

Recommended Secondary Books

Autumn Term 2026



Desamours, Chanelle

Bloomsbury

Interest age: 14+

They Call Her Regret

Pbk

£8.99

9781526675019

Reading age: 12+

Halloween is Simone's favourite holiday. Every year she throws an epic, spooky party, and this time she's hosting it beside Yearwood Lake, where legend has it, a ghost named Regret makes deadly deals with trespassers. Simone isn't worried about all of that - she just wants to have fun, scare her friends and distract herself from her own dark secrets. But in the dead of the night, things begin to go very wrong. When her best friend's life is in danger and Regret appears, Simone must make a choice. How far will she go to save her friend? Dark and tense horror thriller with plenty of twists and turns in the plot, and scenes of violence and murder. The flawed characters are very believable and the ending satisfying, although not too neat and tidy. Good solid title for horror fans.



Harwood, JJA

Magpie

Interest age: 14+

A Steep and Savage Path

Pbk

£9.99

9780008518004

Reading age: 12+

Irina is about to be married to a dead man. She is the willing village sacrifice for the Wedding of the Dead: a desperate ritual designed to lay the hungry vampire that has been terrorising her Transylvanian village to rest. Irina's beloved sister's soul is trapped in the land of the dead. If Irina can retrieve it, she could bring her back, but Irina would need a guide, one who can walk between the living and the dead. Irina strikes up a deal with her new husband - if he agrees to get her safely there and back again, then he can drink her blood as much as he wants. An alternative vampire tale with a quest element, and a touch of romance. The main character is determined and engaging. Overall good leisure read.



Kaufman, Amie

Hot key

Interest age: 14+

Red Star Rebels

Pbk

£8.99

9781471420962

Reading age: 12+

In the year 2067, and the Graves family has transformed Mars from a lifeless rock into a chaotic patchwork of settlements, with a United Nations base at the centre. But, when there is a base evacuation to purge a deadly toxin, two unregistered teenagers find themselves stranded. Hunter Graves has arrived unannounced to try and renew contact with his estranged mother and sister. Meanwhile, Cleo has stowed away as an economic refugee from Earth. These unlikely partners in adversity soon find themselves in a race against time as there is no toxin, but a mercenary gang planning to blow up the base entirely in the next eight hours. Gripping SciFi adventure with plenty of jeopardy and plot twists that keep the reader's attention. The dual narrative effectively helps to make the characters relatable. Overall very enjoyable high octane leisure read.



Meyer, Marissa & Moss, Tamara

Hot key

Interest age: 14+

The Escape Game

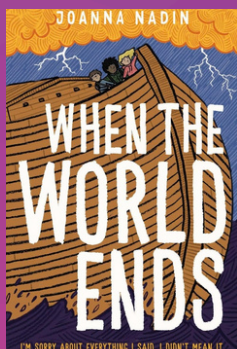
Pbk

£8.99

9781471419638

Reading age: 12+

Six months ago, the hugely popular reality TV show The Escape Game ended in horror when contestant Alicia Angelos was found murdered on set. Now season five is underway, and new contestants are ready to put their skills to the test, including Alicia's sister Sierra. As the contestants progress through the rounds, they begin uncovering clues that hint at the identity of Alicia's true killer. Can they solve the mystery and make it out alive? Very appealing plot setting and good characterisation. Slows a little in the middle, but very satisfying ending. Set for a sequel.



Nadin, Joanna

Uclan

Interest age: 11+

When the World Ends

Pbk

£7.99

9781916747951

Reading age: 11+

One day the unthinkable happens – Europe suddenly suffers a catastrophic flood. Paris and Otis are in London when the flood comes, staying in her hippie aunt's commune. When the flood hits, they all sail away in an ark that the commune have built. Meanwhile, Gaston and his friend Honey are evacuated from their tower block and moved to a camp for the displaced. Both sets of children soon leave the adults, until eventually they meet up and unite, finding unexpected family connections. It is a bleak and horrifying nightmare that all the children find themselves in, but the character development is excellent and there is surprising humour and resilience shown in the narrative.



Oppel, Kenneth

Guppy Books

Interest age: 14+

Best of all Worlds

Pbk

£8.99

9781916558434

Reading age: 12+

When Xavier wakes up on the first morning of a family weekend away with his pregnant stepmum and dad, he doesn't recognise where they are. Somehow they have been transported inside an impenetrable dome where the family have been provided with farm animals and crops to help them survive. There is no trace of their mysterious captors and no way to escape. Then three years later, suddenly another family appears, one with vastly contrasting political ideologies and priorities. In the confines of this strange world, tensions begin to rise between the two families with devastating and tragic consequences. Compelling and tightly woven plot with a very engaging well-drawn central character in Xavier. A number of themes run through the plot such as sustainable living, blended families and conspiracy theories. The narrative feels very pacy, which is helped by short chapters. Overall a teen read with great depth.



Palmer, Luke

Barrington Stoke

Interest age: 11+

Big Words

Pbk

£7.99

9780008789848

Reading age: 8+

Sam and his mates have a special hangout – The Kiln. They're forbidden to tell anyone about it. Whatever the game, the biggest goes first. The rest always follow. No complaints. No backing down. So when Sam comes up with a plan to go sledging on the rust-ridden bonnet of a rotting car, he goes first. To show the others how it's done. But then, disaster strikes! Will their friendship survive the wreckage that follows, or is it time for the rules to be changed? Gritty plot with largely likeable characters and strong lessons to be learnt.

**Prince, Tyra**

Scholastic

Interest age: 14+

Love in the Fast Lane

Pbk

£8.99

9780702345708

Reading age: 12+

Cody has the next few years of her life all planned out, that is until she is headhunted for an F1 motor racing team job in Australia. She arrives fresh from London to find two new team mates with a fierce racing rivalry with each other. Then to makes matters worse, both team mates start falling for Cody. But the team have other more pressing problems, as the lead driver of their main rival team is set on winning, no matter what the cost. An unusual romance set in the world of Formula One. Not quite enough Formula One detail for some readers, but quite enough for some others! Manages to avoid female stereotypes, and keeps a pacy narrative with an added element of mystery. Good safe read.

**Solomons, David**

Piccadilly

Interest age: 11+

The Ministry of Manners

Pbk

£7.99

9781835873175

Reading age: 11+

Alfie and Margot Hawthorne have grown up under the Ministry of Manners, where politeness isn't a choice, it's the law. Alfie knows how to stay out of trouble, but Margot has never been one for quiet obedience. When the Ministry takes Margot, everything changes. Inside the Manners Retreat, she fights to stay herself in a place built to erase her. Meanwhile, Alfie falls in with the Unsilenced who still dare to speak. But the Ministry has plans of its own. And if they succeed, rebellion won't just be punished. It'll be impossible. With echoes of "1984", this is a dystopian narrative for a modern readership dealing with themes of state control of freedom of speech and standing up for what you believe in. Exciting read with good characterisation.