

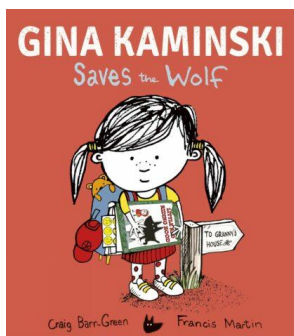
The Reading Agency's March booklist – Wonder Women



To mark International Women's Day (8 March) and celebrate the achievements, triumphs and general brilliance of women and girls from around the world, we have created a booklist that tell the stories of wonder women and girls. We would love to hear what books you'd recommend on social media using #booklist and tagging [@readingagency](#). You can see our past booklists [here](#).

Younger children

Gina Kaminski Saves the Wolf by Craig Barr-Green (author), Francis Martin (illustrator), Little Tiger, ISBN: 9781801045001



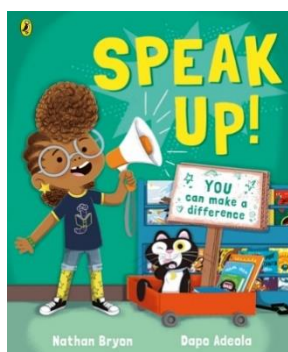
Gina Kaminski is here to tell you three facts.

- 1 – Little Red Riding Hood is full of BIG mistakes.
- 2 – She is off to fairy tale land to fix them.
- 3 – She WILL save the wolf.

Who's afraid of the big bad wolf? Certainly not Gina as she takes the narrative lead and tells the story in her own distinctive way.

With fantastic illustrations from Francis Martin, and an innovative use of pictorial emoji language, this is the ideal book to empower every child to be the hero of their own story.

Speak Up! By Nathan Bryon (author), Dapo Adeola (illustrator), Penguin Random House Children's UK, ISBN: 9780241345870



Join the brilliantly passionate and instantly loveable Rocket as she organises a peaceful protest to save her local library!

Bookworm Rocket loves to collect new books on her weekly visit to the library, and to read all about inspirational figures like Rosa Parks. She is heartbroken when she discovers the library will be closing down! Can she use what she's learnt from Rosa and speak up to save the day?

This empowering, heartwarming picture book is a love letter to libraries and the power of reading. And it shows the incredible power we ALL have when we find our voice and speak up about the things that matter.

The Kindest Red: A Story of Hijab and Friendship by Ibtihaj Muhammad (author), Hatem Aly (illustrator), S. K. Ali (author), Andersen Press, ISBN: 9781839133046



The highly anticipated sequel to *The Proudest Blue* which explores sisterhood, and kindness, from trailblazer and Olympic medallist Ibtihaj Muhammad. When Faizah's teacher asks her class to imagine what kind of world, they want to live in Faizah imagines a world where everyone is kind to one another, and tries to create that world in the school playground.

But what Faizah wants most is to be like her big sister, Asiya. Will Faizah's classmates repay her kindness and find a way for her to match Asiya in time for school photo day? An important and uplifting story about celebrating each other's differences and similarities.

Older children

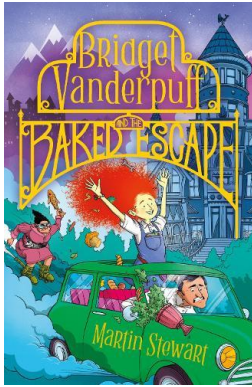
Billie Swift Takes Flight by Iszi Lawrence, Bloomsbury Publishing, ISBN: 9781472988171



October, 1942.

When twelve-year-old Billie is out exploring with her pet chicken, she sees a plane crash into a field and is left wondering if the pilot even survived. Determined to find out more, Billie finds a way into the ATA – a group of amazing pilots who defy the odds to get planes from the factories to the front lines – and her life changes for ever. Some of the pilots are men who are too old, or too injured for the air force. But many more are women. Intrepid, inspiring women who show Billie what she might grow up to become.

Bridget Vanderpuff and the Baked Escape by Martin Stewart (author), David Habben (illustrator), Zephyr, ISBN: 9781804549094



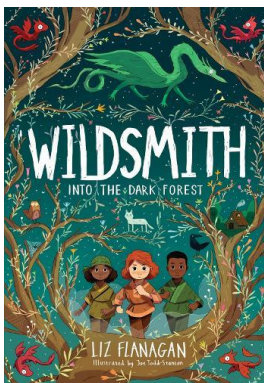
Bridget Baxter is the very last orphan at the Orphanage for Errant Childs, left at the mercy of the awful Miss Acrid and her foul-smelling fish sandwiches. Miss Acrid's mission is to make Bridget's life a misery. But Bridget is more than a match for her.

When kindly Mr Vanderpuff arrives at the Orphanage in search of a child to care for, Bridget thinks her luck has finally turned. Mr Vanderpuff is the village baker, and his shop is a world of wonders. But they soon discover that Bridget is absolutely terrible at baking. When Miss Acrid returns for the ultimate revenge, Bridget must open the Locked and Secret Door, navigate Miss Acrid's spiderweb of

booby traps and use her unique baking skills to save herself – and Mr Vanderpuff – from certain disaster.

Join Bridget as she dons her chef whites and gets the kwassongs at the ready... Baking isn't such a piece of cake.

Into the Dark Forest by Liz Flanagan (author), Joe Todd-Stanton (illustrator), UCLan Publishing, ISBN: 9781915235046



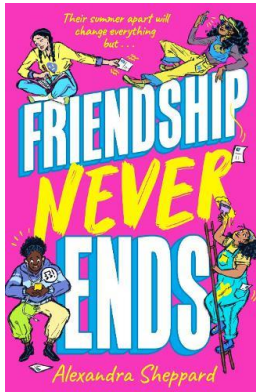
When war threatens her beloved city, Rowan and her mother must flee to the Dark Forest, meeting Grandpa and his white wolf Arto for the first time.

Though she misses her father, Rowan makes new friends - including a trio of powerful witches. When she rescues a baby dragon from poachers, she discovers the secret of her own identity. Could Rowan really be a wildsmith?

Fostering a whole clutch of dragons, the summer speeds by. But when danger threatens, Rowan and Grandpa must call on all their friends for help.

Young people (14+) – please note these may have mature themes and you can find more specific age ratings on publisher websites

Friendship Never Ends by Alexandra Sheppard, Knights Of, ISBN: 9781913311414

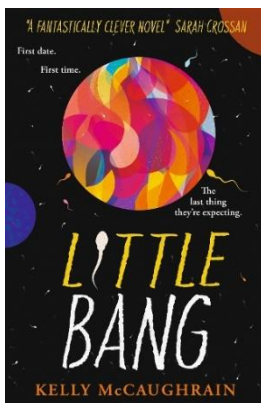


When you're figuring it all out, there are some friendships that mean the most.

Meet Sunita, Gifty, Dawn and May. They're each about to have a summer they'll never forget, but does growing up have to mean growing apart?

Funny, relatable and heart-warming, get ready to laugh, cringe and cry with these four besties!

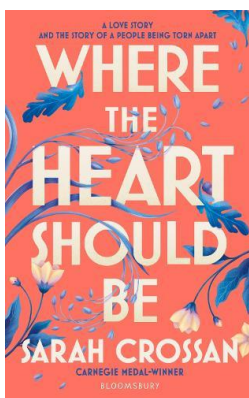
Little Bang by Kelly McCaughrain, Walker Books, ISBN: 9781406375725



Beneath the New Year's Eve fireworks, shy science-nerd Mel and slacker songwriter Sid get pregnant on their first date. Any sixteen-year-olds would expect trouble – but this is Northern Ireland 2018, where abortion is still illegal. Mel's religious parents insist she must keep the baby, whilst Sid's feminist mum pushes for a termination.

Mel and Sid are determined to do this together, but they soon discover that pregnancy is totally different for boys and girls. When their relationship starts to fall apart under all the pressure, Mel finds herself feeling alone with the impossible dilemma of the Little Bang growing inside her.

Where the Heart Should Be by Sarah Crossan, Bloomsbury Publishing, ISBN: 9781526666598 (published 14/3/2024)

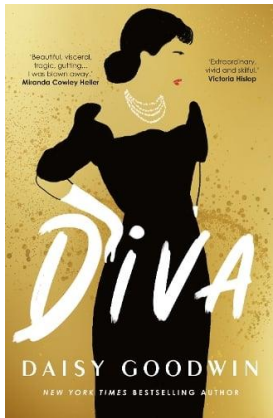


Ireland, 1846 Nell is working as a scullery maid in the kitchen of the Big House. Once she loved school and books and dreaming. But there's not much choice of work when the land grows food that rots in the earth. Now she is scrubbing, peeling, washing, sweeping for Sir Philip Wicken, the man who owns her home, her family's land, their crops, everything.

His dogs are always well fed, even as famine sets in. Upstairs in the Big House, where Nell is forbidden to enter, is Johnny Browning, newly arrived from England: the young nephew who will one day inherit it all. And as hunger and disease run rampant all around them, a spark of life and hope catches light when Nell and Johnny find each other.

Adults

Diva by Daisy Goodwin, Zeus, ISBN: 9781035906703

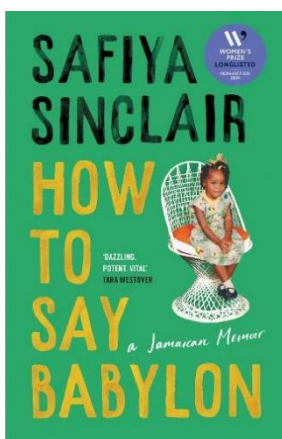


In the glittering and ruthlessly competitive world of opera, Maria Callas is known simply as la divina: the divine one. With her glorious voice, instinctive flair for the dramatic and striking beauty, she's the toast of the grandest opera houses in the world. Yet her fame has been hard won: raised in Nazi-occupied Greece by a mother who mercilessly exploited her, Maria learned early in life how to protect herself.

When she meets the fabulously rich shipping magnate, Aristotle Onassis, her isolation melts away. For the first time in her life, she believes she's found a man who sees the woman rather than the legendary soprano. Desperately in love, Onassis introduces her to a life of unbelievable luxury, mixing with celebrities like Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

And then, suddenly, it's over. The international press announce that Onassis will marry the most famous woman in the world, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, leaving Maria to pick up the pieces.

How To Say Babylon by Safiya Sinclair, HarperCollins Publishers, ISBN: 9780008491284



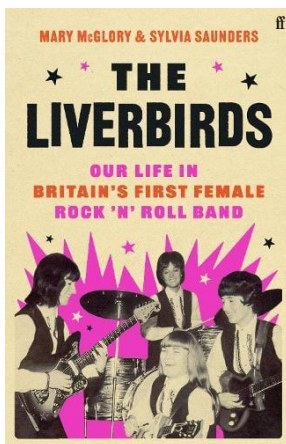
Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Non-Fiction 2024.

There was more than one way to be lost, more than one way to be saved.

Born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, where luxury hotels line pristine white sand beaches, Safiya Sinclair grew up guarding herself against an ever-present threat. Preaching fire and brimstone, her father, a volatile reggae musician and strict believer in a militant sect of Rastafari, railed against Babylon, the immoral, corrupting influence of the Western world just beyond their gate. To protect the purity of the women in their family he forbade almost everything: no trousers, no short sleeves and no short skirts, no opinions, nowhere but home and school, no friends but this family and no future but this path.

Rastas were outlawed and ostracized in Jamaica and, in this isolation, Safiya's father's rule was absolute. At home, her mother did what she could to bring the joy of the world beyond to her children with books and poetry. As Safiya's imagination leapt beyond its restrictive borders, soon her burgeoning independence brought with it greater clashes with her ever more radicalised father. Safiya knew that if she was to live at all, she had to find some way to leave home. But in order to carve her own way forward, she had to first make her way back.

The Liverbirds: Our life in Britain's first female rock 'n' roll band by Mary McGlory (author), Sylvia Saunders (author), Faber & Faber, ISBN: 9780571377022 (published 14/3/2024)



In the early '60s, four friends from Liverpool formed a band. But this is not the 'fab four' story we know.

Mary, Sylvia, Valerie and Pamela - also known as The Liverbirds - were one of the world's first all-female rock'n'roll bands. At an early gig, backstage at the Cavern Club, a young John Lennon told them that 'girls don't play guitars'.

But they took that as a challenge. Despite the early scepticism, they won over tough crowds, toured stadiums, recorded two hit albums, and played with the Kinks, Rolling Stones and Chuck Berry - all in the space of just five years.

Now, the two surviving members of the band tell their incredible story in full for the first time - capturing a lost era of liberation and rock'n'roll, as they thrived in the vibrant Merseybeat music scene and formed a friendship that has endured through the decades.

Our monthly booklists

The monthly themed booklists are co-ordinated in-house by the Reading Partners team. The aim of our booklist themes is to highlight a variety of titles which children, young people and adults will want to read themselves and to encourage reading for pleasure. We aim to create booklists that include titles that are written and illustrated by authentic voices and then include characters that reflect the diverse society of the UK. (Please note our monthly booklists are not part of our Book Selection Framework applied to programme content).