

Goingsolo

Butter Finger

Written by Bob Cattell and John Agard

Illustrated by Pam Smy

Frances Lincoln £4.99 ISBN: 1 84507 376 2



A delightful book mixing prose and verse (and atmospheric pen-and-ink illustrations), celebrating cricket and calypso and set in the West Indies, where both are a way of life. Riccardo Small loves the game, reveres the great players and longs to play, to 'feel like Brian

Lara after his 400-run world record'. But when he misses a vital catch he earns the nickname Butter-Finger 'Butter-Finger /catching a ball, / Butter-Finger /must make it fall.' Fortunately Riccardo's talent for writing calypsos, his other great love, is spotted and nurtured by Count Crawfish, grounds man and 'three-times winner of the Calypso Championship'; he regains his self-esteem, and learns more about cricket, calypso and life. 'Calypsos are about serious things, they about funny things, but they always bursting with life' - just like this book.

Chris Stephenson

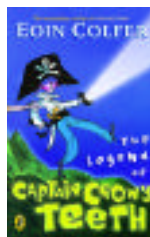
Fish

Written by Charlie James

Bloomsbury £4.99 ISBN: 0 7475 7976 8

Fish play a large part in the Finn family's life- dad sells it, mum is a health food freak and serves boiled cod and tofu as a special treat. However, when dad invents a new type of fish crisps, 'the crown jewels of fish food' Ned Finn is curious, especially when the family are warned that these are TOP SECRET! That, of course, ensures that the children will investigate and when young Bill eats some it has extraordinary and very fishy consequences. Add to this mix the school bully, the villainous Donna Mezzweme and a Glam Gran, the story bubbles with fun and will be enjoyed by all. A most entertaining story from a new voice.

Valerie Bierman



The Legend of Captain Crow's Teeth

Written by Eoin Colfer

Illustrated by Tony Ross

Puffin £7.99

ISBN: 0 141 38130 2

Eoin Colfer is one of those writers who can't help being funny. So there's a laugh every page in this delightful story about a nine-year-old overcoming the fears so regularly fanned by his older brother.

Off for their first dance, the two boys are told by their father that they must be back on time or else 'I'm coming up in the car with your pyjamas, the ones covered in teddy-bears, and I'm making sure everyone sees them.' This terrible threat is never carried out, but there are plenty of other excitements as this lovely little book steams to its triumphant end.

Nicholas Tucker

Boudicca

Written by Sian Busby

Short Books £4.99 ISBN: 19049 7760 X

Britain, at the time of the Roman invasion, is full of daunting Celtic and Latin names like - Trinovanti, Catuvellauni, Camulodunum, Verulamium - which are difficult enough for adults to pronounce, let alone youngsters starting out in historical studies. So how do you keep young children engaged long enough for them to learn about a period of history which at first sight looks a little dry and boring? Short Books seem to have found the answer with their series of biographies based on famous historical characters. This one tells the story of the warrior queen Boudicca. It is a lively account, told by a bard to her great granddaughter in the year 140 AD. But who is this old woman and how can she remember the Iceni queen so vividly? There's plenty of fighting and action in this vivid and imaginative account of one of Britain's first female heroines.

Richard Monte

Lady Violet Winters: The Secret of the Crocodiles

Written by Karen Wallace

Simon & Schuster £5.99 ISBN: 0 68987 483 9

There is a lovely feeling of a bygone age in this Edwardian adventure story. Brilliantly imaginative it is full of excitement and local colour and will encourage less confident early readers to finish a novel. Lady Violet Winters and her American companion, Garth, find themselves in the middle of an exciting Egyptian mystery as they try to discover why their friend, Nicholas, has disappeared. Is the shifty Polish count really going on a crocodile-hunting trip or are there other reasons for his trip down the Nile? Fun to find out.



Marianne Adey

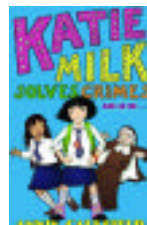
Katie Milk Solves Crimes

Written by Annie Caulfield

Corgi Yearling £4.99 ISBN: 0 440 86686 3

Katie's is a very ordinary family - no money, no dad and a granddad who'd love to be an ace detective (but who is really a chemist's security guard) and inspires Katie to be one, too. Mum's

really hardworking, frets over Granddad, who misses Grandma, and is outraged when Auntie Apricot leaves all her money to Katie when she's eighteen - on condition she agrees to go to boarding school. Katie is delighted. She's read many boarding school



stories and is confident her life there will be action-packed. The reality is a shock. But Katie is determined to retain her sense of self so she tells great stories, gets into trouble for her would-be-detective investigations and manages to solve a genuine crime. She sorts out other friendship problems with grace and humour and can't wait for the next academic year. Written with wit and originality it is very satisfying for younger readers.

Tina Massey

Fish



Written by L.S. Matthews

Hodder £5.99

ISBN: 0 340 87403 1

The day that Tiger finds a fish, struggling for life in a muddy puddle, is the day that he and his family must flee the fighting. Tiger's parents are aid workers in a country riddled with the wickedness of war and plagued by drought. The fish is the only possession that the young boy takes and its precarious position reflects his own. Memorable and sensitive, Matthews' debut novel is destined to remain in the hearts and minds of its readers. This allegorical tale has been beautifully written and the young boy's voice is both plausible and powerful. All the characters are well rounded and well crafted and the reader empathises with their plight. An excellent book of survival and hope.

Anna Harris

Jack Slater Monster Investigator

Written by John Dougherty

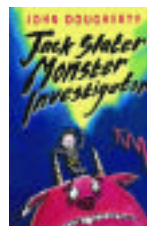
Illustrated by Georgien Overwater

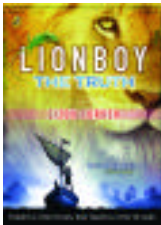
Corgi £3.99

ISBN: 0 552 55372 7

Monsters under the bed are real as any child will tell you. They disappear when you turn on the light. That's why you can't see them. The monsters in his book plan to take over the world by hiding under moveable beds. As Birnum Wood goes to Dunsinane so an army of monsters under beds invade London and orders the Prime Minister to switch off the nation's electricity supply so that monsters can safely frighten and devour children in the dark. It's a clever story, cleverly told. Young readers particularly enjoy the resonance of the monster called Bernard, whose enthusiasm is occasionally checked with the phrase, 'Not now, Bernard!'. The monsters are foiled by Jack Slater and his sidekick, Cherry - but it's a close call.

Mike Maran





Lion Boy: the Truth

Written by Zizou Corder
Puffin £12.99
ISBN: 1 141 38054 3

Charlie Aconite, rescuer of lions and speaker of Cat, is in Morocco hiding with his mother

and father from Macomb the lion tamer and the monolithic, totalitarian Corporally whose tentacles circle the world. Serge, most brilliant of cats, is almost their only link with reality. But their enemies are closing in on them: they must act fast to return the lions to the wild and thwart their evil persecutors. This entails a humorously epic series of chases across oceans and continents, full of hair-raising dangers and hairsbreadth escapes. This wild and crazy adventure, vivid and pacy, also concludes the story started in *Lion Boy* (see *Carousel* Issue 26) and *Lion Boy: the Chase*. The mother and daughter duo, who together constitute Zizou Corder, write with panache and much ingenuity. There are surprises in both the plot and the writing on every page. Reading this book is indeed an exhilarating experience.

Dennis Hamley.

One Voice, Please

Compiled by Sam McBratney
Illustrated by Russell Ayto
Walker Books £4.99 ISBN: 0 7445 8331 4

Every so often you find a small gem of a book, and *One Voice, Please* is such a book. It is a varied collection of short stories which have been told down through the ages, often embellished or reworked to suit each particular audience. A lovely mixture of folk tales, myths, fables and stories from the Bible, its main theme is one of truth and trickery. The writing is clear and uncomplicated, brought to life in amusing pen and ink illustrations. A charming, unassuming little book in which you will rediscover old favourite stories and make new ones. Useful for teachers to prompt discussion of writing styles, but also recommended for storytellers and both young and old who enjoy a good tale.



Janice Knight

The Awful Tale of Agatha Bilke

Written by Siân Pattenden
Short Books £5.99 ISBN: 1 904977 51 0



'Some children are unfortunate... others are just plain bad.'

And they don't come any worse than Agatha Bilke, who develops a taste for arson when her sister chooses a husband Agatha thinks unsuitable (she burns the wedding dress). It's a downward slide from that day on. She finds herself in the brand new Tread Quietly Clinic for Interesting Children run by two brothers who are probably in

need of therapy themselves. But will Agatha be cured? Or will she burn down the clinic before the flaky doctors stand a chance? Siân Pattenden has a lot of fun with this bizarre, funny book and it may well interest Mum and Dad as well. Monty Python fans will feel they've come home...

Yvonne Coppard

House of Spies

Written by Griselda Gifford
Andersen Press £4.99 ISBN: 1 84270 459 1



Evacuated from bombings in London, Pip and her mother are quickly caught up in rural life in Hogsty End. Pip enjoys the varied experiences on the farm where they find refuge, and joins her new friend, a little uneasily, in coping with foreign neighbours - could

they really be German spies as some of the local residents suspect? Pip has more worries to deal with when she learns that her pilot father has become involved in a relationship with a new woman. The dropping of an incendiary bomb brings issues to a head in this lively and thought provoking novel about the domestic front.

Marianne Adey

The Truth About Josie Green

Written by Belinda Hollyer
Orchard Books £4.99 ISBN: 1 84362 885 6

Exotic Aunt Aggie gives Josie Green a sumptuous new diary at the same time as Mrs McIntosh sets the class writing family histories. Fired by the idea and armed with her diary, Josie immediately gets to work as a family detective. Once she starts, however, new clues keep popping up, inevitably leading her in the wrong direction. There's more to Josie's family than meets the eye and when she solves the mystery nothing can ever be quite the same again. This is a first novel. We'll hear more about Brenda Hollyer: she writes with wit and perceptivity, gives Josie a credible and individual voice, manages a range of interesting and individual characters and keeps the plot hurrying along nicely. This is a pleasing book for young readers - Josie is wiser than the adults around her and unwittingly teaches them that hiding the truth is never the right answer.

Dennis Hamley



Candyfloss

Written by Jacqueline Wilson
Illustrated by Nick Sharratt
Doubleday £12.99
ISBN: 0 385 60837 3

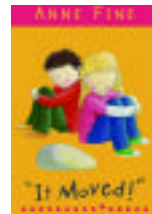
Floss's loving but aspirational mum is off to Australia with her less aspirational, loving Dad. His forte is chip butties. She soon discovers that his financial situation is so

bad he is about to be evicted. At the same time her very best friendship at school is breaking up. The author knows this territory well and there are no surprises but the fans would probably not want changes. There is even-handed treatment of the parents and we see that there are good people in the world, wherever they come from.

Pat Thomson

It Moved!

Written by Anne Fine
Illustrated by Katherine McEwan
Walker Books £7.99
ISBN: 1 4063 0136 6



A delightful story for that much neglected age group, the under ten readers. Luckily, here's one from the masterly pen of Anne Fine, complete with her usual trademarks of wit, humour and quirkiness. Lily hasn't anything interesting to bring for the 'Show and Tell' session at school. She's no intention of taking her chocolate bunny or running the risk of her puppet's strings getting tangled up again. Then - a flash of inspiration! What about the stone that mum uses to prop open the garden gate? It was her favourite stone, a bit egg-shaped but with a flat bottom which meant it never wobbled. But can she convince her classmates that this stone actually moves? A great book for young readers.

Valerie Bierman

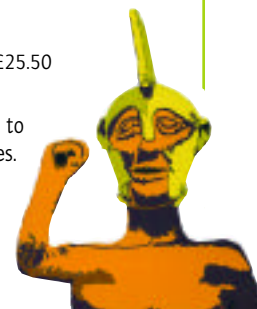
War with Troy; the Story of Achilles

(Audio)

Told by Daniel Morden and Hugh Lupton
University of Cambridge £25.50
ISBN: 0 9542794 4 1

The intention was to listen to these CD's in small episodes. Two hours later I realised how quickly time had passed listening to these wonderful tales delivered by master-storytellers.

Based on Homer's epic *The Iliad* the stories unfold and send shivers down the listeners' spine. Lupton and Morden did not write the words down. They told them as the original stories were told - starting with the Tale of the Golden Apple and the beautiful goddess Aphrodite, and followed by the adventures of Odysseus, Paris, the mighty Achilles and the glorious Helen. All related with the power of the human voice, each retelling different from the one before. Be enthralled, listen and escape to a world far away in another time, another age. Teachers' notes are available, but don't spoil the experience, simply listen. For anyone over 9 years.



Obtainable by mail order (cost includes postage) from CSC, 11 West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DP