

### Alice's Wonderland Tea Party

Written by Poppy Bishop  
 Illustrated by Laura Brenella  
 Little Tiger £12.99  
 ISBN: 978-1848699533



With flaps to open and holes to peep through, this is a riff on the classic for older fingers. Alice has invited her guests to a 'sensible' tea party where there will be "no shrinking, growing or silliness of any kind". As the guests arrive it is clear they have other ideas, and Alice's frustration is clearly expressed in the words and pictures. However, as the story progresses and events become more and more riotous and chaotic, Alice realises that

actually, fun *is* important. As the last guest arrives, with some very special cupcakes, readers will enjoy the impact in a huge double page fold out spread. With lots of little speech bubbles, a disappearing Cheshire cat and plenty of detail on every page, this is sure to be enjoyed time and again by fans of Alice old and new.

Lucy Russell

### Jasper and Scruff

Written & Illustrated by Nicola Colton  
 Little Tiger £5.99  
 ISBN: 978-1788950695



We have all wished for something that is not good for us. This is what Jasper does and works hard to achieve. A story that shows that you can't buy friendship and, in fact, sometimes it is right under your nose. Jasper's truly unpleasant dinner guests really get what they deserve, much to the readers satisfaction. The soft palette of colours gently guides you through the book with simple illustrations that help nervous readers understand the story and the text. A lovely way to move on from picture books.

Sue Bussey

### Captain Rosalie

Written by Timothée de Fombelle  
 Illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault  
 Translated by Sam Gordon  
 Walker Books £8.99  
 ISBN: 978-1406377101



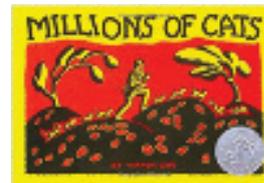
This is a beautifully told tale, enhanced by Arsenault's bold drawings in a drained colour palette. Rosalie sits at the back of the older children's classroom, watching the master teach and listening to him tell the children about the war that is raging. But Rosalie is on a secret mission of her own. However, it is not until we read further that we discover that her mission is learning to read. Each evening she listens to her

mother read out letters from her father who is fighting at the front. But it is when Rosalie accomplishes her aim, of being able to read all by herself and takes a look at all of the letters her mother has stored, that the book reaches its heart-breaking conclusion. A gently told and heart-wrenching story that brings home the full and dreadful impact of war.

Julia Wills

### Millions of Cats

Written and illustrated by Wanda Gag  
 Faber and Faber £6.99  
 ISBN: 978-0571350209

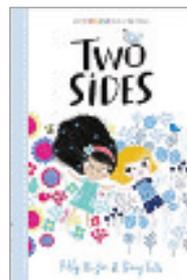


*Millions of Cats* is the oldest American picture book still in print. The book has now been reprinted for the 90th anniversary edition. The work of Wanda Gag has been cited as the inspiration to Maurice Sendak and her childhood home in Minnesota is now a museum. It is a classic tale of a man going in search of the perfect cat for his wife but cannot choose and comes home with "hundreds of cats, thousands of cats, millions and billions and trillions of cats". The pages alternate from purple to cream with amazing black and white sketches.

Ingrid Fox

### Two Sides

Written by Polly Ho-Yen  
 Illustrated by Binny Talib  
 Stripes £7.99  
 ISBN: 978-1788950626



*Two Sides* is a super opening to a new series designed to bridge the gap between picture and chapter books. The illustrations are bold, stylish and contemporary, often every other page, or breaking up the text interestingly at key times. The extremely engaging story is told from two viewpoints; those of Lula and Lenka. They are complete opposites but the very best of friends until thoughtlessness causes real hurt. There is a major falling out and the girls miss each other like an illness. Awkward, hurt pride means that neither can see how to right the situation until they notice the same thing happening to others. Moving and memorable, ringing true with memories of childhood losses for older readers, while helping younger ones empathise and understand how to be and to have a friend. A lovely story exploring friendship, love and loss while celebrating difference.

Tina Massey

### Pirate Pug – the Dog who Rocked the Boat

Written by Laura James  
 Illustrated by Églantine Ceulemans  
 Bloomsbury £5.99  
 ISBN: 978-1408895948



Pug loves his owner, Lady Miranda, and he loves holidays. Unfortunately, he hates water, so when Lady Miranda takes them to the seaside, he is not happy. However, when there is a theft of the mayor's gold chain, he, Miranda and friends set sail on their home-made boat to retrieve it in true pirate fashion. The story is fast-paced and full of charm, its quirky heroine travelling by sedan chair in an otherwise modern world. The illustrations are captivating, running throughout the book, sometimes in two-page spreads and really bring Pug to vivid life. This is one book of a series of Pug adventures and, if this one is anything to go by, will delight children as they start to read independently.

Julia Wills

## TJ and his Wheelable Chair

Written & Illustrated by Amanda Kehoe  
Austin Macauley £8.99  
ISBN: 978-1786123992



Written in rhyme, this tells the story of T J who is unable to walk or talk but loves to listen to music, go to the swimming pool, the fun fair, ride a horse, swing on the swings and play with his friends. Through the text and illustrations, T J shows that disabilities are no barrier to a happy, fun filled, enjoyable and fulfilling life. Based on the experiences of the author's own child

Tadhg who has Cerebral Palsy, this is a positive, life affirming story and also offers the potential for a lot of discussion with children around disability.

Annie Everall

## Ruby Red Shoes Goes to London

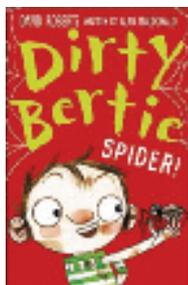
Written & Illustrated by Kate Knapp  
Pan Macmillan £9.99  
ISBN: 978-1509892907

This is a gorgeous book with the feel of a classic. The illustrations are beautiful and full of rabbit-influenced jokes, guaranteed to delight children as they spot them and laugh. The writing is filled with energy, rhymes and beautiful ideas – street lamps with haloes of light, described as ‘caring angels’ showing the way – or hugs feeling like being clothing jumbled in a washing machine. That Ruby’s parents have died is, very subtly and touchingly mentioned, a secret shared with the reader. The tourist spots of London are detailed and intriguing on the page, with facts and questions for the reader. The book is a delight and written with love. Ruby’s feelings for her relatives, her friends and her home are beautifully shared with the reader, who cannot help but be moved.

Julia Willis

## Dirty Bertie Spider!

Written by Alan MacDonald  
Illustrated by David Roberts  
Stripes £4.99  
ISBN: 978-1847159465



A collection of three stories about Dirty Bertie, the boy with “nosepickingly disgusting habits”. Somehow no matter what his good intentions are, he always manages to cause chaos and get himself into trouble. In the first story, he rescues a very large spider from the bathroom and causes mayhem when he takes it to school, telling everyone it is a tarantula and then discovering it has escaped. The other two stories in the book deal with him having to wear a knitted jumper his Gran made him and creating havoc when he

decided to search for treasure using his Dad’s metal detector. Each story is divided into short chapters, making it ideal for children moving on from picture books to reading alone. Full of the humour that children of this age love and accompanied by black and white illustrations these will be enjoyed by many children.

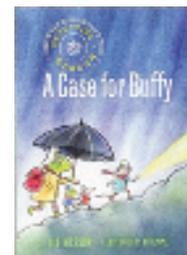
Annie Everall

## A Case for Buffy

Written by Ulf Nilsson  
Illustrated by Gitte Spee  
Translated by Julia Marshall  
Gecko Press £7.99  
ISBN: 978-1776571796

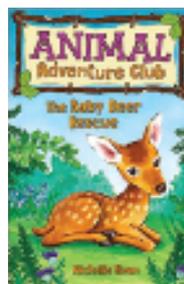
Chief Inspector Gordon and Buffy are responsible for a small police station in the middle of the forest. Gordon takes on two young apprentices, a baby toad and a baby mouse. Buffy starts to realise she has no idea where her mother is and the intrepid duo with their enthusiastic charges take on the case. Their efforts are rewarded with the usual feast of cake. The colourful illustrations in minted pastels are just right for this story and the chapters are short and full of humour, mystery and adventure. Children will enjoy reading this book which is part of the *Detective Gordon* series.

Ingrid Fox



## Animal Adventure Club: The Baby Deer Rescue

Written by Michelle Sloan  
Illustrated by Hannah George Young  
Kelpies £5.99  
ISBN: 978-1782505563



Isla, Gracie and Buzz are the Animal Rescue Club. They all love animals and help the rangers at their local nature reserve. When they find an injured baby deer, they are first on the scene and try to help, but new member Lexi, is a nuisance and keeps getting in their way. An adventure story about friendship that is full of informative facts. There is a diverse range of characters, and the black and white illustrations help to break up the clear text. A good story for animal and nature lovers.

Barbara Band

## Sam Wu is NOT afraid of the DARK

Written by Katie and Kevin Tsang  
Illustrated by Nathan Reed  
Egmont £5.99  
ISBN: 978-1405287531

Sam really doesn't want to go camping with his pal Bernard and his Dad, however he still finds himself in a tent in the woods where there may well be bears, wolves, vampire bats or even alien invaders waiting to attack them. Not that he is

scared, of course. To make matters worse the camping group now includes Sam's know-it-all cousin Stanley, Sam's worst enemy Ralph, Ralph's sister and her friend. That's a lot of people to keep safe during those dangerous hours of darkness. Obviously, the only thing to do is to utilise all the knowledge and skills he has picked up from watching his favourite TV programme, *Space Blasters*. This highly amusing tale with lots of misunderstandings and nocturnal noises is told with a wacky text and plenty of even wackier, black and white illustrations. The pages come alive with the variation of the font size and the sizzling page decorations, and the pages turn black when night falls. Luckily the text then becomes white so we can still read and laugh at Sam and his crew. Other books in the series show that Sam is NOT scared of spiders, ghosts or sharks.

Jan Lennon

