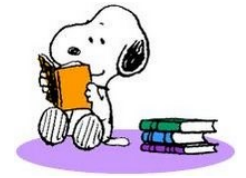




RGS: Bonkers About Books!

April 2022



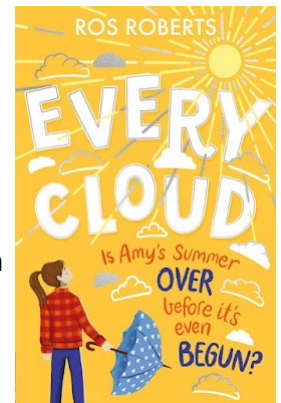
Happy summer term!

I hope everyone had a good Easter break with plenty of Easter eggs to keep you company whilst reading your books! I was thrilled to get the chance to meet LD Lapinski on Easter Saturday, and even more thrilled when she said she had met some children from school in the morning who were very excited about books - that's what I like to hear! I managed to spend a relaxing holiday catching up on some reading and have a few recommendations here for you.

Happy reading! **Mrs Wall**

Every Cloud - Ros Roberts.

Amy is in Year 6 and is looking forward to going to Valley High with her friends; however, when she discovers that her parents' house move means that she doesn't have a place, she is distraught. She hates her new home and now it means that she is going to be separated from her friends. And to make matters worse, she discovers that she needs to spend the beginning of the summer at her grandparents' house with her mum and her siblings. This means she is going to be miles away from her friends so she won't be able to go to the parties they are planning. For Amy, her life seems to be falling apart; just exactly how will she cope?



Amy, I feel, is a fairly typical eleven year old girl: she is desperate to be with her friends and doesn't want anything to come between that. She's moody although she doesn't always mean to be, and she is more concerned with her own needs than those of her family. Her world is literally turned upside down when she discovers that she has to go to Thornberry High and won't know anybody there. How could her parents do this to her? She feels this very personally and doesn't really see the true reason for their move (or chooses to gloss over it) which was due to her father's accident which left him unable to work for some time. As the summer holiday begins, she finds herself heading to her grandparents house whilst her father remains at home to refurbish the new house. With her two younger brothers and her mum, they will spend two weeks looking after her grandma who has injured her ankle and her grandfather (Pops) who is getting very forgetful - and what's even worse is that there is no WiFi and no mobile signal in the house - how will she survive?

Friendship is clearly at the forefront of **Every Cloud** and we see Amy's relationship with her best friends change over the course of the book and I think this will be good for children to read - friendships can change as we move through our lives and that's fine. I enjoyed the way her relationship with Jay developed - he's a lovely character and I think quite possibly my favourite in the book.

I know that the choice of secondary school can be a tricky time for Year 6 children and a stressful one for parents; however, **Every Cloud** is the perfect book to show them that, no matter what happens, you will be ok.

3D Bookish News

3D are loving their reading so much, they've decided to rename each table in their classroom after a different book; they even voted to decide which titles to use for each table ... and you can find the results in the picture here:



Sleep-Over Take-Over - Simon James Green

Oh yes, Otis: the bravest but least popular boy in the school getting invited to the richest, most popular boy's sleepover!

Otis is invited to Rocco Roccoco's sleepover party, and it is not just some ordinary sleepover. It is a chaotic one but there is only chaos in the morning after the sleep. There is a magic show at the party, there is a chocolate fountain and a lot more excellent things!

In the morning, Otis is in a wedding dress and there is a donkey in the house! They go on a thrilling adventure to find out who did all of these crazy things, and eventually they find out who it was... But did that person do it for a reason and if so, what reason was it?

This story was HILARIOUS!!!!

I L-O-V-E-D spells LOVED it! I like how Otis and Rocco were not really friends and then they teamed up with two other girls who were at the party to find out who did all of these weird things. I think the author should write more of these hilarious books and of course any other great book ideas he has. He must keep writing; I am very excited to see the next books he writes!

I would recommend this book for a 6+. I rate this book: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ /5

Isabelle B 6W

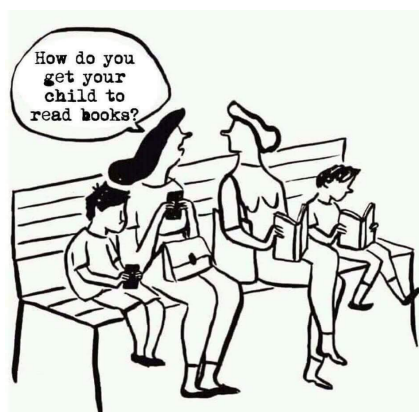


Greta and the Ghost Hunters - Sam Copeland

After an accident where she is hit by a car, Greta Woebegone discovers that her thoughts about ghosts are completely wrong and they do indeed exist, including the three who share her family home, Woebegone Hall, where she lives with her parents, her younger brother and her grandma (who is her best friend). Greta's mum is obsessed with yoga and longs to open her own studio at home; however this will involve moving Grandma into an old folks' home. Greta is absolutely against this idea and is determined to help her grandma out. But I'm getting ahead of myself; since her accident, Greta is able to see and talk to the three ghosts in the house: Greta's grandpa (who her grandma talks to all the time but evidently can't see); Percy Woebegone (an ancestor who lived in the house in the 1500s) and Wolfgang van Bach-Storey (the basement-dwelling narrator of the book). It's up to Greta to rouse this unlikely trio into saving her grandma from being sent to live in the home - but can they work together to succeed in her goal?

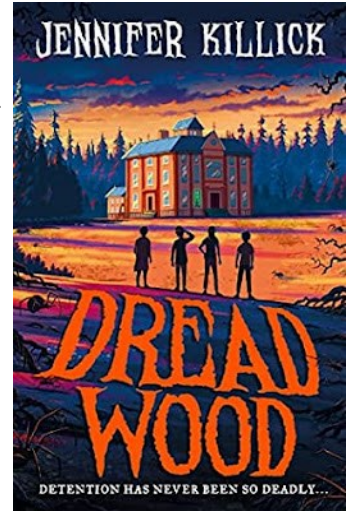
I loved the chatty, humorous style of this book which draws you in from the beginning. The setting feels suitably spooky but the lighter tone means that it's a warmer book that will entice younger readers towards it (I would suggest children from lower key stage 2 onwards). With a host of different characters, readers will be drawn towards Greta and her grandma who share a particularly strong bond, and will enjoy hating the variety of ghost hunters who Greta's parents employ.

This is a book that will make you chuckle. It's full of love and family with wonderful illustrations that enhance the story perfectly. Please tell me there will be more from Greta!



Dread Wood - Jennifer Killick

Angelo, Hallie, Gus and Naria are all serving a Saturday morning detention at school. Things begin in a pretty normal way with their teacher, Mr Canton, confiscating all of their phones for the morning, storing them safely in his bum-bag so they can't be used. He's an incredibly upbeat teacher who is trying his best to be trendy but just isn't endearing himself to the group. The school is located in an old mansion and is set in its own grounds on the edge of **Dread Wood**, which means animals such as pigs can be kept and looked after by the students. The group have only just handed over their phones when a scream pierces the air and Mr Canton races off to investigate, instructing the group to remain where they are. Of course, they completely ignore his instructions and follow him. They head to check on the pigs and quickly discover one of them is missing. And then things really begin to get strange: before they know it, Mr Canton has been dragged under the field by an unknown creature and Mr Lachitt, the caretaker, and his wife are behaving in a very strange manner - and why on earth is Mr Lachitt constantly humming a nursery rhyme to himself? Alone, and with no way of getting help from the outside world, it's up to Angelo, Hallie, Gus and Naria to get to the bottom of these strange and terrifying goings on before it's too late.

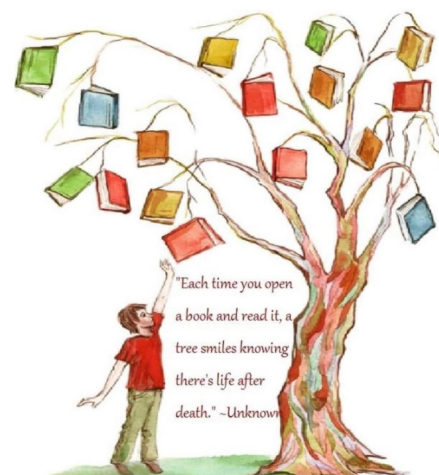
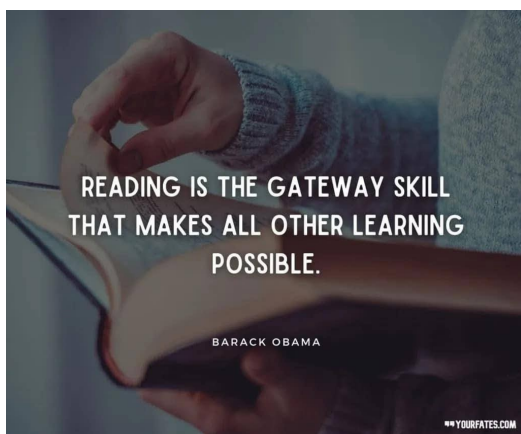


I am a big fan of Jennifer Killick's books and loved the scariness of the *Crater Lake* series, so I was intrigued and excited to get hold of an early copy of **Dread Wood**. This is a book that gets to the heart of the matter quickly, taking you in its hold and not letting you go until the very end. It's creepy in the best way will have you both scared, chuckling and compelled to read on in equal measure.

The characters are a group of mis-matched senior school students who have all been given detention for different reasons and their different personalities shine through from the very beginning. There's a stand-offishness about them and they are all wary of revealing too much at first, but as things take a turn for the worst, they have to learn to trust in each other and they begin to open up about their lives and the reason they are in school on a Saturday morning. It's from this building of relationships that we get the banter that adds a lighter side to the rather terrifying events that are unfolding before their very eyes, revealing a human side to the children - I find Jennifer very good at this in all of her books: the way she creates that natural vibe between them feels very real.

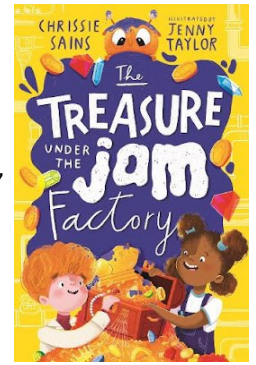
I don't want to say too much about what is lurking beneath the surface of this book, but it's safe to say that I most definitely needed my teddy bear to keep me company whilst I read, and that reading in bed before I put the light out was definitely an error! Jennifer has managed to create a completely fictional idea and make it sound totally believable and I, for one, will definitely be looking more closely at the school field in future - you just never know!

Jennifer Killick is becoming known as the queen of funny/horror fiction in the world of middle grade and **Dread Wood** places that crown very firmly on her head. This is a brilliantly funny/scary book about why you should behave in school, but also looks at friendships and remembering that we don't always know what other people are going through. So grab a copy (and your teddy bear!) and get ready to be thoroughly entertained and terrified as you bravely enter **Dread Wood**.



The Treasure Under The Jam Factory - Chrissie Sains (Illustrated by Jenny Taylor)

Scooter is back and he has just as many ideas to help develop his family's jam factory as he did in book 1! As we meet him again, the extended factory is about to open with a huge public launch. This is something of a departure for his family who have previously kept their jam making a strict secret. However, just as things are set to open, Daffy Dodgy makes a reappearance, causing trouble and demanding her factory back, or money. This sends Scooter into a frenzy but, as luck would have it, his new friend, Cat, may have the answer to his problem ... there's just one catch: Cat's Uncle Perry Pincher has very different, evil ideas on his mind.



I loved *The Alien In The Jam Factory* and was thrilled to be part of the blog tour for that book when it was released, so to have a copy of **The Treasure Under The Jam Factory** arrive in the post last week, was very exciting and I wasted no time before heading in!

It was wonderful to be back with Scooter and Fizzbee, and they were just as I remembered them: Scooter lets nothing get in his way, not even his cerebral palsy (I love the explanation pages at the back of the book, by the way), and his inventive brain comes up with the most wonderful creations - as well as his jammy creations (& disasters ... toilet roll jam anyone?!), I loved RALPH!

As well as the characters I got to know and love in book 1, there are some new characters to get to know and love in **The Treasure Under The Jam Factory**. Perry Pincher is a character that you will love to hate as you get to know him and his pet ferret, Colonel Pom Pom!

With wonderful illustrations once again from Jenny Taylor, **The Treasure Under The Jam Factory** is a thoroughly entertaining sequel to *The Alien in the Jam Factory*.

SkyWake: Battlefield - Jamie Russell

In book 2 of the *SkyWake* series, Casey, her teammates and her brother, Pete, find themselves on Hosin, a distant alien planet that they believed only existed in their favourite computer game, *SkyWake*. Having discovered that it is in fact very real, they have now been forced by the the Red Eyes to battle the Squids in order to get themselves and the other hundreds of gamers back to Earth. But things aren't quite what they seem and, when Casey begins to hear voices in her head, she realises it's the Squids asking for her help. But can she trust them and can she save her team and her brother?



I first read *SkyWake: Invasion* last June and absolutely loved it; it's been a huge hit at school as well with boys and girls both loving the high action, gaming theme of the book. Since then, I have been waiting with huge amounts of excitement for book 2 .

I love that the book starts with a recap of book 1 which helped me to remember all the little bits of the book that meant I could start book 2 without having to wrack my brain to remind myself.

And then we were off, and I simply couldn't put the book down! From the get-go, the plot is fast-paced and grabs you in its thrilling ride. As the story progresses, you get to know more about the characters (including the aliens), their personalities and their history, with true characters coming to the fore which adds to the development. Casey is, as in book 1, a strong female lead but she has some tough decisions to make and I felt for her at times. It's great to see a female lead in a gaming/sci-fi book and she has appealed to boys and girls alike in school. I'm looking forward to seeing what she does next as I suspect there will be more difficult choices coming her way in book 3!

There are some unexpected twists that will keep you guessing in **Battlefield** and the final third of the book is, without doubt, an edge of your seat, unputdownable action-fest (I won't say any more as I don't want to spoil things, but there was more than once occasion when I was shouting at the book over things the characters did!).

I absolutely loved *SkyWake: Invasion* but I think I love **SkyWake: Battlefield** even more!