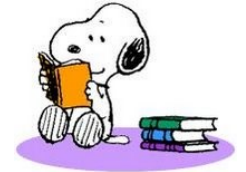




RGS: Bonkers About Books!

October 2023



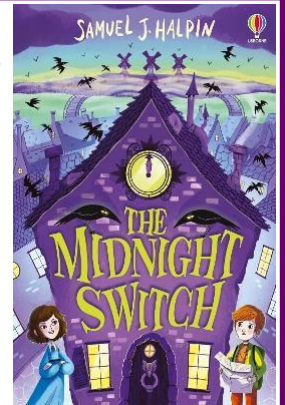
Well, the nights are drawing in and getting chillier so it seems like the perfect time to curl up under a cosy blanket with a cup of hot chocolate and a good book! There are some wonderful books just out which I'll share with you and also a host of spooky books to enjoy as Hallowe'en creeps up on us ... if you're feeling brave enough!

Happy reading

Mrs Wall

The Midnight Switch - Samuel J Halpin

Lewis is moving to the small town of Barrow with his family as his father is desperate for him to gain a scholarship to Elksbridge Collegiate School (or 'THE Elksbridge Collegiate School' as his dad says). Lewis is less keen on the idea, especially when they arrive at their new home (which is far from ready to live in) and he can't escape the strange feeling that he has, not to mention the mysterious rooks that keep appearing. Not long after their arrival, Lewis and his family attend The Peering of the Goblet ceremony, an annual tradition in the town which forecasts the weather due to a curse the villagers believe had been put on the town by the Barrow Bogwitch. Shortly after, Moira, a friend of the family unexpectedly turns up in the middle of the night. Lewis' parents take her in but Lewis feels there is something unusual about her, however, puts it down to the fact that he hasn't seen her for years. It quickly becomes apparent to Lewis that Moira doesn't know her own name or where she is from. Together, they are determined to get to the bottom of what is going on, but time is running out - can they find the answers they need before it's too late?



The Midnight Switch is the sort of book I love reading: full of mystery with just the right amount of adventure and a good sprinkling of darkness thrown in to keep the reader gripped. Having been part of the cover reveal, I was excited to dive beyond and find out exactly what was going to happen.

Lewis clearly doesn't want to move house and certainly doesn't seem to want to join Elksbridge School but his father's desperation for him to do makes him unable to say anything. The relationship between Lewis and his father is an interesting one: they are clearly a close family but his father is grieving the loss of his own father and is just trying to do what he thinks is best for his son; however, he fails to do one thing: ask Lewis what he wants. The result is the adventure that unfolds in the book.

Like *The Peculiar Pegs of Riddling Wood*, Samuel knows how to include just the right amount of darkness in the plot: a small town with annual rituals; legends of old woven into the pages; a character who doesn't know anything about themselves, not to mention an ending that will have you literally hanging on to the edge of your seat. **The Midnight Switch** is a book that drew me in and kept me gripped until after I'd finished the book.

Perfect for fans of the Eerie-on-Sea series or Michelle Harrison book, **The Midnight Switch** is begging to be read under a cosy blanket with a hot chocolate.

Around the world, people who read a lot are given different names...

Book flea - Indonesia

Ink drinker - France

Library mouse - Romania

Reading horse - Denmark

Read-rat - Germany

Books worm - England

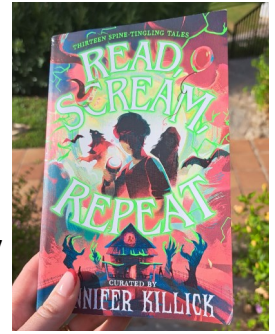


Read, Scream, Repeat

Read, Scream, Repeat is a collection of 13 short, scary stories written by some of today's best middle grade authors. Each one is different and reflects the author's style but they all have one thing in common: they are guaranteed to make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end!

Whether it be werewolves, zombies or creatures lurking in ponds, these stories are brilliantly written and will definitely make you shiver, no matter how warm the day may be. I devoured the book in one sitting on Sunday, feeling brave as I was sat in the sun, but the book is also perfect for dipping in and out of which is what I'll be doing with my class next term.

If you love short stories and you're a fan of middle grade horror, then **Read, Scream, Repeat** is a book you absolutely need. Just remember to read it during daylight hours and have a teddy bear handy to keep you company!



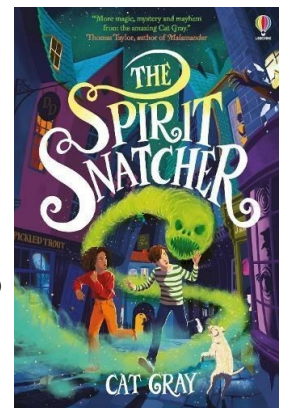
The Spirit Snatcher - Cat Gray

Pip wants nothing more than to fit in and for his parents to be less eccentric than they are. As they head to London to begin a new life, he is dreading his new school and is thankful he has a few weeks before he needs to start. Arriving in Elbow Alley is far from what Pip was expecting, especially not when confronted by a girl who warns him to leave immediately. On their first night, Pip is woken by a strange mist-like apparition which enters his room causing him to feel strange; however, it quickly leaves and Pip begins to think it was just a dream until he awakes the next morning to find his usually bouncy parents sitting lifeless in front of the TV. Heading out, Pip bumps into Fliss, the girl who warned him against staying the previous day. When he tells her about his parents, she informs him they have been spirit snatched and the same fate awaits him and Fliss when they turn 13 in two days' time. Can the pair, along with Fliss's dog Splodge, get to the bottom of who is snatching spirits before it's too late?

The Spirit Snatcher has all the ingredients for a captivating read: a spooky setting, a mystery to solve, brilliantly engaging characters, a cute dog and the ability to draw readers in from the start. Mix them all together and you have a book that I promise you won't be able to put down.

Pip is a character many will be able to relate to as he is profoundly embarrassed by his parents and wants nothing more than to blend in and have a 'normal' life. The move to London is supposed to be a new start but he really can't see his parents changing their ways any time soon. The phrase 'be careful what you wish for...' springs to mind here as Pip ultimately gets what he wants: once his parents have been spirit-snatched, they do nothing but sit in front of their TV and phone, enabling Pip to eat all the junk food he wants. However, he soon realises that all he actually wants is to have his parents back, eccentricities and all. Perhaps it also helps that the residents of Elbow Lane are far from your usual neighbours. As Pip gets to know Fliss, she shows him that blending in isn't everybody's goal in life. I loved her individuality and her sense of self.

The Spirit Snatcher is a book that will remind you that it's OK to be yourself and that family aren't always as embarrassing as they may seem (I've been telling my son that for years!). Publishing at the end of September, **The Spirit Snatcher** is the perfect read to cosy up with as the evenings turn chilly and you need a friend to keep you company. It's a brilliant read and one I know will go down well in school next term.



Reading isn't important
because it helps get you
a job. It's important
because it gives you room
to exist beyond the
reality you're given.
Reading makes the world
better. It is how humans
merge. How minds connect.
Dreams. Empathy.
Understanding. Escape.
Reading is love in
action.

This edition of Bonkers About Books was
proof-read by William C.

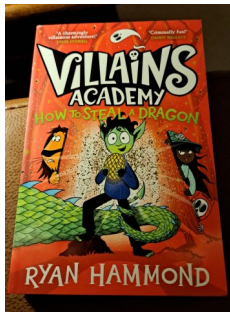
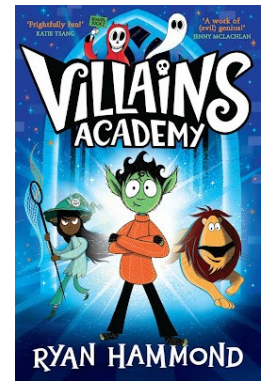
Villains Academy - Ryan Hammond

Bram Moon has been sent to **Villains Academy** in order to learn how to be bad; however, for the shy werewolf, things don't go quite as expected and he finds being evil rather more difficult than some of his fellow pupils. Can he enlist the help of his friends in order to become bad before he receives three strikes and gets sent home?

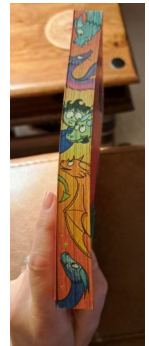
I started reading **Villains Academy** one Saturday evening in January on the way home from the Simon & Schuster brunch where I'd heard Ryan talking, and finished it the following morning. The book is a joy to read and is full of some of the most wonderful characters. I can imagine Ryan having had the best time creating them and, without doubt, Master Mardybum has to be the best name for a teacher I have ever come across!

The writing is enhanced with illustrations throughout and the book will have readers chuckling at the events that unfold. From getting stuck in the toilet pipes to getting bottoms trapped in doors, the plot will have readers enthralled. However, alongside the laughs, there are important messages about teamwork, friendship, trust and being yourself woven into the book.

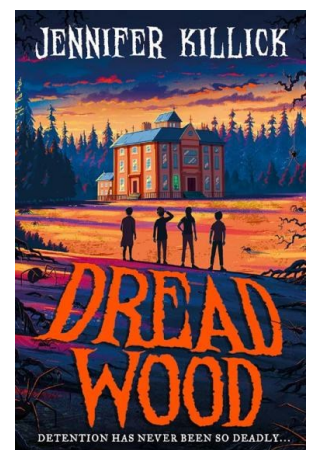
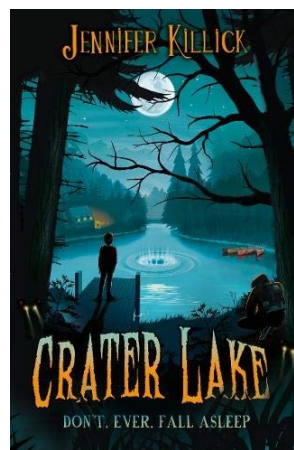
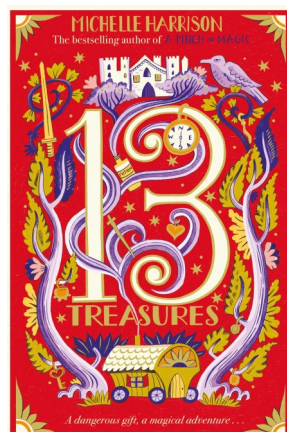
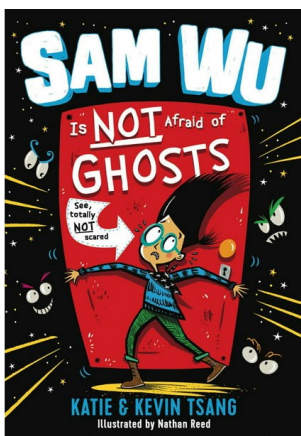
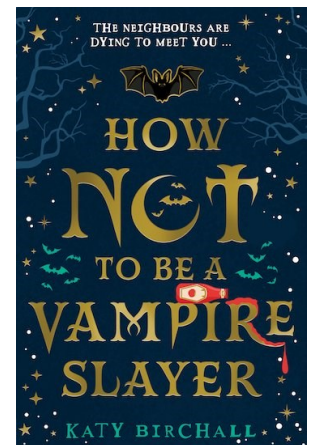
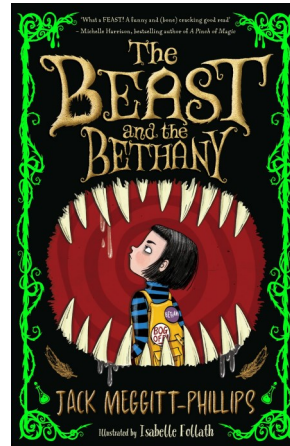
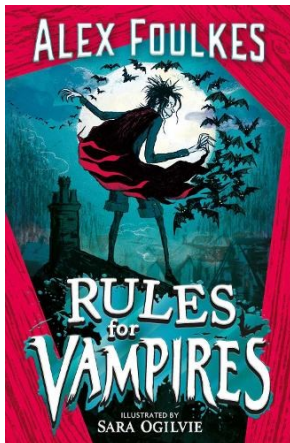
Villains Academy is bound to be a hit with readers and I just hope there is more to come from Bram and the rest of the class. Now, I wonder how evil I have to be to be awarded Villain of the Week...



...and if you enjoy **Villains Academy**, you'll be thrilled to hear that **Villains Academy - How To Steal A Dragon** has just been released. You can see my copy here with those gorgeous sprayed edges.



Some other books that are perfect for Hallowe'en:



Is it too early to talk about Christmas?!

This is a book that will make a perfect alternative to an advent calendar...

Stepfather Christmas - LD Lapinski

Christmas is coming and Harper and her older brother Will are preparing for their usual Christmas when their mum announces that her now boyfriend, Nick, will be joining them for the festive period. Things get off to a positive start and Nick seems nice; however, it isn't long before Harper starts wondering whether he is, in fact, Santa! She tries to talk to Will about it but he just shrugs it off so it's up to Harper to find proof to prove her theory.

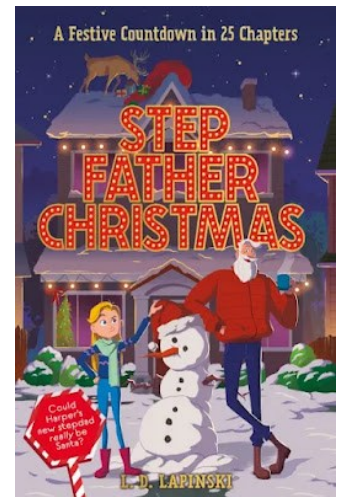
I have a weakness for Christmas books so being privileged enough to read an early copy of *Stepfather Christmas* filled me with joy. Yesterday morning, I curled up with a hot chocolate (it would have been rude not to!) and dove in.

Harper and her family are clearly close and their family of three works well (although, Will seems to be a rather typical teenager!). Bringing Nick into the equation undoubtedly comes with some trepidation and is something I imagine many readers will be able to associate with.

I loved Harper who is an astute and incredibly observant, not only when it comes to Nick, but also with her brother. She's also determined and not put off by others. Not only does she continue her theories about Nick when Will dismisses her, but she also notices that Will is struggling with his best friend. The big question is: is Harper right? You'll just have to read the book to find out!

The book is the perfect mix of modern story-telling with a traditional Christmas feel. With themes of family, love and trusting yourself, *Stepfather Christmas* is split into 25 chapters and is a delightful read that would be perfect as a nightly family book in the run-up to Christmas. I genuinely wish my son was young enough for us to have enjoyed this together like that. We always used to enjoy family reading time after dinner and I could imagine us curling up every night in December and sharing the next chapter - it's the perfect way to build to the big day.

Full of magic, hope and love, *Stepfather Christmas* will leave you with a warm glow in your heart and a desire for gingerbread biscuits and hot chocolate!



Earn A Blue Peter Badge For Reading A Christmas Book!

Follow the link to hear Mel Taylor-Bessent talking about her book and how you can earn yourself a Blue Peter badge by reading her very Christmasy book: [Mel Taylor-Bessent Blue Peter Book Club Badge on Vimeo](#)

The form you need is here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/findoutmore/blue-peter-apply-for-a-book-badge>



Student Review

Pig Heart Boy - Malorie Blackman

Cameron is a thirteen-year-old boy who wants to have a normal life but can't because 2 years before, he caught a disease which effected his heart. Cameron's heart is getting weaker every year and he and his family both know he could die soon...

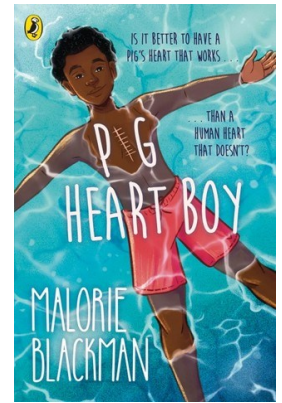
Cameron's friend - Marlon - is great at football and swimming. Cameron wishes that one day, he could be healthy enough to be as good as his friend. One day, Cameron came home to find his dad discussing with a doctor about a pig heart transplant. Cameron needs to make the hard decision of whether or not to accept the offer. He asks his friends but the world around him is less understanding.

I liked this books because it's different from many other books. Most children's books have a happy ending but this one ends with another problem. The story is very touching but it also makes you question things. Is it ok for an animal to die just for us to live?

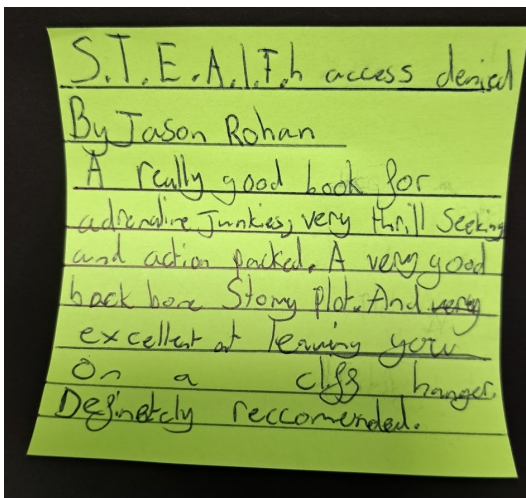
Malorie Blackman's style of writing is unique. In the book, there are two narratives - Cameron telling the reader what is happening and Cameron explaining his life to his camcorder. As soon as you read Malorie Blackman's books, you will be glued to them. Every chapter ends with a cliff-hanger, so you just want to read more and more. I really like Malorie Blackman's books because of that.

I would recommend this book to people who like life-like and engaging books. Pig Heart Boy is a truly excellent book which, once you read, you will never forget.

Oorja



6W's Reading Graffiti Board



6W have started adding their recommendations to the reading graffiti board in their classroom. Keep an eye out to see what else they add.

