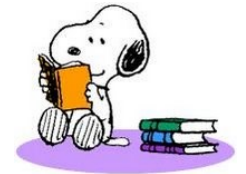




RGS: Bonkers About Books!

November 2023



I don't know about you but I'm already getting into the Christmas spirit: the adverts are on TV, the decorations are in stores and there are Christmas books galore to be read ... to be fair, I'm happy to read Christmas books at any time of the year and often reread Christmas books to help get me in the festive mood. With that in mind, I'm dedicating this month's Bonkers to Christmas books for you all to enjoy over the festive season.

Happy reading

The Christmas Carrolls - Mel Taylor-Bessent; illustrated by Selom Sunu

Holly Carroll and her family are absolutely nuts about Christmas and every part of their life, every day is full of Christmas cheer (including decorations, food and clothing!). When a house comes up for sale on Sleigh Ride Avenue, the family don't even need to view the house before buying it. The move means that Holly will start school for the first time as her parents will be going to out to work to pay for renovations on the house. Holly is initially thrilled at the thought of being able to spread her Christmas cheer with all of her new classmates; however, she finds the reality of school life very different to her expectations. Can Holly get used to being in school and can she find a way to spread a bit of Christmas cheer?

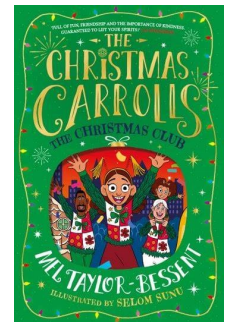


This is a truly wonderful book full of Christmas spirit which oozes out of every page! It's funny and heart-warming and will make you want to eat Christmas dinner and mice pies! I love Holly's enthusiasm for Christmas and the messages the book sends about the importance of being yourself. It also contains wonderful messages about every family being different and respecting those differences. A wonderfully Christmassy book for children (and adults) of all ages that is guaranteed to put a smile on

everybody's face.

And when you finish book one, why not head straight to book 2, **The Christmas Competition**, for more laughs and to see if a rival family can steal their Christmas crown.

I have book 3, **The Christmas Club** ready to read with a mug of hot chocolate!



Where's LD?

A Festive Countdown in 25 Chapters

18th November
Waterstones, Trafford Centre
Signing, meet and greet event 11am

25th November
The Bound, Whitley Bay
Signing, meet and greet event 11am

26th November
Wonderland Bookshop, Retford
Christmas event signing, 11am

27th November
The Rabbit Hole, Brigg
Signing, meet and greet event, 4pm



Step Father Christmas - LD Lapinski

Last month I shared my review of Step Father Christmas which would make the perfect alternative to an advent calendar as it's told in 25 chapters. Well, now you have opportunity to meet the author and get your book as LD Lapinski will be in The Bound in Whitley 25th November at 11.00am.

A Boy Called Christmas - Matt Haig

When you think of Father Christmas, we generally imagine a jolly, old man with a long white beard and a rotund belly; however, once upon a time, he was a young boy called Nikolas. A Boy Called Christmas is the delightful tale of this boy from Finland who, despite not having an easy life and rarely receiving Christmas gifts, still believed in happiness. Then, one day, something magical happened.

This is a delightful story with the perfect mix of humour, compassion and reindeer poop! And when you've finished reading the book, you can curl up and watch the film!



Tinsel - Sibéal Pounder

Blanche Clause is living on the streets of Victorian London and hates Christmas: she's alone and spends the day counting down the seconds until it's over. But then a stranger gives her a red Christmas bauble, her first ever Christmas present, telling her: *'Never underestimate the gifts you are given. What you see inside might surprise you.'* Shortly after that, she meets a young girl called Rinki who is thrilled to have found somebody she can call a friend and their friendship becomes something that will change the world forever. Determined to have her own sleigh and to deliver a present to every child in the world, Tinsel, is the story of how Santa and the Christmas traditions we know and love today came to be.

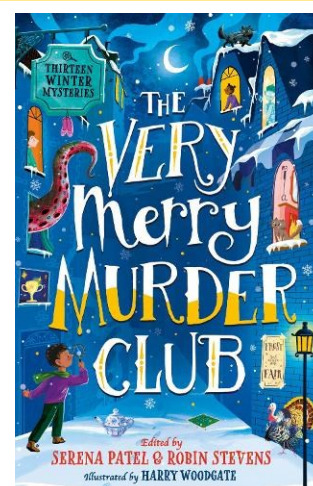
Ok, so, disclaimer: I love Christmas! I put the tree up at the beginning of December, play Christmas songs at full volume and will happily read any book to do with Christmas at any point in the year, so I was very much looking forward to diving into Tinsel and starting the festivities early this year (goodness knows, we need it!). And oh boy, what a book this is! From learning about the elves to discovering how Santa met Rudolf; from the creation of Tinsel to why Santa dresses in the red suit and beard, this book puts a rather wonderfully feminist twist on things that just make complete and utter sense when you read them! And as for Santa ... well, I should have known: we women always do have the best ideas!!!

From mince pie picnics (yes, they are a thing and I desperately want it to snow so I can enjoy one!) to climbing up and down chimneys, this book oozes festive spirit, is guaranteed to put a big smile on your face, make you laugh and leave you with a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. Full of magic, Tinsel is like a hug in paper format, a cosy blanket you'll want to wrap yourself in and I absolutely loved it!



The Very Merry Murder Club

For those who prefer something a little more sinister with their mince pies, why not try this collection of thirteen short stories that will transport you on a wintery journey of foul play, festive mystery and Christmassy crime. The collection combines the talents of some very well-known children's authors: Abiola Bello, Annabelle Sami, Benjamin Dean, E.L. Norry, Elle McNicoll, Dominique Valente, Joanna Williams, Maisie Chan, Nizrana Farook, Patrice Lawrence, Roopa Farooki, Serena Patel and Sharna Jackson. Read it from cover to cover, or dip into the stories in whatever order takes your fancy, this is a great festive collection for those of you who are fans of the Murder Most Unladylike series.



The Chestnut Roaster - Eve McDonnell

Ok, so technically this isn't a Christmas book but mention of roasting chestnuts and thoughts of curling up with hot chocolate whilst reading it (yes, I do that a lot!) and I couldn't resist including it.

Piaf works as a chestnut roaster in the centre of Paris (on the corner of Rue du Dragon to be precise). Small for her age, she is often mistaken for being younger than her twelve years, but Piaf is a most remarkable young lady as she remembers every single thing that has happened to her since the second she was born. It is this gift (or burden) that leads her to realise that the man claiming to be a cousin cannot possibly be telling the truth; this saves her from being kidnapped, something that has happened to several gifted children recently. And then she discovers that everybody else in Paris believes that it is still 1887, and not 1888 - they appear to have forgotten the last year. Realising that something is very wrong, Piaf and her twin brother, Luc, determine to discover exactly what is going on, so embark upon a quite remarkable journey across Paris.

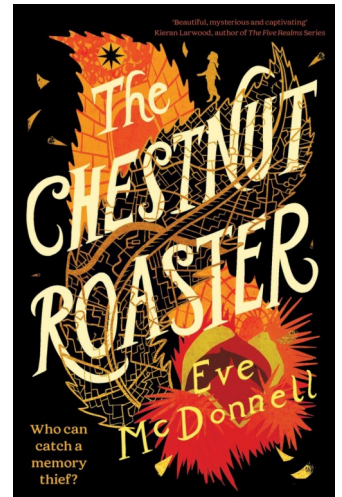
I have a serious love of Paris and an even more serious love of books set in the city, so I really had no choice but to buy a copy of **The Chestnut Roaster** - I knew I would enjoy it, but until I started reading it, I didn't realise exactly how much I would fall in love with it. From the very beginning I was transported to the streets of Paris and could picture myself alongside Piaf. I found myself imagining Rue Du Dragon and Les Deux Maggots; racing around the Île de la Cité with her and venturing into the catacombs (I have determined to visit them next time I'm there). The description lulled me into the pages of the book and transported me to the city that I love, and I promise it will do the same to you.

Piaf is a tower of strength as a character, despite being so small. She is plagued by her 'gift' and uses boxes in her brain to help her manage all her memories. We discover, fairly early in the book, that her twin brother, Luc, is in hospital and she has stepped up to take over his role of chestnut roaster - she clearly feels the weight of responsibility and I saw that throughout their adventure. Whilst many may see her memories as a gift, she clearly doesn't see it that way - she was an incredibly interesting character and one I grew very fond of.

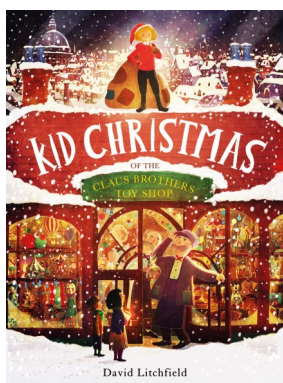
There are a host of other wonderful characters within the book; many of whom you will love (Madame Legrand definitely fell into this category for me) and some you will find confusing in the best way (are they good? Are they bad? You have no choice but to keep reading to find out!).

The Chestnut Roaster is a compelling, thought-provoking book that will hook you in and enchant you; and the sinister undertones will lure you in and keep you reading. I promise you that the description will make you yearn to head to Paris and, as you finish the final page, you will hold it in your memory for days, if not weeks, afterwards.

I know that my love of Paris may make me biased, but I absolutely promise you that this is a book you need in your life - you will thank me afterwards! Oh, and I can highly recommend reading it with a mug of hot chocolate!



Kid Christmas - David Litchfield



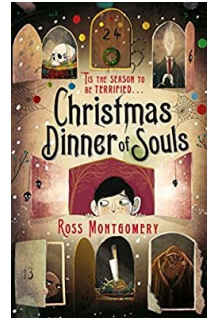
This is a new addition to my Christmas collection and is a beautifully illustrated and told story of a young boy called Nicky Claus who decides to take action when he discovers that not every child in the city gets a present at Christmas.

This is guaranteed to leave you with a big smile on your face and a warm glow in your heart, and will be a picture book you'll want to read year after year. It may even make an appearance in a reading assembly before Christmas!

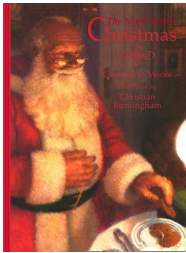


Christmas Dinner of Souls - Ross Montgomery

Lewis has been in trouble: caught throwing stones at the window of the crumbling Soul's College, he's now being made to work there on Christmas Eve as a punishment. However, when he arrives, he quickly realises that all is not what it seems and he is being forced to serve dinner whilst 7 rather chilling ghost stories are told around the table. This is an eerie read in which each of the ghost stories are woven together by Lewis and the dean of the college who is hosting the meal. Definitely not your usual Christmas novel and one that absolutely made me jump (possibly because I read it whilst in a hotel room on my own!) A scarier read for those who are brave enough in Years 5 and 6.



Christmas Classics



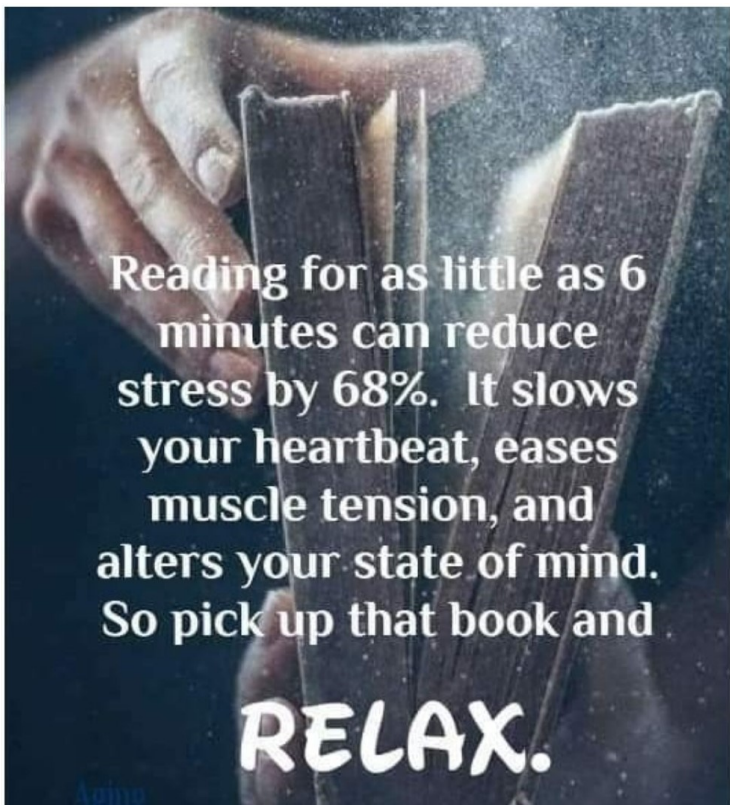
The Night Before Christmas—Clement C Moore

It's a poem that most of you will recognise but this is has to be one of my favourite Christmas books. Traditionally, we read it aloud at home on Christmas Eve before hanging up our stockings and leaving out milk and mince pies for Santa.



The Polar Express - Chris Van Allsburg

Made famous by the animated film with Tom Hanks, this is a wonderful story about a boy who travels to meet Santa and gets to choose the first gift of Christmas. This is a book I read every year ... and I also love to watch the film too!



This edition of Bonkers About Books was proof-read by **Henry H, Ishaan D, Aayur P & Ellie D**

