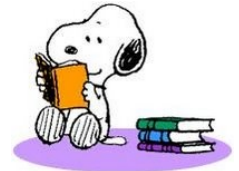




RGS: Bonkers About Books!

January 2025



Hi,

Happy New Year! A new year means plenty of new books to enjoy (I may have read one or two over the holidays!). There are a few continuing series that have been exciting reads that I'm sharing and also some new stand-alone books. What books are you enjoying at the minute!

Happy reading!

Mrs Wall

Ice Apprentices - Jacob North

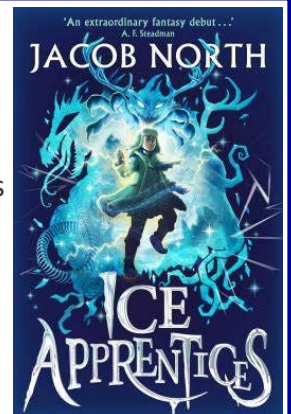
'Oswin Fields is an outside, rescued from the ice. Then he gets a chance to for to the school for ice apprentices, and he sets out to prove his worth. When the beasts begin to strike, Oswin has to risk everything he holds dear...'

In a world that is frozen and revolves around the freeze and the thaw, monsters lurk and survival is everything, so much so that people's worth is decided by how useful they are. Then along comes Oswin, a stray who was found on the ice. Until now, he has lead a sheltered life away from everyone; he is incredibly curious and always desperate to ask questions; he doesn't like not knowing, yet his new world seems to be full of the unknown and secrets. Life is difficult for him as an ice apprentice, especially as a stray - he faces prejudice and hatred, yet all he wants to do is show that he is worthy of being there. He quickly discovers that his uncle was not well thought of in Tundra and he is advised to forget about him; however, Oswin is unable to do this and is determined to discover exactly what he did.

The friendship that forms between Oswin and Ennastasia is wonderful to read. From very different backgrounds, Ennastasia's feeling of superiority is evident from the start but Oswin's persistence slowly leads to her thawing - their relationship made me smile.

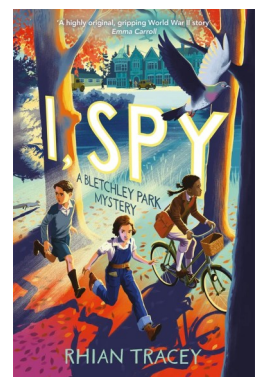
Oswin makes the most wonderful hero: he's brave, true to himself and loyal as a friend. He's somebody readers will delight in getting to know and will be rooting for with every chapter they read.

Publishing 30/1/25, magic combines with adventure in this epic tale where intricate world building means that readers are guaranteed to be transported to the icy Tundra and will be disappointed to leave - I really hope there'll be a book 2!



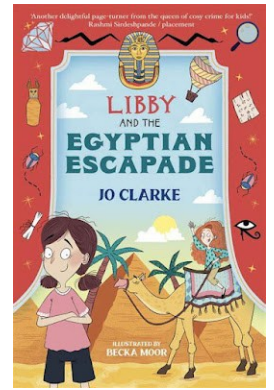
I Spy: A Bletchley Park Mystery - Rhian Tracey

I'm very grateful to Harry who lent me this book over Christmas as he thought I would love it. I have a weakness for middle grade WWII books so it became the first book of the holidays for me, and I have to say that Harry got it spot on! It's a brilliant read full of adventure, daring escapades and twists, all set in Bletchley Park. It's perfect for anybody who loves an adventure or who has an interest in WWII. It's also a book that is guaranteed to make you want to visit Bletchley Park (which I can also highly recommend). I went a few years ago and the place is utterly fascinating; the idea of so many brilliant people quietly playing the most amazing role in the war effort is mesmerising. Tracey's author note at the end is so true: it's the people who simply slipped back into society and kept their stories secret that have the most fascinating tales to tell. I now have the second book, *Hide And Seek*, on my shopping list!



Libby And The Egyptian Escapade - Jo Clarke

The travelling school have headed to Egypt and the trip is far from plain sailing! During a visit to a museum, Noah buys a canopic jar in the gift shop and, despite being initially thrilled, he bumps into somebody and his jar ends up with a crack in it, much to his disappointment. However, they carry on with their trip, thinking nothing of the encounter. However... things start going wrong and Miss Mousedale and Miss Khatun need to do everything in their power to keep their students safe, leading the kids to believe that they have unleashed a mummy's curse. It's up to Libby and her friends to get to the bottom of things before it's too late.



I have adored the Travelling School Mysteries series from the very first book and they're also incredibly popular in school too. It was with mixed emotions that I heard that **Libby And The Egyptian Escapade** was to be the final book in the series: I was excited for their next adventure but sad that this would be the last.

We see a different side to Libby in this book: she's worried about her mum and her father is on her mind. Too add to that, when things heat up, Libby is at odds with the idea of a curse and this causes friction between her and her friends. It's a complex situation and one that needs careful negotiation as they also brave the heat and the danger they find themselves in.

Once again, readers are treated to an epic adventure that excites and teases in equal measure. The plot is pacey and Becka Moore's illustrations perfectly enhance Jo's storytelling. **Libby And The Egyptian Escapade** is a fitting end to the series and, although I'm going to miss Libby and her friends, I'm pleased with the way things worked out.

Alex Neptune Dragon Champion - David Owen

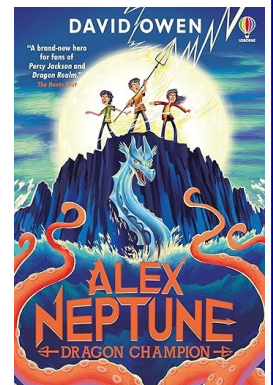
Brineblood is back and is intent on stealing all the sea magic in order to raise a monster from the bottom of the ocean. It's up to Alex, Zoey and Anil to stop Brineblood, but can they manage to defeat him in time?

Alex Neptune has been a series I have adored since the very first book and so it was a mix of emotions that I began reading **Dragon Champion** over the weekend: I was excited to get back to Alex and his friends to find out how it all would end, but I was also sad that this will be the last of the books. I was torn between savouring the book and gobbling it up - gobbling it up won as I couldn't put the book down! From the start, the action and adventure seeps from the book and Alex is tested in ways he's never been before when he loses his magic (this is not a spoiler as it's mentioned in the blurb). Not only does he have to come to terms with this at the worst possible moment, but he also has to deal with the fact that Zoey and Anil still have their powers. Luckily, the bond between them is stronger than ever and the trio make a great team. Alex has come so far in this series; from being terrified of the sea to helping keep the sea safe, it's wonderful to see how strong he's become and how passionate he is about keeping Haven Bay, its residents and his family safe.

Alongside the adventure, David maintains the subtle environmental messages through this book. They are messages that have been present through the previous books and are evident again in **Dragon Champion**, especially when the trio are descending into the depths of the ocean.

I can't finish this review without giving a nod to the host of animals who have befriended Alex along the way; in particular Kraken who often feels more human than octopus!

Alex Neptune Dragon Champion is an action-packed, rollercoaster of a ride and a fitting end to this brilliant series. I can't wait to see what David writes next.



This edition of Bonkers About Books was proof-read by:

Maddie and Harry



The Chronicles Of Whetherwhy - Anna James

'In Whetherwhy, everyone has magic inside but a rare few are Enchanters: people born with magic in their bones, who can wield all four seasons of magic.

When Juniper discovers she is an Enchanter, she must leave behind everything she knows to begin studying at the Thistledown Academy of Enchantment. Unwilling to be left behind, her twin brother, Rafferty, decides to follow, and takes up an apprenticeship at a nearby bookbinder.

As Juniper makes new friends and learns how to wield enchantment, Rafferty becomes involved with a mysterious secret society that meet after dark. As the magic of Whetherwhy starts to lose balance, and the school is attacked by dangerous monsters, the twins must work together to save all of Whetherwhy from those who wish enchantment for themselves.'

After the success of her Pages & Co series, Anna is back with the first book in a new series, **The Chronicles Of Whetherwhy**. It's a brilliant book, full of magic, love and adventure, and with characters that are a delight to get to know. Anna has created a wonderful world that readers will be able to immerse themselves in and won't want to leave. I'm now desperate for the second book to be published!



The Beast And The Bethany: The Final Feast - Jack Meggitt-Phillips

'Ebenezer Tweezer has spent the best part of 512 years doing whatever he wanted, but that all changed when he met Bethany – a rude, snotty-nosed prankster. Ebenezer has come to care for this strange, slightly smelly little scowler more than he has cared about anyone or anything before.

It's just as well, because when this story begins, Bethany needs a friend. She has just discovered that her parents Augustus and Gemima were dreadful criminals before they died in an only slightly more dreadful fire.

Except – it seems her father did NOT die at all. Augustus returns to Bethany's life, begging for Bethany's help to clear his name and show him how to live a life that is free from crime.

As the action barrels towards celebrations for Ebenezer's 513th birthday, Ebenezer, Miss Muddle and Geoffrey have to figure out Augustus' true motives for coming back into Bethany's life. Can they show Bethany the true meaning of family, before it's too late?'

What a delicious way to end The Beast And The Bethany series The Final Feast was. Dark and witty, tantalising and tasty, this was the most brilliant ending to an utterly brilliant series.

I've loved watching Bethany and Ebenezer get to know each other, and even the beast has grown on me! Family comes in all shapes and sizes, and this is one family I'm going to miss.



Midnight Treasure - Piers Torday

'Tibor is a werewolf, adopted by his guardian, a powerful vampir. He and his friend Roza are on the deadliest of quests, and one that will test their very immortality. And they're not the only ones hunting for the Midnight Treasure. Battling with bears, wrestling with vampirs and racing against the clock, Tibor and Roza must decide who to trust. And whether they will dare reveal the secrets ... of the Midnight Treasure.'

Vampirs, werewolves, a quest for treasure and an epic adventure all weave seamlessly in Piers Torday's new book. It's wonderfully dark and full of twists and brilliant characters, all set in a wonderfully created world (I loved the author's note about this).

