

Arnie Jenks and the House of Strangers

Written by Tim Bradley
Matador (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1783064908

Although this is a ghost story, it isn't a scare-you-out-of-your-wits type of ghost story. It is far more interesting than that. Arnie's class are on a school trip to a big, old house appropriately called Shabbington Hall. When the others leave, Arnie waits behind for his aunt to collect him, but a sudden heavy snowfall means she can't get through and Arnie has to stay the night. During the night the house decides to reveal some of its secrets and Arnie is transported back in time to meet some of the people who have lived in the house over the centuries and to learn about their lives. Arnie thinks he will have plenty of material for his school project but then the last and most recent story reveals the biggest surprise of all. There are glimpses of life during WW1, the 16th century, the Victorian era and finally the hot, hot summer of 1976, all seen through the eyes of a lively and inquisitive 21st century schoolboy.

Jan Lennon

Awful Auntie

Written by David Walliams Illustrated by Tony Ross
HarperCollins (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-0007453603

Poor, recently orphaned, Stella Saxby has been left as the heir to Saxby Hall, with only her Auntie to take care of her. But it's clear from the outset that Aunt Alberta really is the most horrible aunt who ever lived. With her permanent snarl, her steel-toe-capped boots and her Great Bavarian Mountain Owl sidekick, she vows to find the hidden will to disinherit Stella, leaving her homeless and penniless. Feisty Stella soon realises that things are amiss and with the help of her new-found friend, Soot, the cockney ghost of a chimney sweep who rattles round Saxby Hall, she starts to uncover Aunt Alberta's sinister lies. But when Detective Strauss turns up on the doorstep, Stella's accusations towards her Auntie, as the murderer of her parents don't seem to be taken seriously. With the perfect blend of comic illustrations, slapstick humour and the deliciously evil Auntie, this will delight fans of David Walliams' previous works. Some fans might miss the character of Raj but there is an amusing little addendum which may make up for this.

Nicole Jordan



An Episode of Sparrows

Written by Rumer Godden
Virago (R) (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-1844088515

Can a story written in 1946 speak to children today? Yes, is the answer, for fiercely independent Lovejoy surely speaks to the modern reader. Her self-absorbed mother takes no real interest in her and does almost nothing to take care of her needs. Mr and Mrs Combe, who care for her in a bleak corner of post-war London, have very little themselves and struggle to make ends meet. Lovejoy's growing passion for the garden she creates on a piece of hidden waste ground provides her with a sense of hope. The reluctant support of two other children ultimately gives focus and meaning to the lives of all three. A colourful array of other characters adds to this memorable picture of post-war London. Lovejoy's striking personality and longing for something real and beautiful in life will have strong appeal for thoughtful readers.

Marianne Adey



Viminy Crowe's Comic Book

Written by Marthe Jocelyn & Richard Scrimger
Artwork by Claudia Dávila
Tundra (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-1770494794

Viminy Crowe's Comic Book is about two children - Wylder Wallace and Addy Crowe - who meet at the Toronto International Comic Book Convention. After discovering that Addy is the niece of renowned comic book creator, Viminy Crowe, Wylder is immediately fascinated by her. After an accident involving a spilled drink both children end up inside Crowe's new book, 'Flynn Goster and the Gold Rush Express'. *Viminy Crowe's Comic Book* is a thrilling adventure set primarily in the exciting steampunk world of the comic book and features all the right ingredients - a dashing hero, a feisty heroine, a dastardly villain and two hapless children stuck in the middle of it all. The story is told from the point of view of both children, the chapters alternating between that of Wylder and Addy, giving the reader a different perspective of the same events. What really marks this book out as different is that it is part novel and part comic book. As a large amount of the action takes place within the world of a comic, it is only fitting that segments of the story are presented in comic book form, spectacularly illustrated by Claudia Dávila.

Davy Hall

Murder Most Unladylike

Written by Robin Stevens
Corgi (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-0552570725

When Hazel Wong left Hong Kong for Deepdean School for Girls for the perfect English education, she never expected to be playing Watson to another pupil's Sherlock Holmes. Her best friend, Daisy Wells, becomes President of the secret 'Wells and Wong Detective Society' and makes Hazel secretary. Unexpectedly, the society is suddenly catapulted from investigating missing ties to uncovering murder, deception and blackmail. Their first big case starts with the unexpected discovery of Miss Bell's dead body which then mysteriously disappears. Luckily, Hazel's clues and deductions are just as vital as the more charismatic Daisy's assumptions and speculations in helping the two girls uncover the trail of a murderer at Deepdean. Set in 1934, this boarding school detective story is exciting and enthralling, but also full of public school eccentricities and period charm. Robin Stevens could well be a new Agatha Christie for young readers.



Benjamin Scott



Boy in the Tower

Written by Polly Ho-Yen
Doubleday (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-0857533036

A modern take on *The Day of the Triffids*. Ade is a young boy living in a tower block with an agoraphobic mother. She relies on him to do most of the household chores so when weird things start happening in the neighbourhood, Ade has to deal with it by himself. Tower blocks around him start falling down, houses are crumbling, people are dying and there are strange menacing plants with a blue glow - the Bluchers - advancing. Ade feels alone and very frightened. People are leaving the area, his school is closed, but he is left with his mother unaware and ill in bed. The story is told through the eyes of Ade, with whom the reader immediately identifies. It is a story of friendship, love and survival. Very moving!

Ingrid Fox

Listen to the Moon

Written by Michael Morpurgo HarperCollins (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-0007339631



This wonderfully written story is mainly told through the evocative memories of the author's grandmother, and her experiences of life on the Isles of Scilly during WW1. Alfie and his father are out fishing one day, and they happen to stray onto an uninhabited nearby island. There they find a young girl, starving and barely alive. They take her home with them and the family lovingly nurse the girl back to health. But they have no idea who she is, or where she came from. They call her Lucy because that is the only word she says. During her first days at school, she is mistakenly labelled as German. The attitude of her school friends and fellow islanders changes dramatically because during WW1 anti-German sentiment was, understandably, rife. The writing is captivating as we witness this change of mood. Desperate to know who Lucy is, where she has come from and what the future holds for her. You can't put the book down. All is beautifully revealed through the narratives of the three different protagonists.

Allister Jordan

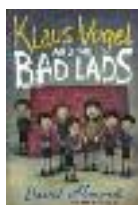
One Wish

Written by Michelle Harrison Simon & Schuster £6.99 ISBN: 978-1471121654

One Wish is a new prequel to Michelle Harrison's *Thirteen Treasures* series so it's ideal for both fans of the series or anyone new. It is a magical story of fairies, spirits, second sight and friendship. Tanya has the gift of second sight and is plagued by malicious fairies intent on creating mayhem in her life. Whilst on holiday she meets Ratty, a fellow believer, who is in serious danger. Ratty and his father are on the run from a malevolent man. Ratty stole something from him and he has spent years conjuring up spells to trace Ratty and now he is getting close. Tanya proves to be an admirable friend as she battles with a water hag, enters a dark dungeon, climbs down a well and conjures up potions to save Ratty and turn his Dad back to human form. Readers who enjoy fantasy will be bewitched by this exciting book and intrigued by the antics of the naughty fairies.



Ingrid Fox



Klaus Vogel and the Bad Lads

Written by David Almond Illustrated by Vladimir Stankovic Barrington Stoke (R) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1781122693

How does a group of boys who have always been up for any mischief, turn into a gang who like to vandalise and destroy property? In this book, the answer is when they meet an older, stronger, more forceful personality than themselves – a personality bent on destruction. Joe has taken control of the gang and leads them on to antagonise neighbours and destroy property. Then, along comes Klaus, a refugee from East Germany, who cannot understand why they are doing such things. By his example, he shows the gang that it is possible, and right, to stand up to Joe and to refuse to follow him. This is an excellent book, which illustrates how tyrants, of all degrees, operate and how courage is needed to defy them – a microcosm for the world. This is a poignant and powerful narrative about intolerance, peer pressure, bullying and the need to belong set against the need to be true to oneself.

Patricia Thompson

Uprooted

Written by Lynne Reid Banks HarperCollins (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-0007589432

As the Second World War spreads out across Europe, ten year old Lindy, her mother and her cousin are evacuated from England to Canada. The incredibly moving and absorbing story is narrated through the eyes, feelings, expectations and fears of little Lindy. After travelling across the endless plains of Canada, they settle in the small town of Saskatoon. The



war, whilst physically thousands of miles away in Europe, is never actually far from their thoughts, as they reflect on those they left behind, including Lindy's father. Lindy strives to keep the family together, so that all can return to normal, once the war is finished. But can things ever truly be the same again? The story follows Lindy as she begins a new school, makes new friends, and we watch her cousin and mother, as they strive to cope with their new surroundings. *Uprooted* is beautifully written by Lynne Reid Banks, portraying everything through the eyes of a ten-year-old girl, far from home.

Allister Jordan

The Luck Uglies

Written by Paul Durham HarperCollins (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-0007526901

Eleven year old Rye lives with her mother on the edge of the village of Drowning, by the road to the bogs. On the night of the Black Moon, vile and terrifying monsters pursue her and no-one can convince Rye that her fears are imaginary. The Luck Uglies, an exiled secret society which may not be spoken of, used to protect the village, but now they seem helpless while terror menaces, destroys and threatens to overwhelm all. Ignoring her mother's advice to keep safe, Rye needs to discover what is happening, and why. The alternative is to live in helpless fear, which she's not prepared to countenance. A dark, fantastical, fast-moving adventure with much action, complex and very human characters, secrets to be uncovered and surprises satisfyingly sprung. The first of a series of three, an innovative and very good read.



Tina Massey



The Forbidden Library

Written by Django Wexler Doubleday (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-0857532879

Alice's father disappears and so she must live with Geryon, a cold and distinctly odd wizard, in a vast, peculiar mansion with a strangely forbidding library. She discovers that she is a 'Reader', with exceptional powers to enter into a book, and to uncover and use its secret powers. Facing danger and even death, she needs courage and a cool head in working out how to defeat the truly alarming creatures she encounters within the books, whilst, at the same time, retaining her own sense of self and decency and avoiding the temptation to do what's easy, but wrong. Determined to find her father, Alice never gives in to self doubt or self pity. Dark, peculiar and fascinating, this is a genuinely powerful creation.

Tina Massey

Magisterium: The Iron Trial

Written by Holly Black and Cassandra Clare Doubleday (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-0857532497

Callum's father doesn't want his son to have anything to do with the Magisterium. Callum has been brought up to abhor magic and magicians. Despite deliberately trying to fail the compulsory magical assessment, Callum becomes apprentice to the most prestigious master at the Magisterium. With soon-to-be friends, Aaron and Tamara, Callum must learn about the world of magic as well as learn to control his powers and his impatience. However, Callum has a mysterious connection to the enemy of the Magisterium, Constantine Madden. Will he learn enough to defend himself and save his friends? This gripping and exciting story often subverts familiar school-for-wizards tropes and a sense of wonder, adventure and danger is maintained throughout. With a modern American narrator, an ethnically diverse cast and in the hands of two seasoned writers, *The Iron Trial* is bound to capture the imagination of many young readers.



Benjamin Scott