book is an incredible artefact of the historic year we have all lived through. We travel from the depths of despair but not without hope; the mundane details contained within four walls becomes our sanctuary.

This is a gift in commemoration of a time and place, of a worldwide pandemic, of loss and of the murder of George Floyd. It is a reminder of how, in uncertain times, we can cling to the simple things for respite, for hope. A reminder of how comforting books and artworks are in times of extreme stress.



Pet by Akwaeke Emezi

9780571355112, Faber

There are no more monsters anymore, or so the children in the city of Lucille are taught. With doting parents and a best friend named Redemption, Jam has grown up with this lesson all her life. But when she meets Pet, a creature made of horns and colours and claws, who emerges from one of her mother's paintings and a drop of Jam's blood, she must reconsider what she's been told. Pet has come to hunt a monster, and the shadow of something grim lurks in Redemption's house. Jam must fight not only to protect her best friend, but also to uncover the truth.



Punching the Air by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam

978-0008422141, HarperCollins Publishers

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?

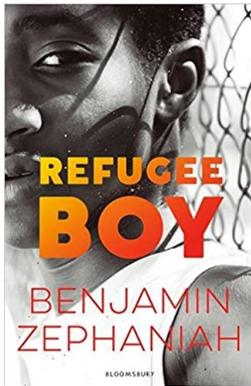


Rapunzella, Or, Don't Touch My Hair by Ella McLeod

978-0702313868, Scholastic

Rapunzella is imprisoned in an enchanted forest made of her own Afro and the might of the evil King Charming seems unstoppable. But is it? Can Rapunzella use her power to change the future?

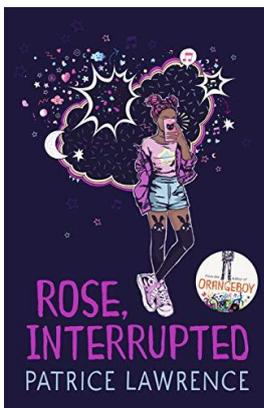
You're fifteen, you spend your time at school and at Val's hair salon with Baker, Val's son, who has eyes that are like falling off a cliff into space. The salon is a space of safety, but also of possibility and dreams . . . Dreams of hair so rich and alive that it grow upwards and outwards into a wild landscape, becomes trees and leaves, and houses birds and butterflies and all the secret creatures that belong in such a forest. Is there a future where such possibility and power is more than just a dream?



Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah

978-1408894996, Bloomsbury

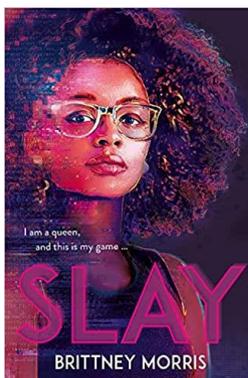
Life is not safe for Alem. His father is Ethiopian, his mother Eritrean. Their countries are at war, and Alem is welcome in neither place. So Alem is excited to spend a holiday in London with his father – until he wakes up to find him gone. What seems like a betrayal is in fact an act of love, but now Alem is alone in a strange country, and he must forge his own path . . .



Rose, Interrupted by Patrice Lawrence

978-1444940657, Hodder Children's Books

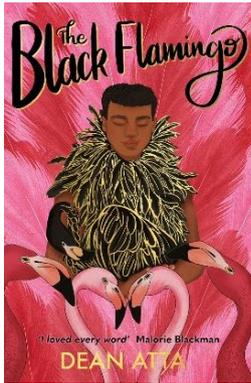
Eighteen months ago, 17-year-old Rose and 13-year-old Rudder escaped a strict religious sect with their mum. They are still trying to make sense of the world outside – no more rules about clothes and books, films and music, no more technology bans. But also no more friendship with the people they've known all their lives, no community and no certainty. It doesn't help that their mum has to work all hours to pay rent on their cramped, smelly, one-bed flat above a kebab shop in Hackney. While Rudder gorges on once-taboo Harry Potters and dances to Simon and Garfunkel and show tunes, Rose swaps the ankle skirts and uncut hair of the Woodford Pilgrims for Japanese-cute fairy dress and her new boyfriend, Kye. Kye, who she wants with all her being. But there's loads of scary stuff about their new life that Rose and Rudder have no idea how to handle – it's normal for girls to let their boyfriends take naked pictures of them, right?



SLAY by Brittney Morris

9781444951721, Hodder Children's Books

By day, seventeen-year-old Kiera Johnson is a college student, and one of the only black kids at Jefferson Academy. By night, she joins hundreds of thousands of black gamers who duel worldwide in the secret online role-playing card game, SLAY. No one knows Kiera is the game developer – not even her boyfriend, Malcolm. But when a teen in Kansas City is murdered over a dispute in the SLAY world, the media labels it an exclusionist, racist hub for thugs.



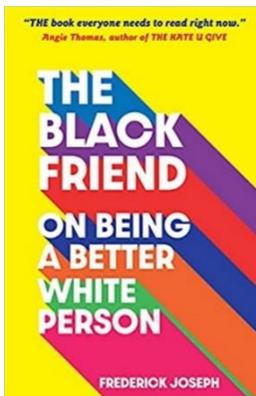
The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta and Anshika Khullar

9781444948608, Hodder Children's Books

Michael waits in the stage wings, wearing a pink wig, pink fluffy coat and black heels.

One more step will see him illuminated by spotlight.

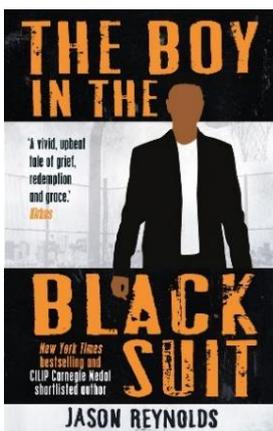
He has been on a journey of bravery to get here, and he is almost ready to show himself to the world in bold colours . . . Can he emerge as The Black Flamingo?



The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person by Frederick Joseph

978-1529500615, Walker Books

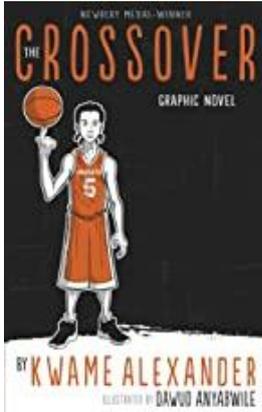
Speaking directly to the reader, Frederick Joseph offers powerful reflections on his own experiences with racism. As a former "token Black kid", he now presents himself as the friend many readers need, touching on topics including cultural appropriation, "reverse racism" and white privilege. Featuring interviews with figures such as writer Angie Thomas, content creator Toni Tone, and April Reign, founder of the #OscarsSoWhite movement, this book serves as conversation starter and tool kit, creating a timely and essential read for committed anti-racists and newcomers to the cause of racial justice alike.



The Boy in the Black Suit by Jason Reynolds

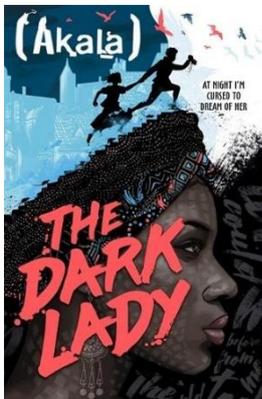
9780571356126, Faber

Matt wears a black suit every day. No, not because his mom died – although she did, and it sucks. But he wears the suit for his gig at the local funeral home, which pays way better than the Cluck Bucket, and he needs the income since his dad can't handle the bills (or anything, really) on his own. So while Dad's snagging bottles of whiskey, Matt's snagging fifteen bucks an hour. Not bad. But everything else? Not good. Then Matt meets Lovey. Crazy name, and she's been through more crazy stuff than he can imagine. Yet Lovey never cries. She's tough. Really tough. Tough in the way Matt wishes he could be. Which is maybe why he's drawn to her, and definitely why he can't seem to shake her. Because there's nothing more hopeful than finding a person who understands your loneliness – and who can maybe even help take it away.



***The Crossover: Graphic Novel* by Kwame Alexander & Dawud Anyabwile 978-1783449590, Andersen Press**

'With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. 'Cuz tonight I'm delivering,' raps twelve-year-old Josh Bell. Thanks to their dad, he and his twin brother, Jordan, are kings on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood – he's got mad beats, too, which help him find his rhythm when it's all on the line.



**The Dark Lady by Akala
978-1444942972, Hachette Children's**

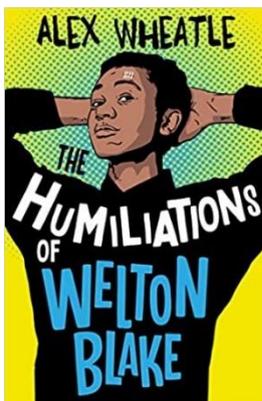
A pickpocket with an exceptional gift.

A prisoner of extraordinary value

An orphan haunted by dreams of the mysterious Dark Lady

Henry is an orphan, an outsider, a thief. He is also a fifteen-year-old invested with magical powers . . .

This brilliant, at times brutal, first novel from the amazing imagination that is Akala, will glue you to your seat as you are hurled into a time when London stank and boys like Henry were forced to find their own route through the tangled streets and out the other side.

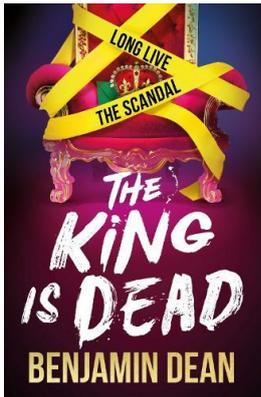


**The Humiliations of Welton Blake by Alex Wheatle
978-1781129494, Barrington Stoke**

Welton Blake has done it! He's asked out Carmella McKenzie – the best-looking girl in school – and she's only gone and said yes!

But just as he thinks his luck is starting to change, Welton's phone breaks, kick-starting a series of unfortunate and humiliating events. With bullies to avoid, girls ready to knock him out and all the drama with his mum and dad, life for Welton is about to go very, very wrong

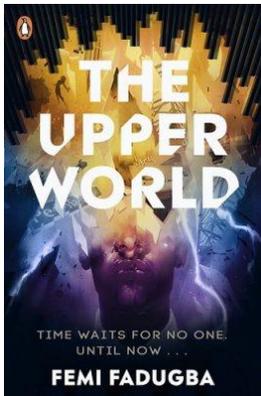
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The King is Dead by Benjamin Dean

978-1398512542, Simon & Schuster

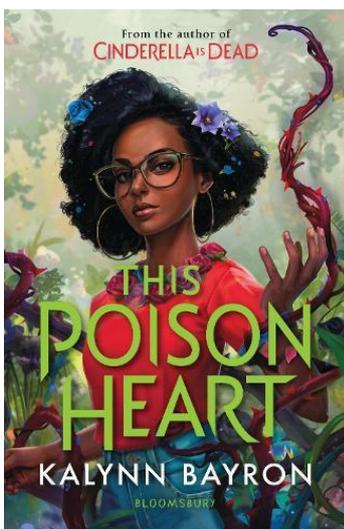
James has been a prince all his life, and since he was born, he's been thrust into the spotlight as the first Black heir to the throne. But when his father dies unexpectedly, James is crowned king at the tender age of seventeen, and his life irrevocably changes. When James' boyfriend suddenly goes missing, threatening envelopes appear in the palace, and gossip and scandals that only he knows are leaked to the public. As the anonymous informant continues to expose every last skeleton in the royal closet, James realises even those in his inner circle can't be trusted.



The Upper World by Femi Fadugba

978-0241505618, Penguin Random House Children's

Esso is running out of time and into trouble. When he discovers he has the ability to see glimpses of the future, he becomes haunted by a vision of a bullet fired in an alleyway with devastating consequences. A generation later, fifteen-year-old Rhia is desperately searching for answers – and a catastrophic moment from the past holds the key to understanding the parents she never got to meet. Whether on the roads of South London or in the mysterious Upper World, Esso and Rhia's fates must collide. And when they do, a race against the clock will become a race against time itself . . .



This Poison Heart by Kalynn Bayron

978-1526632791, Bloomsbury

Ever since she can remember, Briseis has had power over plants. Flowers bloom in her footsteps and leaves turn to face her as though she were the sun. It's a power she and her adoptive mothers have spent her whole life trying to hide. And then Briseis inherits an old house from her birth mother and suddenly finds herself with the space and privacy to test her powers for the first time. But as Briseis starts to bring the house's rambling garden back to life, she finds she has also inherited generations of secrets.

A hidden altar to a dark goddess, a lineage of witches stretching back to ancient times, and a hidden garden overgrown with the most deadly poisonous plants on earth. And Briseis's

long-departed ancestors aren't going to let her rest until she accepts her place as the keeper of the terrible power that lies at the heart of the Poison Garden.

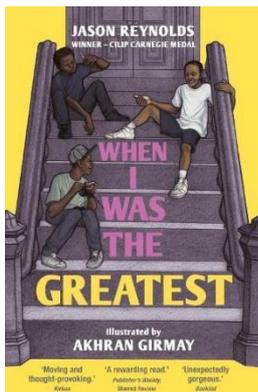


This Wicked Fate by Kalynn Bayron

978-1526650726, Bloomsbury

Briseis's mother is dead, but there is one chance to bring her back. Find the last piece of the deadly Absyrtus Heart.

If she is to find the missing piece she must turn to the blood relatives she's never known, learn of their secret powers and take her place in their ancient lineage. But Briseis is not the only one who wants the Heart, and her enemies will try to use her in any way they can . . .

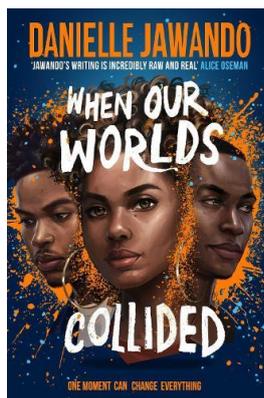


When I Was the Greatest by Jason Reynolds and Akhram Girmay

978-0571369645, Faber

Ali's got enough going on, between school and boxing and helping out at home. His best friend Noodles, though. Now there's a dude looking for trouble – and, somehow, it's always Ali around to pick up the pieces. But, hey, a guy's gotta look out for his boys, right? Besides, it's all small potatoes; it's not like anyone's getting hurt.

And then there's Needles. Needles is Noodles's brother. He's got a syndrome, and gets these ticks and blurts out the wildest, craziest things. It's cool, though: everyone on their street knows he doesn't mean anything by it. Yeah, it's cool . . . until Ali and Noodles and Needles find themselves somewhere they never expected to be . . . somewhere they never should've been – where the people aren't so friendly, and even less forgiving.



When Our Worlds Collided by Danielle Jawando

978-1471178795, Simon & Schuster

When fourteen-year-old Shaq is stabbed outside of a busy shopping centre in Manchester, three teenagers from very different walks of life are unexpectedly brought together. What follows flips their worlds upside down and makes Chantelle, Jackson, and Marc question the deep-rooted prejudice and racism that exists within the police, the media, and the rest of society.

Finding your next read

[Black History Month US 2022: 12 best children's books with empowering black characters](#)

[Black Lives Matter Booklists ages 0-16 by National Literacy Trust](#)

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/globalassets/resources/represents/breaking-ground-brochure.pdf>

[Chatterbooks resources page \(for children up to 13+\)](#)

<https://www.lovereadng4kids.co.uk/blog/collections/diverse-voices-childrens-books-that-celebrate-difference-6090>

[Reading Hack resources pages \(for young people aged 13+\)](#)

[Summer Reading Challenge Book Sorter](#)

[Teachers' Reading Challenge, Find a Read page](#)

Get involved

You can share your book recommendations for children and young people by tagging us [@readingagency](#)