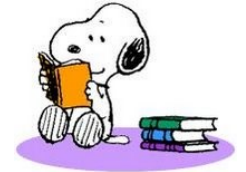




RGS: Bonkers About Books!

March 2023



Hello,

I can't quite believe that Easter is almost upon us, and for me that means having the time to enjoy two of my favourite things: chocolate and books! It's become a tradition in our house to gift books as well as eggs on Easter Sunday and I'm looking forward to choosing the books I'll gift this year. Whatever you're doing over the holiday, I hope you have the time to relax and to enjoy some good books.

Happy reading!

Mrs Wall

Nic Blake and the Remarkables The Manifestor Prophecy - Angie Thomas

Nic and her father have moved around for as long as she can remember, never staying in one place for too long; you see she is a Manifestor as is her dad, and she is home-schooled by him. All she wants to do is learn how to use the Gift but her dad keeps putting it off. Then, when she receives news that changes her life forever, she is forced to go on the run for she has a job to do, one that could have dire consequences for her family if she fails.

Before I go any further, I have to say that **Nic Blake and the Remarkables** is an utterly brilliant book and no matter what I write, I'm not convinced I will do it justice, but I'm going to give it my best shot.

From the start, you are drawn into Nic's life and both the world building & the characterisation that Angie creates are incredible.

Between the world we know (the world of the Unremarkables) and the world of the Remarkables (Uhuru), Angie seamlessly depicts places that are both incredible and believable; a place that is both real and fantasy; a place where you can immerse yourself and get lost as well as find yourself, and I found myself immersed in both.

Nic is a fiercely determined character and one who is reeling with new information that has shocked her and changed everything she thought she knew; however, despite the injustice she feels, she has to put all of this to one side to do what she believes is best. Her character shines brightly throughout this book (both in her bravery but also in how real she is: she isn't immune to feeling jealous and angry at times) and readers will delight in being able to see themselves; she is real, relatable and a character readers will enjoy getting to know.

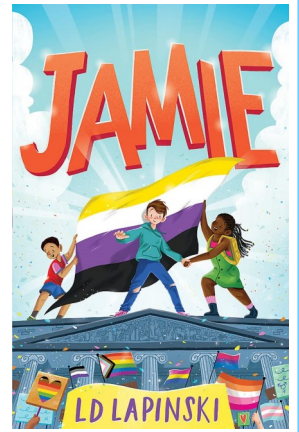
The book is an absolute rollercoaster of adventure which will leave you breathless. The twists feel like they just keep on coming and mean that it is utterly unputdownable. Incorporating modern issues with mythology, adding in magic and curses as well as a host of interesting creatures, **Nic Blake and the Remarkables** is an utter triumph of a book and I know that it is going to be a huge hit. It will be heading into school with me on Monday and I can guarantee that there will be a stampede for it.

Released on the 4th April, **Nic Blake and the Remarkables** is a book that needs to be pre-ordered and then devoured - I promise you won't regret it. Now, I just need to know how long I'm going to have to wait for book 2!



Jamie - L.D. Lapinski

Jamie is enjoying their last year of primary school and likes nothing better than spending time with their friends Daisy and Ash. However, when they attend a talk at school with their parents about which secondary school they will go to, everything changes as they only have two choices: Queen Elizabeth's High School for Girls or St Joseph's Academy for Boys. What Jamie wants to know is what they are going to do, as being non-binary, there seems to be no options for them. They try to talk about it but nobody seems to be really listening so they decide to take matters into their own hands. With the help of Daisy and Ash, can Jamie find a solution?



Every once in a while a book comes along and you just know it is going to be an important book, and this is how I felt once I'd read **Jamie**. I began reading it last Sunday evening, thinking that it may take me a few days to finish; oh how wrong I was! Once I began, I couldn't put it down and read it in one sitting. There are so many positive messages in this book and LD Lapinski manages to weave them into the plot with ease.

This book looks at some very big topics in a way that children will understand and appreciate. Making the move from primary to secondary school is a big enough move without having the added complication of feeling that there isn't a school for you. Jamie is understandably upset and confused, especially when the adults around them don't seem to be really helping. I felt for Jamie at so many different points during the book and really wanted to just reach into the book and help the adults to understand.

As well as the story, the book contains useful useful guide pages put together by Jamie to help readers understand terminology.



Jamie is a book about being yourself, about standing up for what you believe and about helping others to accept you for who you are. It's about friendship, family and about being brave. It's about identity and acceptance; it's about understanding and raising awareness. **Jamie** is a book that shows children that they should be proud of who they are and reminds adults that they need to listen.

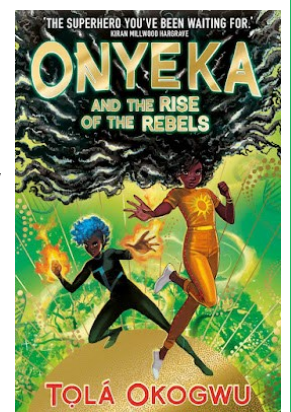
Jamie is publishing on the 30th March and LD Lapinski will be in Waterstones Durham on the 8th April from 11.00am—2.00pm. Why not pop along and say, "Hello?"

Onyeka and the Rise of the Rebels - Tolá Okogwu

After the thrilling end to book 1, Onyeka and her friends are now on the run, desperate to escape Dr Doyinbo and his plans. They also need to find a way to get Niyi's powers back to him and find Onyeka's parents. The problem they have is they don't know who they can trust.

Having loved and raced through book 1, I was absolutely thrilled to have been able to read book 2 on NetGalley before it was released, and it didn't disappoint. The book is full of twists and uncertainty as the group discover who they can trust. The action is ever-present and definitely kept me on my toes. I felt as though I got to know the characters more as the book progressed and the end of the book left me absolutely wanting more.

Full of fast-paced action and characters you will be rooting for, **Onyeka and the Rise of the Rebels** will be a book that will leave you wanting more.



The Treasure Hunters - Lisa Thompson

Vincent is in Year 7 and is quietly trying to get through each day of secondary school without being noticed, and that seems to be going well until he is chosen as one of four students who will spend the weekend taking part in the Wilderness Warriors Challenge. This is Vincent's worst nightmare but, despite his best attempts, he can't get out of it so he has to face a weekend of walking and camping. Can the four come together as a team and what will happen when one of the team announces that there may be treasure hidden not far from where they are?

I'm a big fan of Lisa's writing and so it really didn't take me long to decide that **The Treasure Hunters** was going to jump to the top of my tbr pile.

Vincent doesn't really seem happy at the beginning of this book. He doesn't appear to be enjoying school and his dyspraxia isn't making things any easier. His only respite is the computer game, Battle Doom, he plays - it's his escape and discovering he's good at it gives him something to look forward to. I think he also feels that he is living in his brother's shadow and doesn't quite know how to shine in his own right. I really felt for Vincent and I'm sure many readers will be able to associate with him. Making friends isn't always easy, especially not when you're at a new school and Vincent has figured that being invisible is his best bet. The teachers, however, are more astute than Vincent gives them credit for and have realised that he's struggling to fit in, which is why Ms Bell and Mr Hearn sign him up for the weekend. Along with Scarlett and Josh, who both come across as incredibly mean, and Lena (who seems to be the only one who is keen to go on the trip), the four are a rather unlikely group of campers.

The trip itself made me very much think of Duke of Edinburgh, something which my son has recently completed, and a weekend of rain, soggy tents, carrying heavy rucksacks, trying to cook outdoors and coping with blisters is something he has regaled me with so it felt vaguely familiar as I read about Team Linley High's progress (or lack of it). I have to say that I have much sympathy for them as I would definitely find a weekend like that my worst nightmare!

It's only Lena who seems to be enjoying the weekend and her preparations and map reading are what keep the team together, but we soon learn that she has alternative plans that involve a detour and pirate's treasure. I loved Lena's determination as well as the fact that she seems happy to simply be herself.

Lisa has a way of writing about issues that affect children and shows them they aren't alone and **The Treasure Hunters** is no exception: dyspraxia, separated families, family relationships and financial hardship are all explored in some way and Lisa manages to do this in a way that readers will understand and may be able to relate to. It's always important that readers see themselves in books and **The Treasure Hunters** will do this for so many readers.

I began reading **The Treasure Hunters** on Saturday morning in between playing taxi for my son and by Saturday afternoon, all thoughts of getting jobs done had gone out the window! The book is an unputdownable read that will remind readers not to judge people, that working together as a team helps and that friendship can appear in the most unlikely of places.

Due for release on the 13th April, **The Treasure Hunters** is another guaranteed hit for Lisa Thompson whose writing goes from strength to strength.



Gold Medal Mysteries: Thief on the Track - Ellie Robinson

Hannah is spending time with her dad at the World Championships in Tokyo when she meets Maria and Seb whilst enjoying the sporting action. However, when they hear that American sprinter Jess Mark has had his gold medal stolen, the trio decide to turn detectives to try to find the medal themselves - after all, with a huge cash reward on offer, the trio have an incentive! But can they discover who the culprit is before the closing ceremony?

Having met Ellie at the Simon and Schuster brunch in January, I was keen to read Gold Medal Mysteries. She had shared an extract of the book and had talked about how she'd used her experience as a Paralympic swimmer to help with the details, so I was intrigued.

From the start, this is a fast-paced book with action and twists that will keep readers on their toes - I know I didn't guess who their thief was! The detail that Elie includes within the book helps to paint a very detailed picture and sets the scene well, especially the behind the scenes parts of the athletes' village - I learned so much!

With characters that readers will be able to associate with and will love, Hannah, Maria and Seb make an intrepid trio who are adept at sneaking into places they shouldn't be! I'm pleased that this is the beginning of a series as I'm looking forward to seeing what the team have to investigate next.

Friendship, inclusion and a love of sport all feature highly in this exciting new series which is due for release on the 13th April. **Gold Medal Mysteries: Thief on the Track** is going to be popular in school and I can already think of students who will be keen to grab this on Monday morning.



Exciting Bookish News!

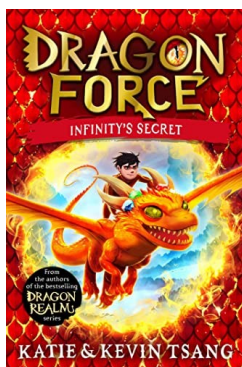
A Kind of Spark TV Adaptation



For those of you who have read and loved Elle McNicoll's A Kind of Spark, I'm very excited to tell you that the TV adaptation is nearly here! It will be on BBC iPlayer on the 31st March and on CBBC from the 17th April. Elle was involved in the casting of the show and insisted that all autistic characters were played by autistic actors; the show includes many neurodivergent cast and crew. I don't know about you, but I've very excited to watch this.



Dragon Force is coming!



I know how popular the Dragon Realm series has been in school and that so many of you have been desperate to know what's coming next (I was sworn to secrecy until now!). But now the news is out and so I'm very excited to reveal that the follow-on series, Dragon Force, is coming and book one, Infinity's Secret will be released on the 14th September. Want to know more? Here's the blurb:

It's been five years since the Dragon Realm fell into the Human Realm and both populations are now living side by side. But dangerous magical creatures are threatening to disrupt the peace and it's up to a new group of heart-bonded humans and dragons to protect the world – the Dragon Force. Under the watchful eye of seventeen-year-old Billy Chan, Lance Lo, his younger sister Zoe and new friends enrol at Camp Claw to learn all the skills they need to become protectors. But when Camp Claw is mysteriously attacked in the dead of night, it's up to the latest recruits to prove they've got what it takes to save the day.