

A Friend for Henry

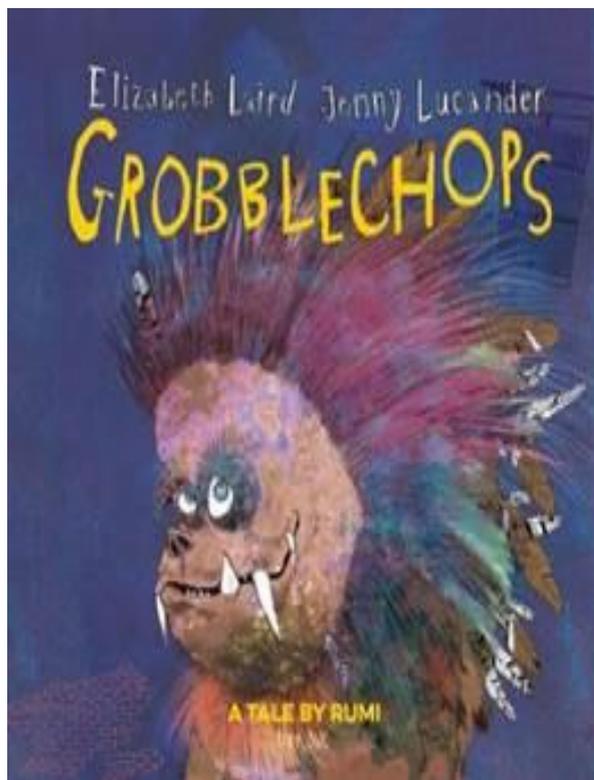
by Jenn Bailey

Henry's keen to make friends in his class. However, it's proving a bit of a challenge and he's getting increasingly frustrated with his peers.

There's the girl who waves her hands right in his face, the boy who runs off with the mat that Henry has put in the "right" place, even a child who digs up worms. Plus, people get cross with him for doing things that he thinks are kind. However, with time, Henry learns that friendship is possible and the benefits are definitely mutual.

Interest Age: 3-7

Reading Age: 5+



Gobblechops

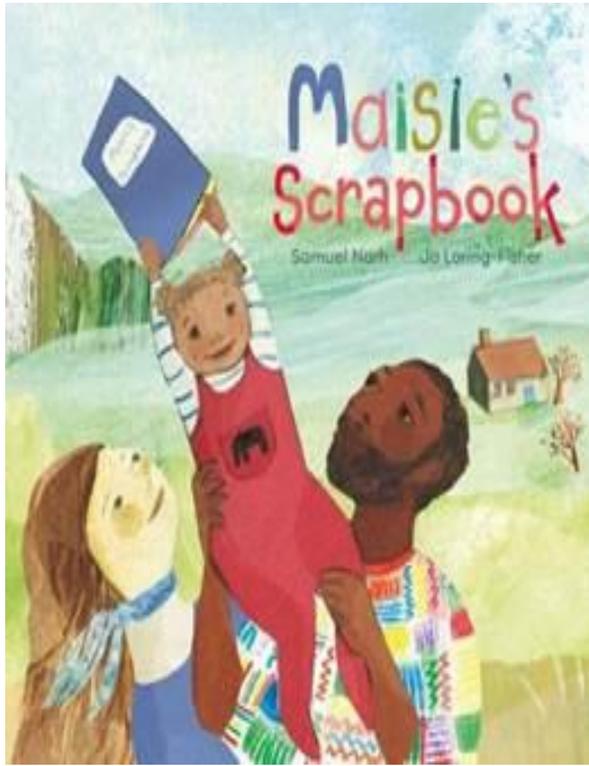
By Elizabeth Laird

Amir doesn't want to go to bed. He is scared of the dark and afraid there might be a monster under his bed; a monster called Gobblechops who has huge teeth and growls like a tiger.

Dad reassures Amir that if he growls louder, the monster will go away – but Amir can't help catastrophising and worrying that Gobblechops's mum and dad will join in the fight and eat him up. Luckily, Amir's dad is a bit of an expert when it comes to monsters, and can rationalise and defuse all his son's anxiety to the point where Gobblechops becomes a friend rather than a threat.

Interest Age: 3-6

Reading Age: 7+



Maisie's Scrapbook

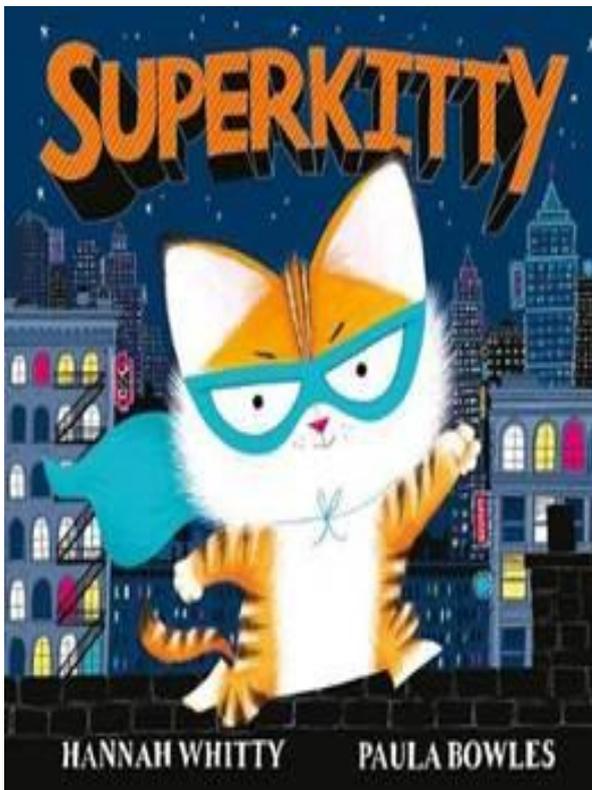
By Samuel Narh

Maisie's home is full of wonder and her days are filled with experiencing her vibrant world. She sees the rain drip, drip, drip on the window, watches the night sky at the beach and twirls in the autumn leaves.

As the seasons come and go, Maisie spends time with her parents. Mama plays the viola, wears linen and protects her from bulls whereas her dada wears kinte cloth, plays the marimba and tells tall tales featuring Maisie. In many ways, her parents are different, but they praise and hug her in the same way

Interest Age: 4-8

Reading Age: 5+



Superkitty

By Hannah Whitty

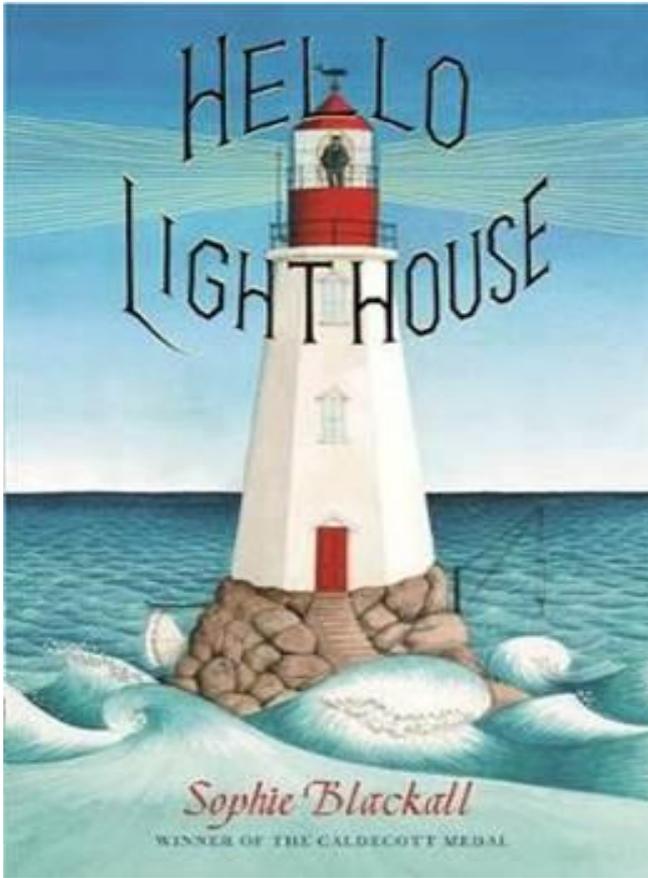
Kitty is fed up of answering phones at the Sensational Superhero Agency and dreams of catching criminals with the superhero gang. But they ALWAYS leave her behind!

Then a call comes in about a stolen dinosaur bone and Kitty takes matters into her own paws, following the superheroes in their pursuit of devious criminal Nefarious Norman! Will Kitty save the day and prove that small is MIGHTY?

This fun story combines cute animals with a lively crime caper. Like a picture book version of the animated film Zootopia, it is sure to delight and hearten mini-ones who relate to talked-down-to Kitty.

Interest Age: 4-6

Reading Age: 5+



Hello Lighthouse

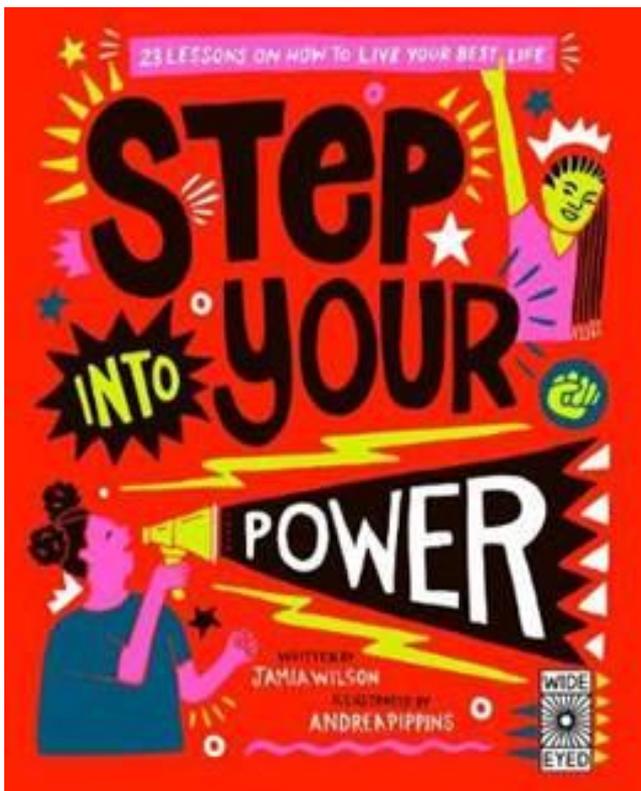
By Sophie Blackall

A red and white lighthouse stands amid a changing sea: in winter, it ices over, and seals play on the surface. Icebergs and whales pass by, and storms shipwreck sailors. Within the lighthouse, the new keeper comes to replace the old. He tends the light inside the lighthouse, paints the rooms, writes in the logbook and waits for his wife. When she arrives, they are soon joined by a baby, and eventually move to a cottage on the shore, where they can watch the sunsets over the lighthouse that was their cosy home.

Sophie Blackall won the Caldecott Medal in the US for *Hello Lighthouse* and it's easy to see why. Her artwork and draughtsmanship is stunning, full of detail and colour. Pages such as the one featuring a cutaway of the lighthouse with its seven tiers – light, study, bedroom, dining room, store room and entrance, as well as water stores set deep in the rock – are full of amazing detail to spot

Interest Age: 7+

Reading Age: 7-9



Step into Your Power

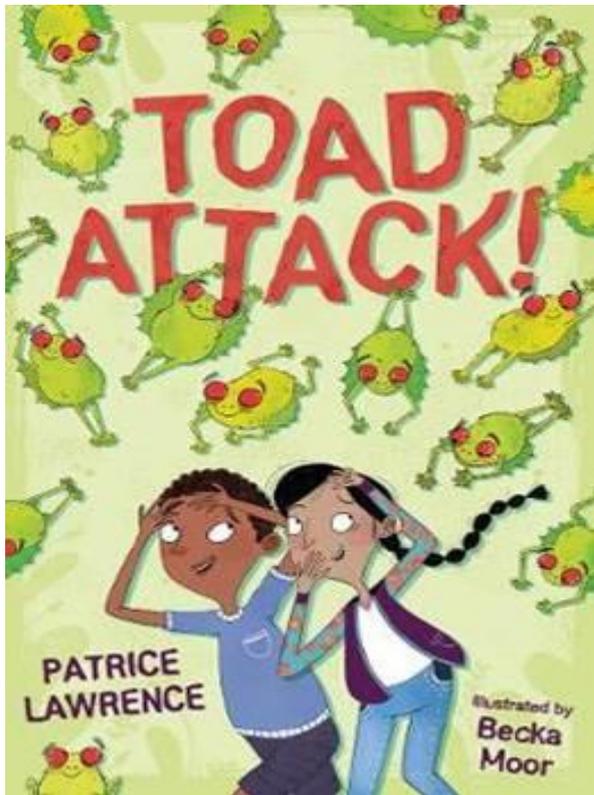
By Jamia Wilson

The world can be tough to navigate for all of us, and childhood is full of potential difficulties, from conflicts with friends, bullies to understanding what's happening in the world and obeying rules that they don't necessarily understand or agree with.

In this wonderful book, aimed at older primary or younger secondary school children, author Jamia Wilson and Andrea Pippins, themselves both activists and passionate empower-ers of children, give a series of practical tips and explanations about ways that we can live our best lives, from self-care to making good choices, asking for help, finding a mentor, speaking our truth and asking for what we need

Interest Age: 8-11

Reading Age: 8-11



Toad Attack

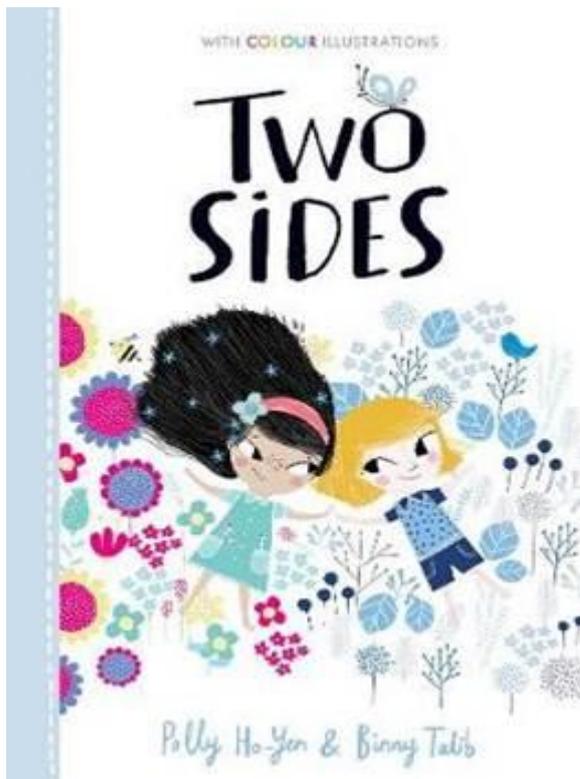
By Patrice Lawrence

Leo is astounded when he is hit on the head by a flying toad on his way to school. His best friend Rosa is excited because one of her two dads is a television presenter and plans to make a nature programme about the pale, yellow amphibians with bulging red eyes. However, the toads have an insatiable appetite and as the town of Upper Dab is besieged by these destructive creatures, some of the residents want to take drastic action to get rid of them.

This amusing tale positively portrays a range of ethnicities, family set-ups and disability (Rosa is deaf and uses a hearing aid, sign language and lip reading to communicate).

Interest Age: 7-10

Reading Age: 7-9



Two Sides

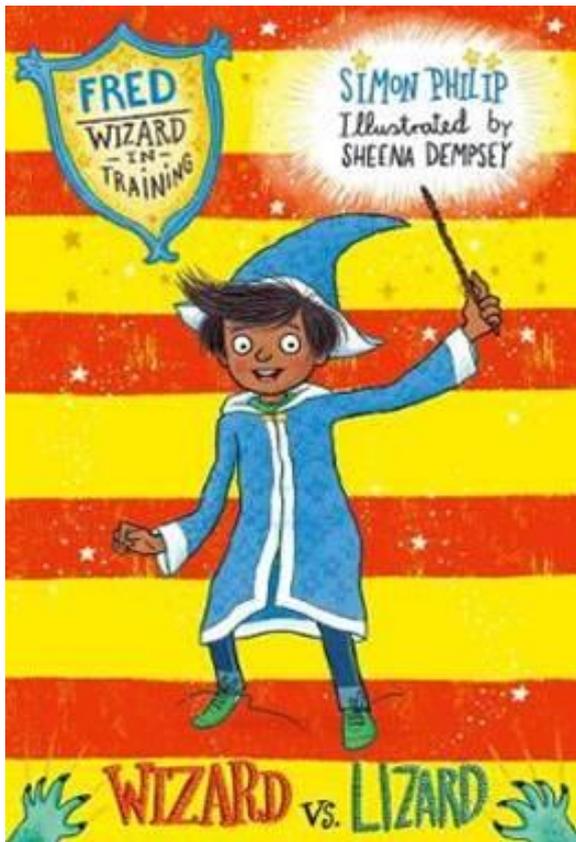
By Polly Ho-Yen

Lula and Lenka are the best of friends since they were born, despite being the total opposite of each other. Lula likes talking and dogs, and is disorganised and always late; Lenka loves drawing, has a cat, is always neat and on time. They make a perfect pair.

One morning, when Lula is rushing to get to school in time, she forgets to pack Lenka's pencil case she borrowed to make her present. But Lenka is upset that she didn't make the effort to remember the most important thing she needed that day. Suddenly they are no longer friends and neither of them want to make the first move to say sorry. Will they ever manage to make up?

Interest Age: 6+

Reading Age: 7-10



Wizard Vs Lizard

By Simon Philip

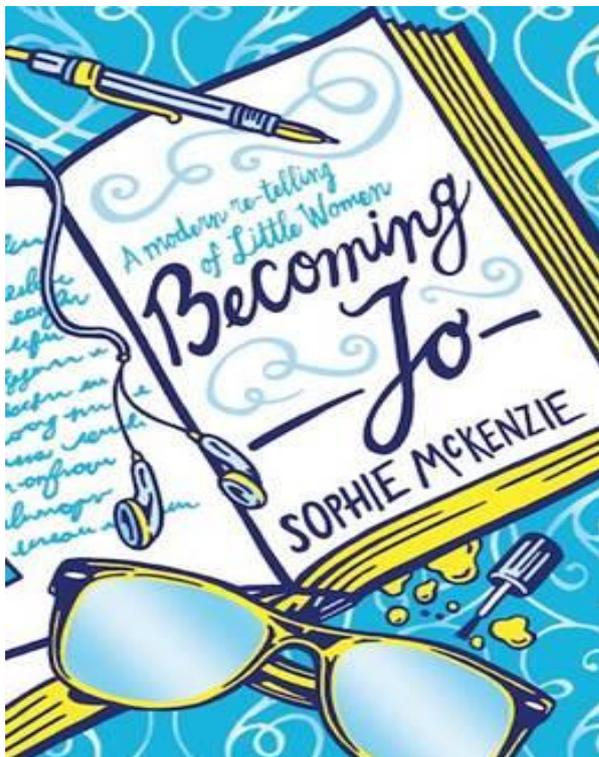
Fred comes from an exceptionally gifted magical family, but unfortunately his own wizarding skills are rather underwhelming. His washing-up and toast-making spells are disastrous and even his three-year-old sister is better at magic than he is.

Tired of being the butt of his siblings' jokes and a disappointment to his parents, Fred decides to enter a competition where the prize is to meet Merlin, the greatest wizard of all time. Fred hopes that the legendary magician will give him some tips on how to improve his magic. The only snag is that he has to capture the tail of a fearsome fire-breathing lizard, which could prove to be extremely challenging, given his limited magical skills.

However, with encouragement from his best friend Marvin, Fred realises that other qualities, such as determination, resourcefulness and kindness, are equally as important as magic.

Interest Age: 6+

Reading Age: 7-10



Becoming Jo

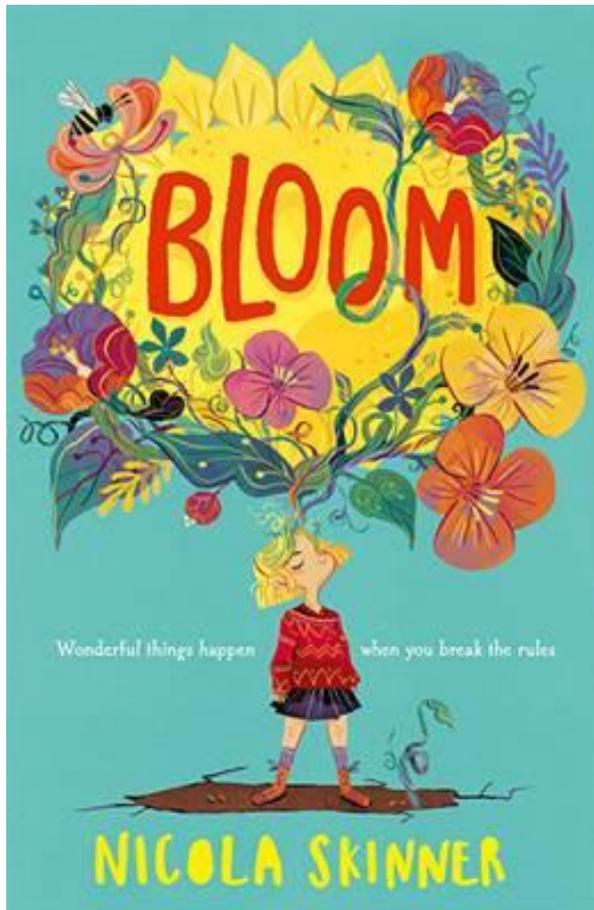
By Sophie McKenzie

Jo has always wanted to be a writer. She'll happily spend hours squirrelled away working on her masterpieces, but with three sisters to contend with, a new friend who's just moved in to her street and a father who's in Syria working as a humanist minister, there is a *lot* going on.

Becoming Jo is a marvellous modern retelling of *Little Women* from *Girl, Missing* author Sophie McKenzie, which proves how relevant Louisa May Alcott's novel still is today, 150 years after its publication.

Interest Age: 9-14

Reading Age: 9-14



Bloom

By Nicola Skinner

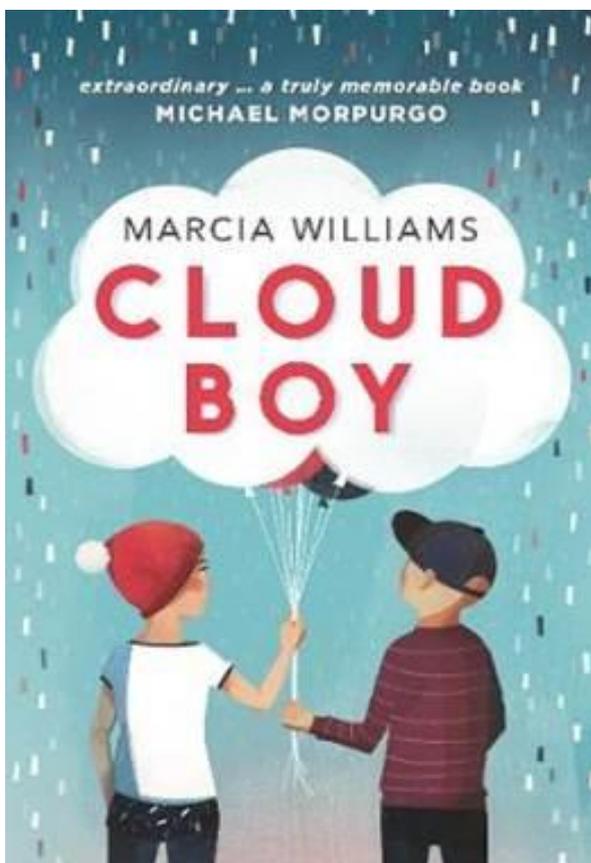
Sorrel Fallowfield is very well-behaved. She has to be if she doesn't want to cause her busy mum any trouble, so she knows the rules at school better than most of the staff. And when headteacher Mr Grittysnit announces a competition in which the best-behaved student will win a family holiday, she knows she has it in the bag.

At least, that is, until she finds a mysterious packet of seeds in her back garden and her world begins to spin wildly, bafflingly out of control...

Bloom is an unusual, surreal and funny tale, but behind all the oddities is some real heart. Grappling with themes of identity, conformity and the power of breaking the rules – with a reminder of the importance of nature and the environment, too – it manages to say a lot in a surprisingly accessible and imaginative way.

Interest Age: 10+

Reading Age: 10+



Cloud Boy

By Marcia Williams

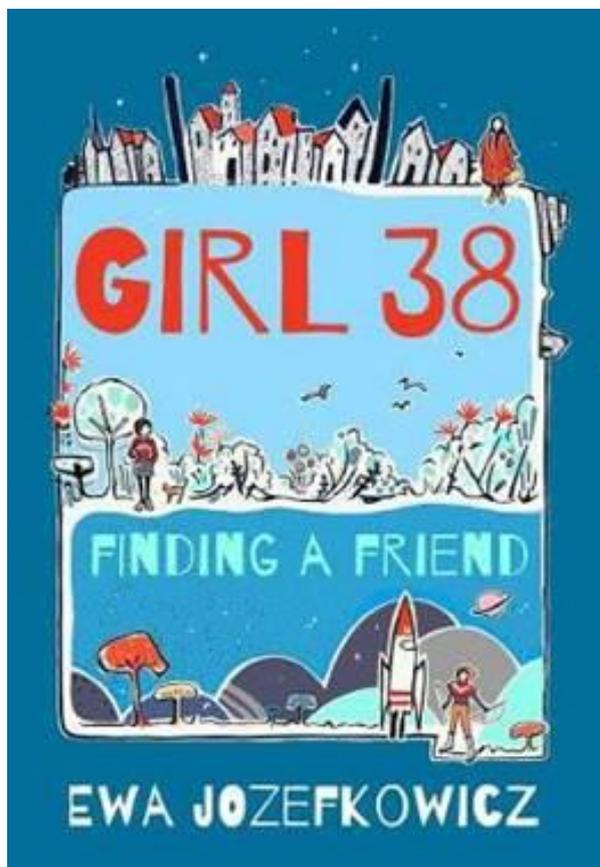
Angie and Harry live next-door to each other and are such good friends, they consider themselves almost-twins. They have big plans for the summer ahead, particularly with families constructing them their dream treehouse.

As Angie tells their story in energetic diary format, her affection for her friend turns swiftly to frustration and anger as he misses some of their planned get-togethers due to apparent headaches. As the book progresses, the reader comes to realise (as eventually does Angie) that Harry's illness is something more serious than just an occasional headache.

This is a touching story, accessibly delivered. A smaller subplot accompanies the central story, in the form of letters from the past, read at intervals to the children by Angie's grandma who documented her wartime childhood in Japanese-occupied Singapore. Her story is fascinating, harrowing and based largely on fact.

Interest Age: 9+

Reading Age: 9+



Girl 38

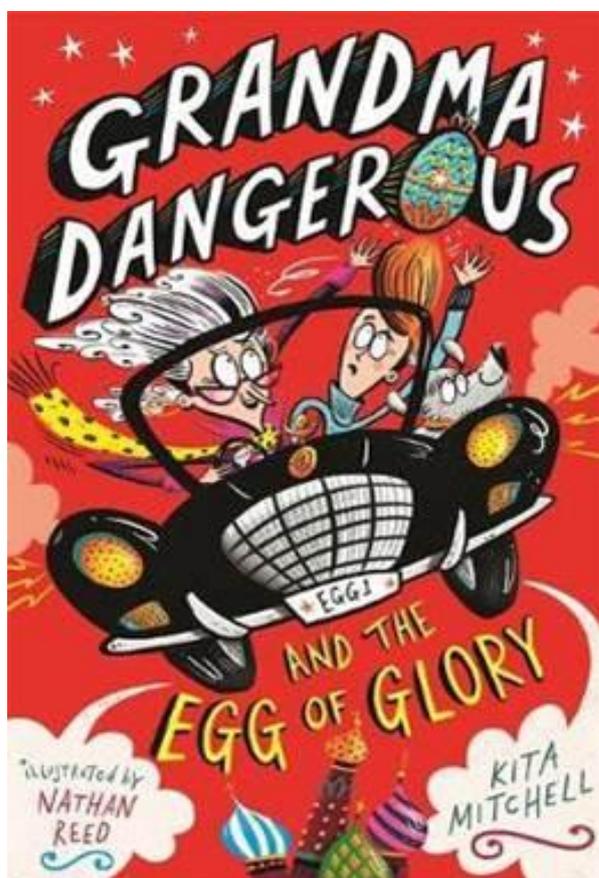
By Ewa Jozefkowicz

Girl 38, the hero of Kat's comic strip, is everything Kat wishes to be: a brave and fearless explorer, facing challenges head on. But Kat is a bit lost. Since starting secondary school, things haven't been great, especially between her and her best friend Gem. When Gem takes an immediate dislike to new boy Julius, everything gets turned upside-down: Gem is determined to make Julius the class joke and she's going to use Kat to make that happen.

Who needs enemies with a best friend like Gem? Torn between loyalty to Gem and doing the right thing, Kat immerses herself in drawing her comic and in sharing stories with her elderly neighbour, Ania. Listening to Ania's tale of wartime escape from Nazi Poland helps Kat find the courage to stand up to Gem and discover within herself the parts of Girl 38 she admires so much.

Interest Age: 10-13

Reading Age: 10-12



Grandma Dangerous and the Egg of Glory

By Kita Mitchell

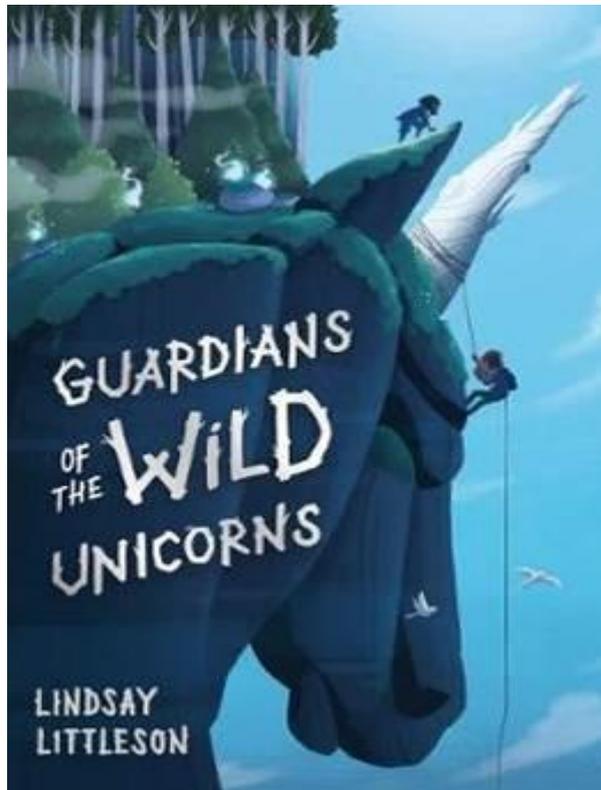
Ollie is looking forward to a spot of treasure hunting with his best friend Piper during the school holidays, so is peeved when his plans are hijacked by the arrival of his annoying cousin, Thomas. Not only is he a real bore, he also makes Ollie look bad, as he has impeccable manners and seems to actually like housework.

Thankfully, things liven up when Grandma Dangerous and her shifty friend Edna drop in. After snaffling a few cucumber sandwiches and procuring a hacksaw, the eccentric pair hurtle away in Grandma's hot air balloon.

In their haste, they leave behind an extraordinary object, which Thomas identifies as a priceless Fabergé Egg, stolen from a St Petersburg museum 30 years earlier. Suspecting Grandma may be involved in criminal activities, Ollie is delighted when she returns to enlist their help with her "project" and the three children embark on a madcap Russian adventure, involving a prison break, forgery and some curious contemporary dancing.

Interest Age: 8-12

Reading Age: 7-12



Guardians of the Wild Unicorns

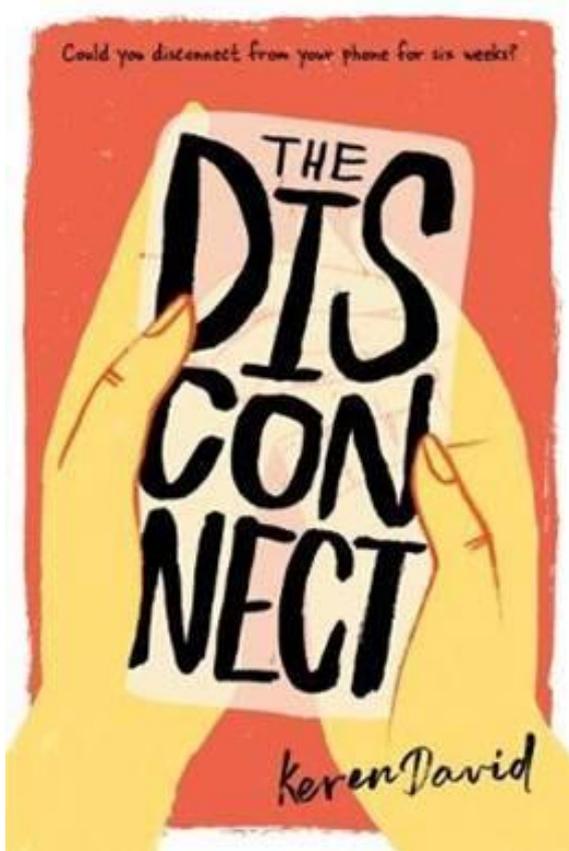
By Lindsay Littleton

The first time Lewis spots the dark smudge of an unfamiliar creature tracing a path across the moor he thinks he might be dreaming – or perhaps has even died of fear. After all, he is dangling from a precariously swinging rope half way down a sheer cliff face. His friend Rhona thinks it's more likely that he imagined it, especially as he wasn't wearing his glasses.

When the pair discover that Lewis's vision was real, and that they have stumbled upon the world's last remaining wild unicorns, they are forced to turn detective in order to save the magical animals from ruthless exploitation.

Interest Age: 9-12

Reading Age: 9+



The Disconnect

By Keren David

Would you give up your phone for a thousand pounds? Esther would have said no – but then a rich woman visits their school and sets the whole year group a challenge. Give up their phone for six weeks, and they will win a thousand pounds. For Esther, who uses her phone to keep in touch with her dad and sister in New York, it's a real wrench, but she decides to make the effort. Only it seems that some people aren't playing fair...

This short, snappy and entertaining book has an irresistible premise which many teenagers will find relatable. It takes a healthily balanced view of the pros and cons of mobile phone and social media usage. Among other things, it includes a heart-warming theme about the importance of family. Esther gains, and loses, unexpected things from giving up her phone.

Interest Age: 11+

Reading Age: 8+