

# Talking Books

with Mrs Garrett



Issue 4 December 2020

“Readers are lucky – they will never be bored or lonely.” Natalie Babbitt

## WELCOME



Christmas is around the corner and Father Christmas is busy packing up presents – many of which will be books. He may be aware that a growing number of children are discovering the increasingly popular genre of graphic novels. These books are attractive to readers of all levels, but are proving invaluable to children who have difficulty reading or maintaining focus on a story. A recent article by *Scholastic* reports that ‘graphic novels have exciting plots and action. The combination of text and pictures helps the reader to follow the story and understand what is happening. The pictures help to support the development of the plot and the characters and text are chosen for maximum impact.’ Many of the classics are now being adapted to graphic format to make them more accessible to those who find reading plain text difficult, but retain the original language. But, if your child would like to ‘try before you buy’, the Library has many graphic novels to choose from ranging from the *Dogman* series and *Alex Rider* series to the classic stories of *A Christmas Carol*, *Tom’s Midnight Garden*, *Northern Lights*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Frankenstein*, *Noughts and Crosses* and a number of Shakespeare plays. The best part about borrowing from the Library is that it’s FREE. *Happy Christmas.*

## LITERARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

**Story Museum** If you haven’t yet discovered *Story Museum* on YouTube, it is worth a look. A new series is starting, *Stories from the Woodshed*, (a remix of Grimm’s fairy tales), which is performed by a cast of some of the UK’s most celebrated storytellers and filmed in their brand new theatre space. *The Wolf and the Seven Kids*, told by Amantha Edmead, can be viewed at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lxQ\\_Cb\\_enE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lxQ_Cb_enE). There will be a new story to watch, for free, on their YouTube channel every Friday through to February 2021. But don’t forget to subscribe! This trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78mXqPU3ZFo> will give you a taster of what is to come. **The stories are suitable for children aged 7+.**

Also of interest to the 7+ audience is a bi-monthly literary magazine called ‘*Scoop*’, which aims to ‘inspire and nurture a love of reading and writing’. Each issue includes stories, articles, games, activities and competitions. You can subscribe to paper copies or digital. *Scoop* has also just launched a new podcast. Search ‘The Scoop’ on all major podcast platforms. The first episode features Liz Pichon and Elle McNicoll.

**Reading is Magic Festival** You can still watch the recorded events of this children’s digital book festival with your children. It includes authors and illustrators such as Cressida Cowell, Robin Stevens, Steven Camden, Joseph Coelho, Kiran Millwood Hargrave and Jasbinder Bilan to name but a few. It is available to watch on demand until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 on this link: <https://www.readingismagicfestival.com/>

If your child does not find it easy to sit and read a book, you might like to try a new interactive online magazine called *Checkpoint Kids*. This celebrates gaming and stories and is free to download. It supports learning and literacy. It can be found here: <https://checkpointmagazine.com/checkpoint-kids/>

*What do Santa's little helpers learn at school?  
The Elf-abet.*

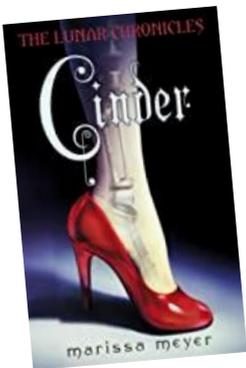


# LET'S KEEP READING!

New books in the Library

*How did Scrooge win the football game?  
The Ghost of Christmas passed.*

Twenty one new books have arrived in the Library this month so please do show the list to your children and discuss which titles they may like to borrow. There are some great recommendations from our staff and pupils too. (*Synopses from Amazon, LoveReading and The Book Trust.*)



12+

**Cinder** by Marissa Meyer

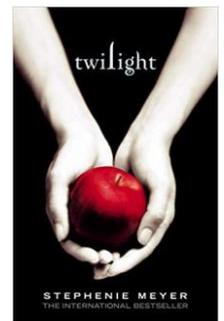
Cinder is a gifted mechanic in New Beijing and is also a cyborg. She's reviled by her stepmother and blamed for her stepsister's sudden illness. But when her life becomes entwined with the handsome Prince Kai's, she finds herself at the centre of a violent struggle between the desires of an evil queen and a dangerous temptation. Cinder is caught between duty and freedom, loyalty and betrayal. Now she must uncover secrets about her mysterious past in order to protect Earth's future.



12+

**Twilight** by Stephanie Meyer

When 17 year old Isabella Swan moves to Forks, Washington to live with her father, she expects that her new life will be as dull as the town. But, in spite of her awkward manner and low expectations, she finds that her new classmates are drawn to this pale, dark-haired new girl in town. But not, it seems, the Cullen family. These five adopted brothers and sisters obviously prefer their own company and will make no exception for Bella. Bella is convinced that Edward Cullen, in particular, hates her, but she feels a strange attraction to him, although his hostility makes her feel almost physically ill. He seems determined to push her away - until, that is, he saves her life from an out of control car. Bella will soon discover that there is a very good reason for Edward's coldness. He, and his family, are vampires - and he knows how dangerous it is for others to get too close.



12+

**Demon Road** by Derek Landy

For anyone who ever thought their parents were monsters... Amber Lamont is a normal sixteen-year-old. Smart but insecure, she spends most of her time online, where she can avoid her beautiful, aloof parents and their weird friends. But, when a shocking encounter reveals a horrifying secret, Amber is forced to go on the run. Killer cars, vampires, undead serial killers and red-skinned, horned demons – Amber hurtles from one threat to the next, revealing the terror woven into the very fabric of her life. As her parents close in behind her, Amber's only chance rests with her fellow travellers, who are not at all what they appear to be...

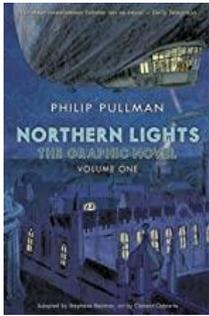


12+

**The Time Machine** by H G Wells

When a Victorian scientist propels himself into the year 802,701 AD, he is initially delighted to find that suffering has been replaced by beauty, contentment and peace. Entranced at first by the Eloi, an elfin species descended from man, he soon realises that this beautiful people are simply remnants of a once-great culture now weak and childishly afraid of the dark. They have every reason to be afraid: in deep tunnels beneath their paradise lurks another race descended from humanity - the sinister Morlocks. And when the scientist's time machine vanishes, it becomes clear he must search these tunnels, if he is ever to return to his own era.





12+  
**Northern Lights**  
(graphic novel)  
by Philip Pullman

Lyra Belacqua lives half-wild and carefree among the scholars of Jordan College, with her daemon familiar always by her side. But the arrival of her fearsome uncle, Lord Asriel, draws her to the heart of a terrible struggle – a struggle born of Gobblers and stolen children, witch clans and armoured bears. As she hurtles towards danger in the cold far North, Lyra never suspects the shocking truth: she alone is destined to win, or to lose, the biggest battle imaginable.



12+  
**Frankenstein**  
(graphic novel)  
by Mary Shelley

In trying to create life, the young student Victor Frankenstein unleashes forces beyond his control, setting into motion a long and tragic chain of events that brings Victor himself to the very brink. How he tries to destroy his creation, as it destroys everything Victor loves, is a powerful story of love, friendship ... and horror.

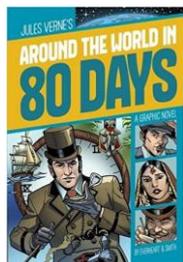


*Why did Rudolph have a bad mark in his end of term report?  
Because he went down in history.*



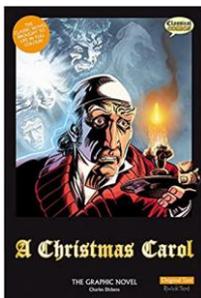
9+  
**Tom's Midnight Garden** (graphic novel) by Philippa Pearce

When Tom's brother gets sick, Tom's shipped off to spend what he's sure will be a boring summer with his aunt and uncle in the country. But then, Tom hears the old grandfather clock in the hall chime thirteen times and he's transported back to an old garden where he meets a mysterious girl named Hatty. Tom returns to the garden every night to have adventures with Hatty, who grows a little older with each visit. As the summer comes to an end, Tom realizes he wants to stay in the midnight garden with Hatty forever.



10+  
**Around the World in 80 Days** (graphic novel) by Jules Verne

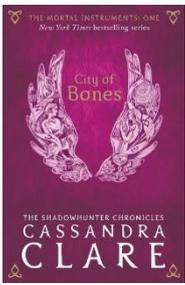
In London, 1872, a man named Phileas Fogg makes a bet that he can travel across the entire planet in eighty days. The wager? More than half his sizable fortune - the exact amount of money stolen from a nearby bank a day earlier.



9+  
**A Christmas Carol** (graphic novel) by Charles Dickens

This is the classic novel brought to life in full colour! 'I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future'. Classical Comics' first Dickens' title is probably his best-loved story. Scrooge gets a rude awakening to how his life is, and how it should be.





12+

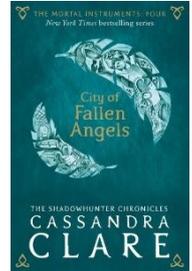
**City of Bones** by Cassandra Clare

When fifteen-year-old Clary Fray heads out to the Pandemonium Club in New York City, she hardly expects to witness a murder—much less a murder committed by three teenagers covered with strange tattoos and brandishing bizarre weapons. Then the body disappears into thin air. It's hard to call the police when the murderers are invisible to everyone else and when there is nothing—not even a smear of blood—to show that a boy has died. Or was he a boy?

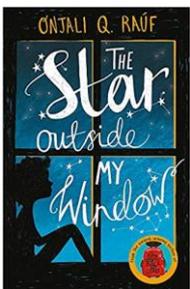
12+

**City of Fallen Angels** by Cassandra Clare

The Mortal War is finally over. Clary Fray is back home in New York, happy to be still alive. Happy about lots of things, actually. She's training to become a Shadowhunter. Her mum is getting married. Downworlders and Shadowhunters are at peace. And – most importantly – she can finally call Jace her boyfriend. But nothing comes without a price...



*What is Santa's favourite type of music?  
Wrap.*



9+

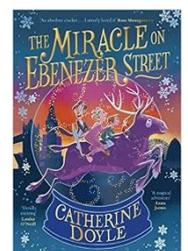
**The Star Outside My Window** by Onjali Q. Rauf

Following the disappearance of her mum, 10-year-old Aniyah suddenly finds herself living in foster care. With her life in disarray, she knows just one thing for sure: her mum isn't gone for ever because people with the brightest hearts never truly leave. They become stars. So when a new star is spotted acting strangely in the sky, Aniyah is sure it's her mum and she embarks on the adventure of a lifetime to make sure everyone else knows too -- an adventure that involves breaking into the Royal Observatory of London, a mischievous scurry of squirrels and the biggest star in Hollywood... *Told through the innocent voice of a child, this is a story that explores the subtle faces and endless impacts of domestic violence and celebrates the power of hope and resilience.*

8+

**The Miracle on Ebenezer Street** by Catherine Doyle  
(Recommended by Mrs Ford)

When George stumbles across Marley's Curiosity Shop at the Christmas fair he finds a mysterious snow globe. The scene it contains is just the first of a series of impossibilities... Alongside his Scrooge of a father, George is swept on an adventure that takes them to Christmas past, Christmas present and Christmas future. With a little help from an enthusiastic elf and a rather grumpy reindeer, can George find a way to bring the joy of Christmas home once again?

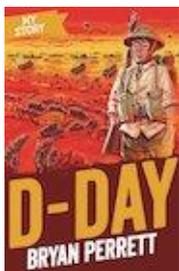


9+

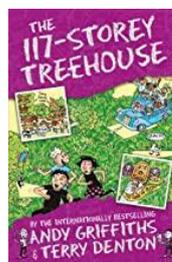
**The Way Past Winter** by Kiran Millwood Hargrave  
(Recommended by Poppy Campion)

Mila and her sisters live with their brother Oskar in a small forest cabin in the snow. One night, a fur-clad stranger arrives seeking shelter for himself and his men. But, by the next morning, they've gone - taking Oskar with them. Fearful for his safety, Mila and her sisters set out to bring Oskar back, even if it means going north, crossing frozen wild-lands to find a way past an eternal winter.





**9+**  
**D-Day**  
 by Bryan Perrett  
 (Recommended by Tiger Wang)  
 D-DAY is the story of the Allied landings in Normandy. It's 1944 when Lieutenant Andy Pope takes part in the D-Day landings, crossing the English Channel to the beaches of Normandy.



**8+**  
**The 117-Storey Treehouse**  
 by Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton

Andy and Terry have added another thirteen levels of crazy fun to their ever-growing treehouse. They've got a tiny-horse level, a pyjama-party room, an Underpants Museum and a Treehouse Information Centre! But Andy and Terry have found themselves running from the Story Police and the only way to escape is through the terrifying Door of Doom!



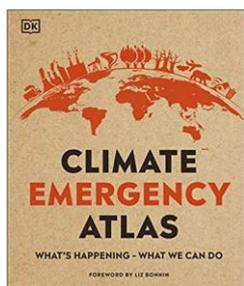
**8+**  
**The Land of Roar**  
 by Jenny McLachlan  
 (Recommended by Mrs Ford)

When Arthur and Rose were little, they were heroes in the Land of Roar, an imaginary world that they found by climbing through the folding bed in their grandad's attic. Roar was filled with things they loved – dragons, mermaids, ninja wizards and adventure – as well as things that scared them (including a very creepy scarecrow. . .). Now the twins are eleven, Roar is just a memory. But when they help Grandad clean out the attic, Arthur is horrified as Grandad is pulled into the folding bed and vanishes. Is he playing a joke? Or is Roar . . . real?



**8+**  
**Return to Roar**  
 by Jenny McLachlan  
 (Recommended by Mrs Ford)

Twins Arthur and Rose can't wait to go back to Roar, the fantasy world they get to through their grandad's attic. Roar is a land of dragons, mermaids, unicorns, ninja wizards and where anything they can imagine can be real. But when they return there's no time for exploring, because a message arrives from their scarecrow enemy, Crowky. WHAT'S IN THE BOX? The Box would always contain the things that scared the twins most - and if Crowky gets hold of it, Roar could be in more danger than ever. Soon they find themselves on another thrilling adventure, accompanied by old friends and new faces and seeing parts of Roar they'd almost forgotten. But will they get to the box before Crowky does? And if it opens, what will they see?



**9+**  
**Climate Emergency Atlas**  
 Writer and researcher:  
 Dan Hooke

Which countries generate the highest CO2 emissions? Which coastal cities are most vulnerable to rising sea levels? What will the polar ice caps look like in 10 years' time? Which countries have successfully harnessed renewable energy sources? This unique graphic atlas tells you everything you need to know about the current climate emergency and what we can do to turn things around. Packed with facts and figures and more than 30 dynamic maps, *Climate Emergency Atlas* is clear and easy to understand.

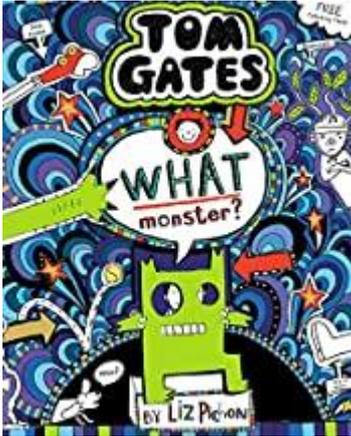


What carol is heard in the desert?  
 'O Camel Ye Faithful'.



*Read a book, read a book, read a book...*

The Tom Gates' series of books remains ever popular in the Library, but, with a number of titles to choose from, which one to read? *Tanisha Chandrarajah* has very kindly written a book review of her favourite Tom Gates' story and has given it the top mark of 5 out of 5 stars for being an "excellent book!". Thank you, Tanisha.



*What Monster (Tom Gates)* by Liz Pichon

*The story:* There is a boy called Tom Gates and he goes to a shop with his best friend on the way to school. He meets a kind lady with a dog (he loves dogs) and he tells the lady all his secrets about school. A few days later, that same lady comes to be a cover teacher at school. She is really strict. The school play is also coming up...

The book is very funny, has moments of action and a little sadness and is amazing!

*Favourite character:* Tom Gates because he is very funny and quite silly. He just makes the book more festive.

## WORTH A LOOK...

It's the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* and a beautiful illustrated version has just been published. There is also a brand new Lyra story to accompany the trilogies entitled *Serpentine*. Lyra and her daemon Pantalaimon have left the events of *His Dark Materials* far behind. In this snapshot of their forever-changed lives, they return to the North to visit an old friend, where we will learn that things are not exactly as they seem . . . It is illustrated by Tom Duxbury and is a wonderful companion to *The Book of Dust*. For readers who like to know more about the background to an author and their stories, *Daemon Voices* charts the history of Pullman's own enchantment with story, from his own books to those of Blake, Milton, Dickens, and the Brothers Grimm, among others, and delves into the role of story in education, religion, and science. *Daemon Voices* is both a revelation of the writing mind and the methods of a great contemporary master, and a fascinating exploration of storytelling itself.

Some of the older girls have been enquiring about books that highlight inspirational women. This may be of interest for children interested in women in history: *She Speaks: Women's Speeches That Changed the World, from Pankhurst to Thunberg* by Yvette Cooper. The book has been described as 'A powerful celebration of brilliant speeches by countless brave and bold women throughout the ages who have used their voices to inspire change, transform lives and radically alter history. It includes Boudica, Margaret Thatcher and Malala.

Bloomsbury Readers are books for children written by a range of diverse and award-winning authors which are worth a look and are aimed at getting children excited about reading. Here are just a few suggestions:

For ages 6+ you might like:

*The Boy in the Jam Jar* by Joyce Dunbar

Dylan's hearing is getting worse and he cannot connect with his friends. Luckily, his dog Pluto is there to keep him company.

***Harry's House of Invention*** by Rachel Anderson

Harry lives in a house full of inventors and experiments. So when he breaks his arm, his mum installs a reaching, grabbing and twirling invention to his cast. Except now his arm has special powers of its own and Harry has no choice but to go along with its mischief and mayhem...

For ages 7+:

***On the Ghost Trail*** by Chris Powling

A spooky comedy with hilarious illustrations by Loretta Schauer. A ghost has been haunting Ben's grandpa's house with cobweb trails and the TAP-TAP-TAP of its heartbeat. So when the clock strikes twelve, Ben's brother dares him to go on a hunt for the ghost in the church graveyard. Will he be brave enough?

***My Other Life*** by Polly Ho Yen

Mae spends a lot of time in hospitals. She's had asthma since she was little and sometimes she just can't breathe. She was in hospital the very first time she saw the hole - a tear in the universe which seems to appear only to her. Before she knows it she is drawn into a parallel world, where things aren't quite the same...This powerful fantasy story is full of big ideas and a great way to talk about chronic illness with children.

For ages 8+

***My Friend the Alien*** by Zanib Mian

Maxx is an alien, a real one from the planet Zerg. He's on Earth to research these strange things called emotions that humans have (and eat as much chocolate as he can). But some of the humans seem to think Maxx's new human friend Jibreel is an alien too, and Maxx just can't figure it out. Why would coming from another country make you an alien?! This funny science-fiction story is a perfect way to tackle difficult topics like racism and refugees with children.

***Taliesin*** by Maggie Pearson

On the most magical day of the year, the unluckiest man in the whole of Wales finds a baby floating in the river. But Taliesin is no ordinary baby - not only can he talk, but he is also a magician, prophet, poet and trickster. As the years pass, Taliesin transforms the lives of all he meets, for better or worse...

For ages 9+

***Macbeth*** Retold by Tony Bradman

An atmospheric retelling of the story of Macbeth. One dark and stormy night, two men come across three witches who foretell the future. One man is promised a royal future as king, the other that his son will rule one day. But King Duncan still lives and the path to the throne is unclear. What follows next is murder most foul...

***Stoneywish*** by Joan Aitken

From a mysterious traveller who leaves an injured horse with a stranger, to a garden plant that slowly creeps into a house during a thunderstorm and a man who comes across two angry forces in the middle of a forest, this chilling collection of stories will have readers jumping at bumps in the night.

For ages 10+

***Sky Ship*** by Geraldine McCaughrean

From ships that sail in a sea in the sky and children who witness the deadly effects of a scientific experiment, to a magic carpet that brings about a day of judgement and a year where eleven days are lost and never to be found, this short-story collection will have you on the edge of your seat!

***To Liberty*** by Catherine Johnson

An exciting adventure set in revolutionary France which tells the true story of a swashbuckling hero Thomas-Alexandre Dumas, whose mother was an enslaved African woman and whose father was a French noble. Alex is happy living with his brothers and sister on his father's farm on Haiti, but his father wants to go back to France and can't afford to take his mixed-race children with him. Soon, Alex must fight for his freedom... and that of France. From a slave on the streets of Port au Prince to a general in the French army, this is the dramatic true story of Thomas-Alexandre Dumas' life (the inspiration for his son's book *The Three Musketeers*).

