

Recommended Secondary Fiction Spring Term 2024



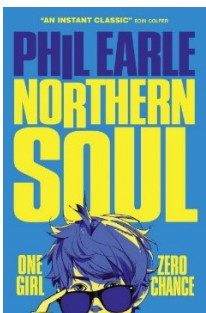
Davis, Ben

My Brilliant Plan to Fix Everything

Scholastic Pbk 7.99 9780702315787
Interest age: 10+ Reading age: 10+

Alex convinces his dad into thinking he has a writing sabbatical and works out a way to take over his dad's postal route, giving his dad time to write his book and become the successful, happy man he needs to be. Which he hopes will result in his mum and dad getting back together again. But Alex quickly learns postal work is a bit trickier than it might seem; there's the school bullies who throw his letters in the canal, an overly suspicious boss, and a lot of angry dogs to get through. Not to mention Willow, the girl on the canal who starts to help Alex but has a dark secret that might derail everything...As the weeks go by, Alex starts to appreciate how much his dad means to the people in the community. But the lies are piling up, and as Alex's ruse starts to fall apart, he needs his dad more than ever - successful author or not.

A very emotional and thoughtful story told from the point of view of Alex. Strong characterisation and development of relationships. Fundamental message is that life is forever changing, we can't live in the past but must adapt and grasp the opportunities that are offered.



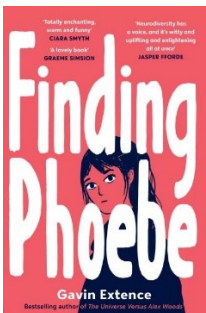
Earle, Phil

Northern Soul

Barrington Stoke Pbk 7.99 9781800902039
Interest age: 12+ Reading age: 8+

Marv is 14 and lives with his Dad. He's a keen footballer and has a great best mate. Then Carly Stonehouse, a new girl, arrives at school! For Marv it's love at first sight. He enlists help from an unusual source. The story is of Marv's painfully funny quest for love. Features his Dad who runs a music shop, and a music star from the past.

Wow! So much has been crammed into this 92 page story. It's funny, told with empathy and I loved it! Great Reading for Pleasure!

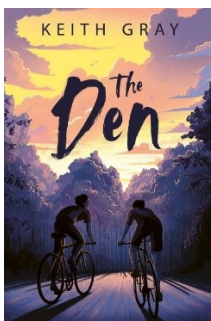


Extence, Gavin

Finding Phoebe

Andersen Pbk 8.99 9781839133312
Interest age: 14+ Reading age: 13+

15 year old Phoebe is autistic. She prefers to stay in her comfort zone: walking her dog, writing fantasy fiction, surviving school with as few incidents as possible. When her best (and only) friend rebels from her religious parents (her father is the islands vicar) and gets a secret boyfriend, Phoebe reluctantly agrees to cover for her. Before long, Phoebe's dealing with all sorts of things she'd rather not, like deception, fashionable jackets, and the bewildering politics of the school chess club. Breaking the rules has never been Phoebe's thing, but as events take a seriously unexpected turn, she realises there's more to her than she ever imagined . . .Written as a letter to her mother who has died of cancer, Phoebe often finds the world confusing. She is a wonderful, believable main character whose autism provides much humour and well as an understanding of her difficulties with some social interaction.The Author is writing from first hand experience as his daughter is also autistic. Rather beautiful and emotionally engaging story with many great characters.



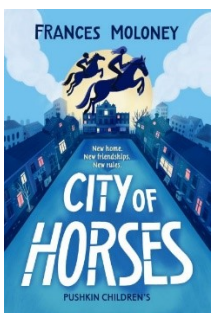
Gray, Keith

The Den

Barrington Stoke	Pbk	7.99	9781800901919
Interest age:	11+	Reading age:	8+

Marshall feels the need to escape because things are tough at home. Dad is in Marshall's words "a loser" and in constant pain with shattered dreams of being a rock star, Mum has left, and his sister is away at university. Rory, Marshall's best friend is happy it's the first day of the summer holidays. While they are out on their bikes they stumble across a forgotten underground bunker at the edge of the woods. They stay here overnight, telling their parents they are staying at each other's house. They love having a space of their own and plan to spend the summer here and continue to make their den. They both have very differing view of how to do this which stretches their friendship to the limit, with rivalry and betrayal.

A simple yet compelling and tensely written story about friendships, falling out and life as a teenager.



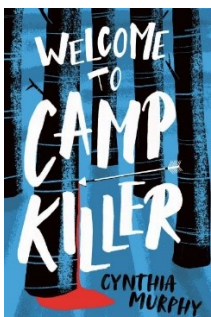
Moloney, Frances

City of Horses

Pushkin	Pbk	7.99	9781782693963
Interest age:	9+	Reading age:	9+

Thirteen-year-old Misty's life is turned upside down, when her dad loses his job, and they have to move to Redbridge. They have to start using a foodbank and money is tight. The new town brings surprises as on the estate where Misty now lives ponies run free. Here she meets Dylan, a mysterious local boy who loves horses. Misty is determined to keep up appearances and hide her new life from her friends at all costs, believing they will not want to be friends with her anymore and being embarrassed by their money situation. When the horses she has grown to love come under threat will she be able to help.

A sensitively written story about a girl and her Dad coming to terms with the financial crisis they find themselves in. Their new home has a strong sense of community.



Murphy, Cynthia

Welcome to Camp Killer

Barrington Stoke	Pbk	7.99	9781800902282
Interest age:	13+	Reading age:	8+

A chilling 121 page story. When an American-style residential camp is set up in the grounds of an English stately home, the teenage camp counsellors are looking forward to a fun summer of activities. However, things don't feel quite right at Camp Miller, from the outset. Rumours circulate of a tragedy that took place in the grounds and there are unexplained sightings of a ghostly presence. Then the incidents begin - a near-drowning out on the lake, a fatal fall from a cliff-face... are these tragic accidents or is there something more sinister going on? One for those who like horror, thrillers and mystery.



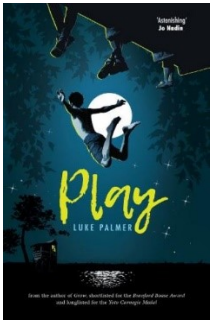
Nabi, Zohra

The Kingdom Over the Sea

Simon & Schuster	Pbk	7.99	9781398517707
Interest age:	9+	Reading age:	9+

When Yara's mother passes away, she leaves behind a letter and a strange set of instructions. Yara must travel to a place that is not on any map - Zehaira, a world of sorcerers, alchemists and simmering magic. But Zehaira is not the land it used to be. The practice of magic has been outlawed, the Sultan's alchemists are plotting a sinister scheme and the answers Yara is searching for seem to be out of reach. Yara must summon all of her courage to discover the truth about her mother's past and her own identity...and to find her place in this magical new world.

A very good fantasy, adventure story that keeps you hooked throughout. Great setting and world building with a brave and determined main character. Good for reading for pleasure. A debut novel which is set for a sequel.



Palmer, Luke

Play

Firefly Press Pbk 8.99 9781915444318
Interest age: 14+ Reading age: 12+

Matthew slips into his imagination, Luc pushes his body to the limit, and Johnny ... well who knows what Johnny's up to. But when Mark starts running errands for his older brother's mysterious associate, he thinks he's found the best game of all. There's money in his pocket and his friends have started looking at him differently. Then Mark breaks a rule, and quickly realises that the penalties in this game far outweigh the prizes. Can they all make it to the finish line before someone loses more than just face?

Compelling, gritty story told through multiple narratives that follow the lives of four boys. Each teenager has their own very real issues which is portrayed in an authentic and engaging way, along with their friendships with each other and the theme of masculinity. There is a tragic ending which heightens the emphasis of being truthful about the featured situations. This would particularly appeal to boys.



Randall- Jones, Emily

The Witch Stone Ghosts

Chicken House Pbk 7.99 9781915026101
Interest age: 10+ Reading age: 10+

Autumn has seen dead people since she was a very small child. This makes her feel weird and alone, and her best friend is a long dead chimney sweep. But when her father drowns in unusual circumstances his is the one ghost that doesn't appear. Then, a clause in his will sends her and her mother to the remote isle of Imber off the Cornish coast. Autumn soon begins to uncover Imber's dark past and mystery follows mystery until Autumn finds she is the only one who can set things right.

Excellent dark gothic tale from a debut author. The issues of grief and loss are sensitively portrayed, and Autumn is a well-drawn central character that readers will root for. The world building is very good, and the brooding sense of threat and doom builds slowly and surely through the narrative, all of which makes it a compelling leisure read. Gripping to the last page. Well worth promoting.



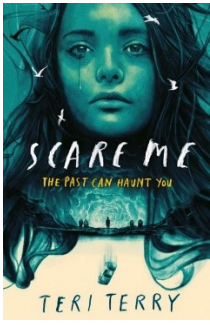
Steven, Laura

Every Exquisite Thing

Electric Monkey Pbk 8.99 9780008627355
Interest age: 14+ Reading age: 12+

Penny Paxton is determined to be a star and worshipped and adored like her superstar mother. From an early age she has aimed for a place at the elite Dorian Drama School. So when her new mentor offers her an opportunity she cannot refuse, to have a portrait painted by a mysterious artist who can grant immortal beauty to all his subjects, Penny happily follows in the footsteps of Dorian's most glittering alumni, knowing that stardom is sure to soon be hers. But when her trusted mentor is found murdered, Penny realises she's made a terrible mistake. But can she and her friends stop the murders, and who will be next?

Dark and brooding exploration of beauty and stardom. Very good gothic tale with superb world building, and very well drawn believable central characters. Mental health issues are sensitively portrayed, as are the issues surrounding society's pressure on young women to conform to ideas of beauty. Overall an excellent leisure read.



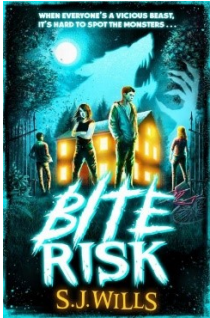
Terry, Teri

Scare Me

Hachette Pbk 7.99 9781444962727
Interest age: 14 Reading age: 14+

Sixteen-year-old Liv has the ghost of her twin sister, Molly, who died at birth, with her constantly. It's a part of her that no one else can see or hear. Liv meets a boy called Echo, who is searching for the truth about his mother's death, and despite Molly's concerns, Liv is drawn to him. Echo believes that if he can just speak to his mother's ghost, he will learn the truth about what happened to her and be able to move on with his life after the car accident. He believes the way to reach her is through fear: to scare himself enough to lift the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead. Echo and Liv begin increasingly dangerous games that tests their greatest fears: but how far is Echo willing to go to uncover the truth?

A tense supernatural thriller. Compelling writing told from Liv and Echo's point of view.



Wills, S.J

Bite Risk

Simon & Schuster Pbk 7.99 9781398520943
Interest age: 12+ Reading age: 11+

In a town where all the adults turn into werewolves once a month, three teenagers discover the sinister reality behind this change and set out to save their town. When the full moon comes out, almost all the adults turn into werewolves, and it's up to the young people to protect themselves from danger.

A very pacey thriller, with conspiracies, character tensions and action. Intriguing with unexpected twists and has the feel of a screen play which will appeal to young adults.

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