

Convincing novels



The Doctor Who 50th Anniversary Anthology

Puffin (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-0141348940

From the first year of *Dr Who* the show inspired book adaptations, but in this collection eleven prestigious and well-known YA authors tackle a new tale, one for each of the eleven Doctors. Part of the fun of this collection is picturing each of the eleven Doctors in

their very own stories, and only basic knowledge of the Dr Who universe is needed to enjoy this diverse and intriguing collection. With writers like Neil Gaiman, Derek Landy, Malorie Blackman, Patrick Ness, Eoin Colfer, Marcus Sedgwick and Charlie Higson, it is no wonder that each story offers a gripping, sometimes humorous, gem. This exciting anthology could well be a Tardis into further reading adventures, especially for reticent YA readers. Familiarity with the show will be reassuring, but discovery of a stunning array of contemporary authors may also be enlightening.

Benjamin Scott

Soul Mates

Written by L.A. Weatherly

Barrington Stoke £6.99 ISBN: 978-1781123102

This short novel, the first of a trilogy in the latest Barrington Stoke Teen Series, with its easy and engaging language, compact paragraphs, clear font and hallmark cream paper, will appeal to reluctant or struggling teenage readers. Described as a paranormal romance this timeslip story revolves around the uneasy lives of two young people, Nate and Iris, who, when they first meet, are drawn together by an intuitive sense of visceral familiarity. Each, it seems, has dreamed repeatedly of the other for as long as they can remember. That sense of fulfilled destiny fuels their determination, to confront malevolence, in the form of a haggish creature who threatens to destroy their love. Fast moving, 'dyslexia-friendly' and appealingly packaged this book will encourage readers to seek out the forthcoming sequels.

Catriona Nicholson



Dead Silent

Written by Sharon Jones

Orchard (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1408327562

In *Dead Silent*, Poppy Sinclair, a modern Nancy Drew, returns for her second adventure. Poppy accompanies her boyfriend, Michael, to his interview at Kings College, Cambridge. At the same time, Poppy hopes to reconnect with her estranged father who is the

chaplain at Trinity College. However, their reconciliation does not go well with Poppy still struggling to understand her father's religious convictions. The visit gets considerably worse when several university students are murdered, and her father becomes the prime suspect. This has all the ingredients of a great read: a thrilling mystery with ancient secret societies; plenty of gruesome murders; family disputes, and a budding romance. Poppy is an engaging character and the burgeoning romance between her and Michael is endearing. However, she always seems to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. She has a strong sense of right and wrong and always does what she thinks is right, regardless of her own safety. There are so many twists, turns, and time-honoured red herrings, that the reader is kept on the edge of their seat until the very end.

Jane Hall

Destination Earth

Written by Ali Sparkes OUP (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-0192733443



Alien Lucy has spent the last ten years learning how to blend into the human race as a fourteen year old teenager and she thinks that it will not be a problem. Although very well prepared by the computer generated hologram, Mumgram, it is the small details which cause her newly found friends, Jay and Emma, to be suspicious and believe all is not as it should be. This first half of the novel flows along easily with the teenagers doing what teenagers do and Lucy, often quite comically, not quite getting it right. However, you always have the feeling that trouble is brewing as the Koth stirs. The second half of the story turns into a gripping, action-packed adventure. In journeying by spaceship from her doomed home planet Lucy, the sole survivor, has unknowingly brought along a stowaway which could bring about the end of all human and animal life on earth. Even though we know that mankind will prevail you are kept guessing right up to the last few pages. A superb, exciting page-turner from an established award-winning author!

Martin Kromer

Russian Roulette

Written by Anthony Horowitz Walker (eB) £14.99 ISBN: 978-1406310504

This is the prequel to the Alex Rider series and is a gripping insight into the teenage years of Yassen Gregorovich, the deadly assassin, whose next kill is Alex Rider. As Yassen prepares to undertake this mission he remembers his childhood and the book takes the reader through his life. He was an ordinary schoolboy who, within a few months, is changed into a ruthless killer by necessity and a strong desire to survive. Now Yassen has been ordered to kill another young boy and he questions how his life has led him to this situation. This is immensely gripping and somehow Anthony Horowitz has made Yassen, a hired assassin, into a sympathetic and humane character. It is extremely enjoyable and will be appreciated whether or not readers have read the Alex Rider series. The cover is threatening and will stand out on bookshelves for both young adults and adult readers.



Ingrid Fox



On Two Feet and Wings

Written by Abbas Kazerooni

Allen & Unwin £6.99 ISBN: 978-1743361351

This is an extended version of a book originally published in 2008 as *The Little Man*. Abbas Kazerooni is now a lawyer in California and this memoir tells the extraordinary story of his flight from Iran at the age of nine. Hearing that the Iranian authorities are planning to enlist ten year olds in the war against Iraq, Abbas' father decides to send his wife and his son out of the country. At Teheran airport the wife is not allowed to board the plane so the little boy is sent off, on his own, to Istanbul. The father's business associate there abandons him and Abbas is forced to fend for himself for months while he attempts to get a visa to come to the UK. He shows resolution, courage and great initiative and finally wins through, only to find that his Iranian cousin in Worcester, Mehdi, is far from welcoming. It is a gripping story, written in a plain and simple style, and young readers who live safe and comfortable lives will be amazed and enthralled by the travails that others have to endure.

Nigel Hinton



Look After Me

Written by Aoife Walsh
Andersen (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1849397131

Phoebe's family is going through a bad patch. Dad has left home and her two foster brothers, Feng and Cal, are beginning to worry that they will be taken away by Social Services. If that situation isn't bad enough, a new crisis arises when one of their old foster sisters arrives with her own baby, Iris, begging Phoebe and her older brother, Adam, to keep the baby. Can Phoebe and Adam keep Iris safe and healthy until their own domestic situation improves? This moving story will appeal to all thoughtful readers. A striking first novel!

Marianne Adey

Looking at the Stars

Written by Jo Cotterill
Bodley Head (eB) £12.99 ISBN: 978-1782300182



Amina lives in a country repressed by dictatorship. She is excited when a liberating army arrives, but life becomes even harder as war rages. Neighbours are set against each other as the ethnic origin of everyone becomes a matter of public concern. Then, older brother, Rumer, runs away to join the rebels and, as a result, Amina's father is brutally murdered in front of his family, by government soldiers. Amina, her sisters and mother are forced to flee, but they become separated. Eventually, Amina and sister Jenna arrive at a refugee camp run by the liberating forces. Life is very tough but they find a way to survive and Amina finds herself making up stories about the stars every evening to comfort others. This is a remarkable book which brings to life the stark reality of life in a refugee camp in a war torn country. But it is lightened by Amina's stories which enable people to see beyond the grim reality and imagine a better future. It is an emotional story yet is told simply in direct language which makes the harsh reality very obvious but also always shows the enduring power and strength of the human spirit.

Liz Dubber



My Brother's Shadow

Written by Tom Avery Illustrated by Kate Grove
Andersen £6.99 ISBN: 978-1849397827

Kaia is frozen in the past ever since she witnessed a terrible tragedy in which her brother took his own life. Petrified of accepting the awful realisation that her beloved brother, Moses, is gone forever, she invents a shadow child and confides in him her deepest fears. At first the shadow is the only communication she has with the outside world. Her mother, too afraid to accept the truth, has taken to drinking and, one by one, her friends abandon her. Kate Grove's black and white illustrations chart the progress of Kaia's inward journey from the frosty snows of winter, through the first shoots of spring, until the young girl emerges into a blossoming new world, one where she is able to face up to the harrowing events of her past and move on. The effects a death in the family can have on a young child are often overlooked and this difficult subject is deftly handled by Tom Avery in a story which shows how it is possible to survive even the worst tragedies.

Richard Monte

City of Fate

Written by Nicola Pierce
O'Brien (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1847173379

On a peaceful Sunday afternoon, fourteen year old Yuri is playing with his friends when enemy planes sweep overhead. The Nazi invasion of Russia is about to change their lives forever. Almost overnight, the schoolboys are shipped off to become soldiers in the merciless battle for Stalingrad. Soon, it will become clear that the lives of soldiers on both sides have no value to their respective leaders, as the cruelties and horrors of war are unleashed without pause and without hope of escape. The crazed battle between Hitler and Stalin for



Russia's capital city is not a topic often seen on a British school curriculum, but as a lesson in the stupidity of war it is hard to beat. We follow several characters whose journeys through the horrors of war will bring them all together for one final, awful scene. The violence is extreme, and there are no neat endings. This is not a story for the faint-hearted, or for those who favour the rose-tinted territories of childhood in the classics of long ago. Nonetheless, it is beautifully written, totally absorbing, and a timely reminder that cruelty and inhumanity are ever with us, but, so is love, the triumph of good over evil, and enduring hope when everything seems lost.

Yvonne Coppard

Bone Jack

Written by Sara Crowe
Andersen (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1783440054



Ash's father has returned from war as a very different man, on the verge of a breakdown. Ash's best friend Mark is grieving following the suicide of his father. He feels guilty that he didn't help Mark, and now Mark has retreated from him and from life, lost in anger and dark thoughts that he can't control. Ash's escape is in mountain running and the honour of being chosen as the Stag Boy in the annual Stag Chase. However, Ash knows that things aren't right, dark forces are stirring and evil seems to be on the rise, threatening Ash and his family and friends. Dark, atmospheric and mysterious, this book grabs the reader from the first page, refusing to let go. Beautifully written, this multi-layered novel weaves magical fantasy and modern reality together seamlessly. Characters are vivid and believable, the plot is taut and the tension builds leaving the reader holding their breath at times. The imagery and descriptive quality of the writing is superb, particularly of the landscape and its timelessness. A stunning debut novel!

Annie Everall



Witch Finder

Written by Ruth Warburton
Hodder (eB) £6.99 ISBN: 978-1444914467

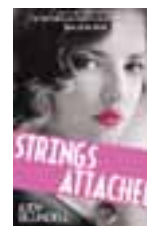
In London in 1880, Luke Lexton is being initiated into the Malleus Maleficorum, an organisation that is sworn to destroy the witches that seem to hold so much power in the city. Luke is eager to be accepted as he knows that witches were responsible for the death of his parents and he is sworn to vengeance. The final part of the initiation is to randomly draw the name of a witch from a list and kill them within a month. Luke selects the name Rosa Greenwood and starts to plan his mission. Then we meet Rosa, a pretty sixteen year old witch, who is about to be married off to a thoroughly unpleasant, but wealthy, young man who will rescue her family from impending poverty. Luke and Rosa's story is full of excitement, romance and magic, but the descriptions of the hard lives of the Victorian poor, prevent it becoming saccharine. The story continues in *Witch Hunt*.

Jan Lennon

Strings Attached

Written by Judy Blundell Scholastic (eB) £7.99 ISBN: 978-1407123929

Set in New York of the 1950s, this is an exciting and atmospheric story of a young woman's search to find a place for herself in a vibrant and dangerous city. Kit is a back-row chorus girl, but dreams of making the big time and even becoming an actress. When she is offered an apartment of her own and this is followed by an audition for one of the bigger clubs, she can't believe her luck. But she is not stupid and soon realises that there are strings attached. Unexpected and dangerous events unfold and Kit has to make hard choices about where her loyalties should lie. She is an attractive and appealing character and this fast-paced story captures our attention from the first as Kit discovers hidden strengths and learns just who she can and cannot trust.



Louise Stothard