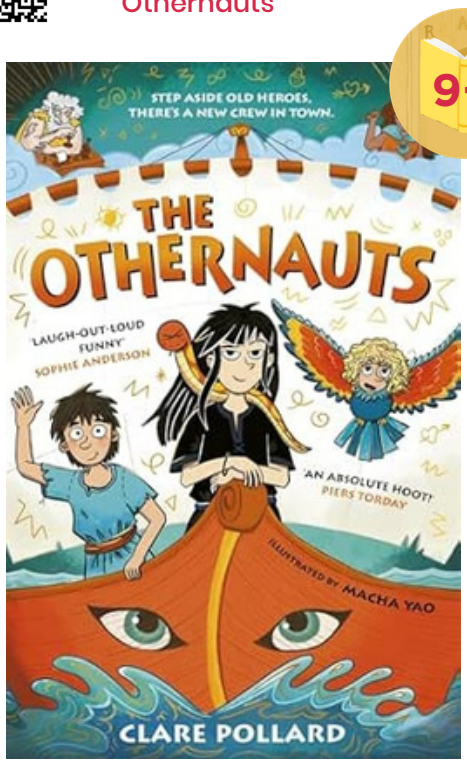
WHAT TO READ NOW

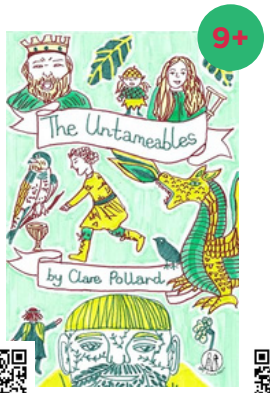
September-October 2026

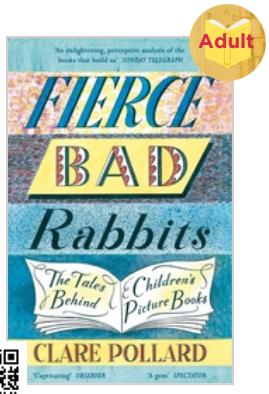
Book recommendations for all ages

Scan the QR code to order The Othernauts



More books by the same author





Mostly Book Talk

Listen to the full interview with Clare Pollard here

The Othernauts

by Clare Pollard

Q: What was your journey to becoming a writer?

A: I love writing, I love reading, but I love reading anything. I love reading film scripts, play scripts, newspapers. I just read everything and always have. And I guess I wanted to be a children's writer when I was a child. I've still got chapter books I wrote when I was five or six. One called 'Stand Up My Nostrils' about evil genies, one called 'Hard Cheddar' about evil mice taking over the world. So I always wanted to write children's books, and I feel it's taken a long time to get there.

Q. Tell us about the Othernauts for those who haven't read it

A: When I was a kid, I wanted to be on the Argo, but the Argo is a ship full of fully grown men. And so what I what I wanted to do ... was to sneak an 11-year-old girl onto the ship. That was my starting point. So my version of Jason the Argonauts, it's a proper retelling, and it's based on the Argonautica, which is like the Odyssey, like Homer's Odyssey in Iliad, it's an ancient Greek epic poem.

Q: Jason feels like he's determined to be a hero and has in a remarkable run of luck, but...?

A: The easy thing would have been to make the heroes the bad guys, and I've done that before... I didn't want to make him a bad guy. He just expects everything will go well for him and that everyone will fall in love with him so he has to learn teamwork.

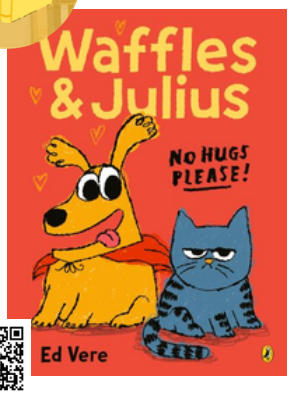
BOOK CLUBS IN SCHOOLS

LoveReading 4 KIDS BECAUSE BOOKS CHANGE LIVES

BOOK PICKS

Book recommendations for all ages

3+

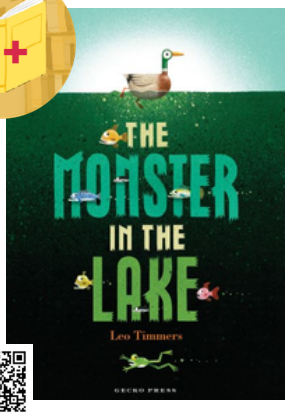


Waffles and Julius: No Hugs Please!
by Ed Vere

Meet Waffles and Julius, an overenthusiastic dog and a disinterested cat, and your favourite new grumpy / sunshine duo.

Young readers will enjoy the classic dog-and-cat dynamic, as the googly-eyed Waffles asks Julius again and again if he would like a hug, even offering him a stick and singing his favourite song (cover your ears!). Will Waffles learn to be patient, and more importantly, can he learn to respect his friend's wishes?

3+



The Monster in the Lake
by Leo Timmers

Four ducks are tired of their small pond and set out for an adventure in the big lake. Walking at the back, Eric isn't sure. He's heard there's a monster in the lake, but his friends don't believe a word of that old story! Eric reluctantly tags along, only to make a startling discovery and find himself in a wonderful underwater adventure.

With his signature bold illustrations, layered textures, and playful visual storytelling, Timmers crafts a story about fear, curiosity, and the courage to look beyond first impressions.

9+

The Game Changers
by Helen Rutter

Welcome to The Game - an exciting summer camp where you will make new friends, build resilience and test your limits! You will be put into a team of five with strangers, no screens, no shortcuts. Everyone starts from scratch and has to make friends and find a way to the finish line together.

Tig Larson lives with his mum and isn't sure he has any friends. He finds it hard to know what to say or how to connect with people, so when his mum signs him up for a mysterious and exclusive summer camp, run as a game where campers must work as a team to reach the end, it is well outside his comfort zone. The team Tig joins are all very different from one another, and from him, and somehow they have to pull together.

7+

Detective Thingy Majiggy
by Cecelia Ahern
Illustrated by Katie Saunders

"My name is Mia. I'm ten years old and I have a secret...Are you ready? I can speak to inanimate objects... Everybody can speak to inanimate objects, though, so that's not the weird part. The odd thing is that objects speak to me".

Soon after Mia moves to live with her new foster mother, during her first nervy day at a new school, a classroom fire sees Mia almost become embroiled in very hot water when she's initially blamed for starting the fire. Inspired by a comment from Toaster, and in the light of lovely heart-to-heart with Detective Lucy, Mia sets about solving the mystery of how the fire started.

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BOOK PICKS

Book recommendations for all ages

10+

Outlaws
by E. L. Norry

Will, Robyn and Scarlett are the titular 'outlaws', and are all in Year 8 at Sherwood High. Their acting headteacher is called Mr Nottingham, so there are lots of clues that this engrossing story may turn out to be about fighting for social justice.

When the group find themselves in a situation where the head teacher seems determined to go out and pick on the children who are most vulnerable, by cutting bursaries and limiting opportunities, they suspect that there is something seriously wrong at their school and are determined to find a way of setting things right.

13+

Augusta Pine Does Not Exist
by Emily Lloyd-Jones

The main character, Augusta, is a complex character. Officially dead, she has been recruited to work undercover for a secret, ethically-dubious government department.

Flashbacks of her past deeds and missions are skilfully woven into the narrative, providing both context and further potential for action-filled thrills. Readers might not always agree with Augusta's actions, but they'll enjoy getting to know her and sympathising with her current situation. In comparison, they will undoubtedly fall slightly in love with her sidekick, Edgar, a sentient AI in the form of a very cute bumblebee. However, though he might initially seem cute, Edgar's lack of a moral compass and willingness to complete tasks by any means necessary, will surely send a shiver of fear through any reader considering the possibility of a future robot uprising.

11+

Shadow Thieves: Island of Skulls
by Peter Burns

Young hero Tom is now in his second term at Beaufort's School for Deceptive Arts and faces a series of trials and challenges that test him both mentally and physically.

Tom and his schoolmates, not all of whom have accepted him into their elite group, are trapped on the pirate island of legendary villain the Duke of Nimes and hunting for his buried treasure, which is rumoured to include a deadly weapon that absolutely must not fall into the wrong hands. Unfortunately, the wrong hands are on the island too and holding a group of Tom's fellow students hostage, as well as his mentor, the Corsair. Even the boobytrapped tunnels Tom has to negotiate are less dangerous, and just how much can he rely on the honour of his fellow trainee thieves to watch his back?

Stuck on Hard Mode
by Erin Phillips
Illustrated by Charlotte Grange

Your energy levels are depleted; those laundry and washing up questlines are all flashing with red exclamation marks and nearly everything is on fire...but that's just an average day for many neurodivergent people, right?

Helped along by your digital companion Erin and allies you'll meet along the way, this guide features advice on customising your character, developing your stats, managing tricky status effects like burnout, and even making friends and exploring relationships in multiplayer mode.

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BOOK PICKS

Book recommendations for all ages

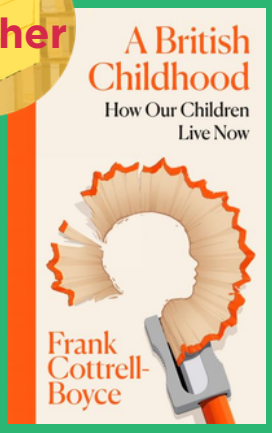
Teacher Bookshelf

A British Childhood

by Frank Cottrell-Boyce

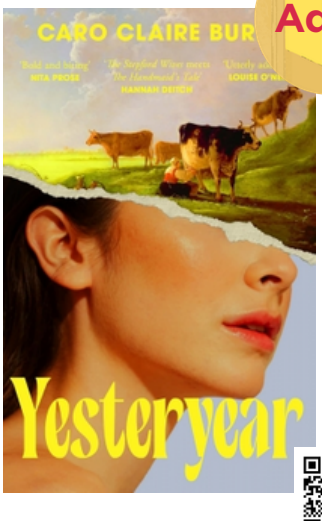
During his time as Children's Laureate Frank Cottrell-Boyce visited schools that had been forced to make permanent homes in temporary buildings, where teachers doubled up as social workers, therapists and nutritionists. These encounters prompted him to reflect on his own upbringing in Merseyside, the difference literature made to his early years, and how, during his lifetime, childhood in Britain has been transformed. He shows how the connections we make and the sense of community are so vital to our future adult selves, and how, in the twenty-first century, these connections have become increasingly frayed.

Teacher



Love Reading Book Club Selection

Adult



Yesteryear

by Caro Claire Burke

Natalie lives a traditional lifestyle – and has the social media accounts to prove it. Her charming farmhouse on her working ranch is artfully cluttered, her husband is a handsome cowboy, her homemade sourdough boules are each more beautiful than the last. So what if there are nannies and producers and industrial-grade ovens behind the scenes? What Natalie's followers don't know won't hurt them.

Then, one morning, Natalie wakes up in a strange, horrible version of reality. Her home, her husband, her children. They're all familiar, but something's off. Is this a hoax? A reality show? A test from God? One thing Natalie does know is that it'll make one hell of an Instagram post...

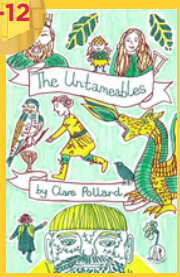
Giveaway

A set of Clare Pollard's books

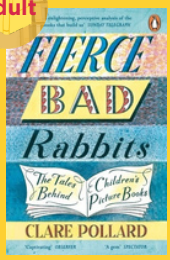
We have a copy of each of Clare's kids books and a copy of Fierce Bad Rabbits to give away (UK postage only).

9-12

9-12



Adult



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WHO WE ARE

Book recommendations for all ages

BOOK CLUBS IN SCHOOLS

Book Clubs in Schools is a charity. We promote reading for pleasure through school book clubs. We believe passionately that reading can open up opportunities for young people.

Our core purpose is to re-engage pupils in reading for pleasure and the wide benefits it brings. Through book clubs and related activities, our programme increases students' confidence in reading, willingness to read, ability to take part in discussions and provides volunteering and leadership opportunities for older pupils.

Mostly Book Talk

A podcast for teachers, librarians, and parents who are passionate about supporting children's and teenagers' reading for pleasure.

We cover the world of children's and YA literature, offering expert book recommendations, engaging author interviews, and practical advice on how to nurture a lifelong love of reading.

Listen wherever you get your podcasts or find us at www.mostlybooktalk.com

LoveReading 4 KIDS BUY BOOKS CHANGE LIVES

LoveReading4Kids is one of the UK's leading children's book recommendation sites plus an online bookstore with social purpose, using a community-powered funding model to support school libraries, champion reading for pleasure, and create the next generation of readers.

Use the links in this newsletter and 5% of the cover prices will go to the charity Book Clubs in Schools and 25% will go to a school of your choice to help them buy more books for their classrooms and library.

LoveReading 4 SCHOOLS Powered by LoveReading4Kids

LoveReading4Schools (powered by LoveReading4Kids) is the schools-facing platform supporting teachers, librarians and school leaders to build strong reading cultures. Through expertly curated book content, practical tools, and a community-powered funding model, LoveReading4Schools champions reading for pleasure and works to ensure every child has access to books they genuinely want to read.

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