



### Moving Again

Written by Barbara Robertson Illustrated by Peter Andrews  
Arthur H. Stockwell £2.50 ISBN: 978-0722344071

This is a beautifully written consideration of how a family of ducks copes over the winter time when food is sparse and waters freeze over. As the winter tightens its grip on the countryside, wise Mother Mallard soon assesses conditions and decides that her family must move on from the village pond, first to Farmer Bill's stream, then, on to the wide, fast-flowing river and ultimately to the large, sandy estuary where Father Drake eventually finds them. There they meet up with Brent geese, Shoveler and Pintail ducks. As spring approaches the family returns to the village pond, leaving the reader with renewed respect for their hardy resourcefulness through the cycle of the seasons.

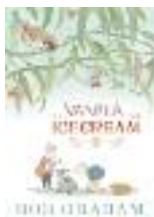
Gill Roberts

### Vanilla Ice Cream

Written and illustrated by Bob Graham  
Walker £11.99 ISBN: 978-1406350098

Chaos theory for kids! A bold young sparrow's hungry, curious nature takes him away from the flock and the dusty market in India. It takes him across the rough sea to a new land and a new city. Here, a brief encounter with a family and their dog provides little Edie with a memorable first taste of vanilla ice cream. Bob Graham's narrative is succinct and eloquent, perfectly complementing the generous sequence of illustrations in this pleasing glimpse at the randomness of life and the charm of the unexpected.

Megan Stanfield



### Mozart's Banana

Written by Gillian Cross  
Barrington Stoke (R) £5.99 ISBN: 978-1781123676

Who would have thought to name a horse 'Mozart's Banana'? Those who knew the animal realised that it was a crazy name for a crazy horse! Everyone had tried to tame him, even to ride him, but to no avail. Alice Brett moves into the village from the city, never having seen a horse before. Sammy Foster dares her to ride Mozart's Banana, never thinking she will take him seriously. But, one day, Alice sees her chance, and what happened next will surprise you. A Library Van and costumes for Book Week come into the story...

Marianne Adey

### What's My Name?

Written by Wendy Finney Illustrated by Tony Ross  
Andersen £4.99 ISBN: 978-1849395793

This is a delightful new story about a little princess who is not so little anymore. It is this fact that is troubling the King, who, after puzzling for some time, decides to call a meeting of all the important people in the palace to help with his problem. It is time the princess is called by her proper name but it is such an awfully ugly name that no-one wants to be the one to tell her. They all recall how scary the little princess can be when she doesn't have her own way. The little princess overhears everyone discussing the problem but when she goes in search of her friends to find out what her real name actually is, they are all hiding. He



takes some persuading, but, when the King eventually confesses her name, it isn't quite as bad as everyone had feared. The colour illustrations are bright and wonderfully expressive and the story as humorous as ever when the feisty princess discovers she has a very attractive name.

Louise Stothard

### It's Walter under the Bridge

Written by Dion Child Illustrated by Graeme Bowen  
Whitney Bridge (eB) £8.50 ISBN: 978-0992654214

Regular visitors to the charming town of books, Hay-on-Wye, may already be aware of Walter, the troll who lives under Whitney Bridge. In *It's Walter under the Bridge* we learn about the bullying of the small, friendly troll, by the much bigger and uglier trolls, that forces him to abandon his original bridge. Aided by his riverbank friends, Walter finds a new home at Whitney, making a new friend, Chester the spaniel, at the same time. This is a sweet tale telling how Walter ends up at the well known toll bridge. The illustrations by Graeme Bowen are what really make this book so special. Walter especially is gorgeous; the sort of troll no one would mind meeting. The photos, showing the inspiration for the illustrations, are a clever idea, while the colouring page and learning activity add to the fun for younger readers. If you buy your copy of the book from the toll cottage, you may actually meet Walter himself and get a sticker to prove it.

Jane Hall



### Made by Raffi

Written by Craig Pomranz  
Illustrated by Margaret Chamberlain  
Frances Lincoln £12.99 ISBN: 978-1847804334

Ever questioning, Raffi wonders if he really is different. It's when he is quietly musing and observing during a boisterous playtime at school that he sees Miss Fernandez knitting and there begins the self-discovery of his own innate creativity. He becomes totally absorbed in knitting a special rainbow birthday scarf for Dad. He knits in bed, at meal-times, on the school bus, anywhere and everywhere, drawing both positive and negative attention to himself. He sets a fine example to readers of all ages by talking through his concerns with parents who provide just the right reassurance, support and encouragement needed to ensure his continued drive and confidence. This is an important and heart-warming story which affirms that gifts, talents and dreams can soar, that individuality can be nurtured positively, and understanding of self, and others, is precious, if not priceless.

Gill Roberts

### Algy's Amazing Adventures at Sea

Written by Kaye Umansky Illustrated by Richard Watson  
Orion (eB) £4.99 ISBN: 978-1444006896

Algy may live "in an ordinary house in an ordinary street" but playtime in his garden shed with Cherry and Brad is far from ordinary. Thanks to one special loose plank, Algy meets George the parrot and previous bad experiences on the beach (when he swallowed sea water, dropped his ice cream, had sand in his eye and a seagull stole his sandwich) fade into insignificance. Now, his only worry is the hole in his new red, yellow and green scarf from Auntie Sue, which isn't such a worry after all, for the previously unwanted scarf is now super special! Kaye Umansky's trademark magic



and humour never disappoint, making this a brilliant early novel to whet reading appetites – with just enough text wonderfully complemented by Richard Watson's comic and colourful illustrations.

Gill Roberts



## The Moonshine Dragon

Written by Cornelia Funke Illustrated by Monica Armino  
Barrington Stoke £5.99 ISBN: 978-1781123539

As Patrick settles down for the night, a dragon pops out of his story book, pursued by a tiny white knight on a dragon-hunting quest. Magic and mayhem abound as Patrick and the dragon join forces to fend off the knight. But how can Patrick get both dragon and knight safely out of his bedroom so he can get some sleep? A witty and entertaining tale with cute illustrations.

Yvonne Coppard

## My Heart is Laughing

Written by Rose Lagercrantz Illustrated by Eva Eriksson  
Gecko (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-1877579516

Dani is a happy, hopeful optimist. Although she is sad that her very best friend, Ella, has moved away, Dani is convinced she will come back one day so keeps her place at school. Meanwhile, she has to deal with a bit of spiteful bullying from a couple of other girls in her class. Beautifully produced and illustrated with fine black and white drawings, this is a tale with an ending that reinforces Dani's belief in a happy, hopeful world – without being too saccharine. It's a convincing snapshot of a typical child's life, where good and bad things happen seemingly at random. It doesn't pretend to be anything more than a straightforward, interesting story, and is all the more welcome for that.



Yvonne Coppard



## Tale of a Tail

Written by Margaret Mahy Illustrated by Tony Ross  
Orion (eB) £9.99 ISBN: 978-1444012156

This is one of those genuinely funny children's books which does not rely on jokes about bodily functions to get us laughing. Instead, Margaret Mahy uses a dog's waggy tail to create all sorts of mayhem in a story that keeps the reader amused right to the very end. Prodigy Street could be on any suburban estate, except for the fact that it is home to a canine who can grant wishes with his tail. Najki, pronounced Naykee, has a Polish name and his little asides at the beginning of each chapter, make for an amusing insight into his human friends. When new arrival, Tom, who also has a Polish name, Tomasz, discovers the dog's secret he is in for a lot of surprises, especially as it takes him a few chapters to work out why and how his wishes are granted. Cats turn into tigers, Tom turns into rugby superhero and his mum even disappears up a pine tree. Disaster looms when Najki's tail is wounded in an accident, but just when Tom thinks life without magic will be ordinary, he realises how extraordinary the real world is, once you learn how to look at it in the right way.

Richard Monte

## Supercat vs. the Party Pooper

Written by Jeanne Willis Illustrated by Jim Field  
HarperCollins (eB) £5.99 ISBN: 978-0007518654

A special birthday treat to follow a real-life zoo keeper around London Zoo has to be abandoned when news arrives that the Queen and her guests have all fallen ill. James and Supercat suspect something is not right and sneak off to Buckingham Palace to foil a dastardly plot by their arch-enemy Count Backwards and his men, the



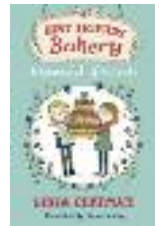
Calculators. With the Queen and numerous heads-of-state captured, the Count plans to take over the world. Only quick thinking can save the day. This second book in Jeanne Willis' *Supercat* series is a cracking roller coaster of excitement, laughs and action. Jim Field's illustrations effortlessly add further drama, humour and warmth to the story as well as breaking up the text for younger readers.

Benjamin Scott

## A Spoonful of Secrets

Written by Linda Chapman Illustrated by Kate Hindley  
Orion (eB) £4.99 ISBN: 978-1444011906

This is the second book in the series *Best Friends' Bakery* about Hannah, her family and friends. Hannah's mother has just opened her own bakery. Everything is going well and Hannah seems to be popular with the girls at her new school. She is obsessed with cakes and baking and even describes everyone she knows in terms of what cake they most resemble. She joins the Baking Club at school along with Mia, who is perhaps trying a little too hard to make friends with Hannah and the others. After a while Mia starts acting strangely and then there is also the problem of the surly tennis prodigy and his mother who are customers in the bakery. Hannah's positive outlook and baking skills help to sort out everyone's problems and a sense of wellbeing is restored. This is a feel-good story for young fans of *The Great British Bake Off*. Some recipes are even included and further titles in the series are due out in 2015.



Jan Lennon



## A-Maze-ing Minotaur

Written by Juliet Rix Illustrated by Juliet Snape  
Frances Lincoln £11.99 ISBN: 978-1847804310

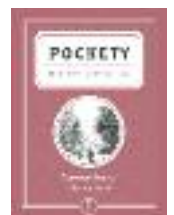
The myth of Theseus and the Minotaur is oft retold but, in this version, the maze is brought to the foreground, quite literally, as, in the first section of the book, the bottom third of each page shows us the Minotaur lurking in different parts of his lair. Once Theseus enters the maze, trailing the golden thread to help him find his way out, there is a double page spread of the maze so that readers can try to solve the puzzle. There is a page of information at the end of the story that sets the myth in its historical context. The design of the book conveys a good sense of the nature of the labyrinth, the monster lurking beneath the light, and the colourful palace above. Young readers, or listeners, will enjoy spotting the Minotaur in his lair and trying to solve the puzzle for Theseus.

Annalise Taylor

## Pockety

Written by Florence Seyvos Illustrated by Claude Ponti  
Pushkin (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-1782690252

Subtitled *The Tortoise Who Lived As She Pleased* this is an unusual story, and one that is difficult to categorise, by either genre or target age group. It has a slightly detached quality that is in keeping with the central character, an independent young tortoise determined to make her own way in the world. Pockety's companion dies quickly, but not graphically, in the opening pages of the book. The rest of the story shows how Pockety comes to terms with her loss. However, the matter of fact nature of the narrative means that it is never sentimental. This restraint is reflected in Claude Ponti's engravings which evoke Pockety's place in a world which can be vast and overwhelming as well as domestic and reassuring. As adults we can be uncomfortable talking to children about death, but this book offers one approach, without being in any way preachy. This feels like an engaging story that happens to be about grief rather than a story about the issue of grief that had some characters and plot tacked on afterwards. Highly recommended.



Annalise Taylor