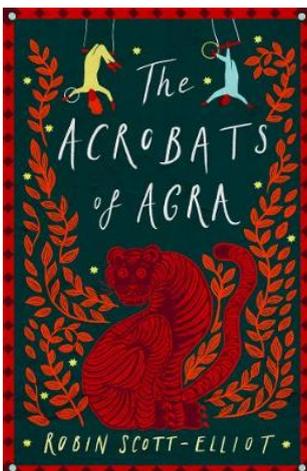


## Another Twist in the Tale

**Author:** Catherine Bruton **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/11/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

I had better declare, from the very start, that I am an avid reader of Charles Dickens – and can find books that purport to be continuations or reflections on his work quite unsatisfactory. But right from Chapter One this fascinating flight of fancy had me gripped. The language feels authentic, the character names, if not originally Dickensian, fit and would be equally at home in a Dickens novel. The invention of a twin sister for Oliver shows just how very unequal Victorian society was for girls – to the point that the healthy girl child was left on the rubbish heap, whilst the sickly Oliver was raised in the workhouse – as boys had more economic value! This really is an authentic tale of Victorian society – and particularly the rather grubbier elements of that society. Dickens' London leaps off the page – with all its smells, sounds and rather unpleasant characters (as well as a couple of wonderful, welcoming and delightful folk too!) Catherine Bruton is a teacher who regularly teaches Dickens in her classes, so she appreciates that he can be hard to access for today's students – this book is intended as a welcoming way into what can seem to be a very difficult cannon of literature. Bruton proves herself to be a great storyteller, using vibrant language, powerful descriptions and a wonderful sense of the hardships of fighting for the underdog in society. I hope many of today's students will find this a great way into reading Dickens – especially in this year – the 150th anniversary of Dickens death.



## The Acrobats of Agra

**Author:** Robin Scott-Elliott **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 26/10/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

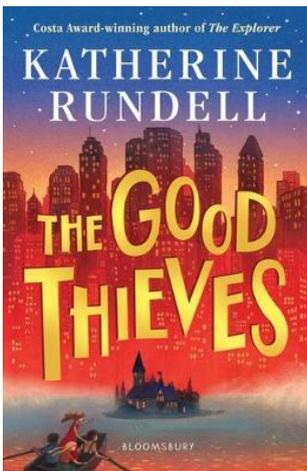
Three children, and a tiger, must make their way alone across India while the chaos and violence of the 1857 Rebellion rages around them. The three are very different: Bea is the orphaned child of English parents, desperately searching for her baby brother; Jacques is French, formerly part of a circus double act, and accompanied by another circus performer, tiger Tonton; and Pingali, third orphan, formerly a servant to the Governor of Agra, now out on his own. They meet all kinds of dangers but see them through in the spirit of Jacques' favourites, the three Musketeers, 'all for one, and one for all'. The three – four if you include Tonton – are great characters and their adventures are always credible, no matter the scale of the dangers they face. Robin Scott-Elliott does a great job of depicting the landscape of India and the political background to their adventures too. All in all, this is up there with a trip to the circus for thrills and breath-taking excitements.



## The Tigers in the Tower

**Author:** Julia Golding **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 18/09/2020  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

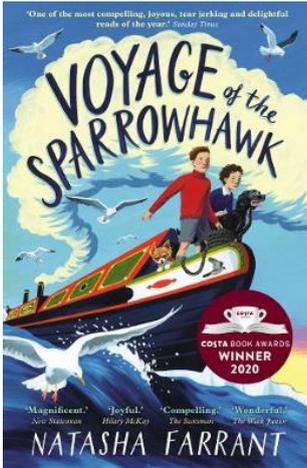
Julia Golding is a gifted storyteller and her new book has everything you want in an adventure. Sahara Clive arrives in London an orphan, friendless except for the two tigers her family were escorting from India to their new home in the Tower's famous menagerie. Her English father and Indian mother died on the journey and it is quickly assumed she would be an embarrassment to her English family. It's the nineteenth century, Wellington is Prime Minister (and makes some cameo appearances) and Sahira is placed in an orphanage run with the casual cruelty familiar from other famous orphan stories. Sahira though is as fierce and proud as her tigers and not to be pushed around. Sustained by courage and poetry and with the help of some good people and more than a few animals, she overcomes prejudice, greed and ignorance to secure a new home. Elegantly told, this is a real box of delights, an adventure that is exciting, heartwarming, moving and inspiring. One to recommend to fans of *A Little Princess* or modern historical adventures by Jacqueline Wilson or Robin Stevens.



## The Good Thieves

**Author:** Katherine Rundell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

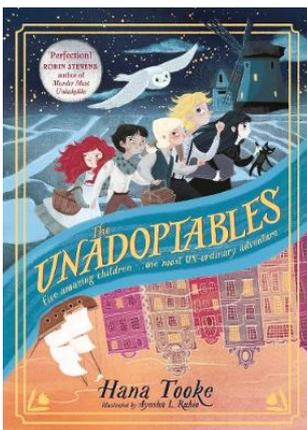
**Longlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021** After stories set in jungles and on the Russian steppes, Katherine Rundell has chosen the streets of Prohibition New York for her latest, but it's just as full of the sense of peril and freedom from rules that characterises her earlier books, with central character Vita facing possibly the greatest danger yet. Newly arrived from England, Vita is determined to win back her family home, the fabulous Hudson Castle, acquired from her grandfather in a distinctly shady way by mob boss Victor Sorrotore. This will involve breaking and entering – and legend has it the castle is impregnable – and safe cracking, but Vita is fortunate enough to have as associates an extremely talented pickpocket and two fearless young circus performers. Rundell revels in setting her characters these kind of challenges and also in exploring the kind of physical and mental daring required to undertake them. She likes to equip her protagonists with right and with love too, the latter proves a formidable weapon for Vita. Beautifully written and full of scenes that both thrill and enchant, *The Good Thieves* is Rundell at her classiest. Readers who are captivated by Katherine Rundell's wild children will also enjoy *Stop the Train* or *The Middle of Nowhere* by Geraldine McCaughrean, or books by classic children's writers such as Joan Aiken and Eva Ibbotson.



## Voyage of the Sparrowhawk

**Author:** Natasha Farrant **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

**Winner of the Costa Children's Book Award 2020 | September 2020 Book of the Month** I challenge any reader, young or old, not to want to devour this book in one delicious sitting. Once started upon the story of Lotti and Ben, two orphans living in the aftermath of World War 1 and who could not be more different in temperament or background, it is impossible to put down. Initially and understandably wary, they gradually become each other's best friend and staunch allies in their respective quests for family and a safe haven for an increasing number of dogs. Their odyssey takes them, in the faithful old narrowboat which has been Ben's home, across the stormy channel to France, with a vengeful, deceitful uncle and a steadfast policeman hot on their heels. But there is nothing far fetched in their survival, they do need and even eventually welcome the support of friendly adults on both sides of the channel and they learn to work together and to counteract each other's failings. They never lose hope in even the darkest moments and neither does the reader, despite some heart-stopping tension. These are characters who will dwell long in your memory and indeed leave you wanting to know more, including about some of the fascinating minor characters. The authentic period detail and dialogue captures the spirit of an age where children may seem, to a modern audience, to have a thrilling level of agency and independence, but only because they are largely ignored or neglected rather than protected by society. A standalone, middle grade adventure that is as well written as this, is pure gold dust with which to captivate young readers and a perfect class read. But be warned, they may not want to go home!

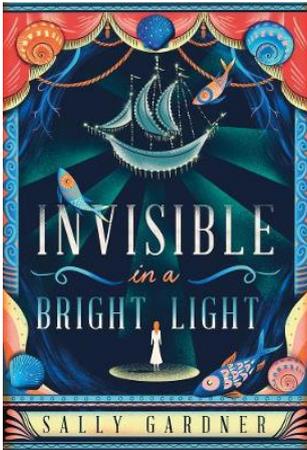


## The Unadoptables

**Author:** Hana Tooke **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 23/07/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

**A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month August 2020 | August 2020 Debut/Book of the Month** Warm-hearted and mysterious The Unadoptables is a wonderfully entertaining adventure with a cast of fascinating characters set in a brilliantly evoked old-world Amsterdam and the surrounding countryside. Following the clues from the only possessions she was left with when she was abandoned as a baby and guided by her 'Book of Theories', the imaginative Milou leads her four friends – the least adoptable children in the very horrible Little Tulip Orphanage – to her family home where she is sure she will find her parents. Travelling through a freezing night the children arrive at their destination. But there is not the welcome they had expected. Where are Milou's parents? And what is the mystery they need to solve? The creative ways in which the five children manage first to escape from the evil clutches of their matron and her evil accomplice Rotman and then to make a new life for themselves bamboozling neighbours and

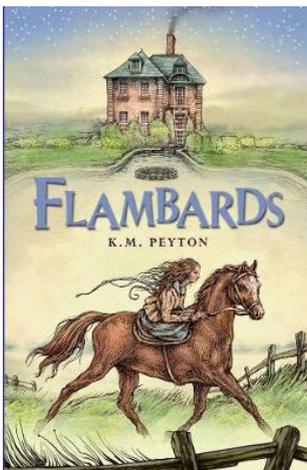
unravelling the mystery is vivid and captivating.



## Invisible in a Bright Light

**Author:** Sally Gardner **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 14/11/2019  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

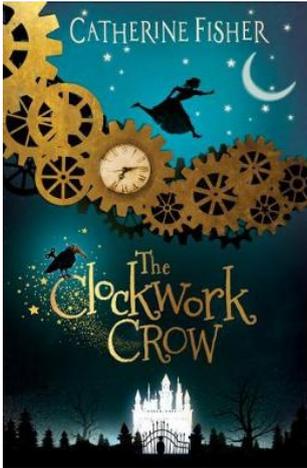
**Longlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021** What a majestic conjuration of Middle Grade magic this is – think Alice in Wonderland in a dazzling theatrical setting. The year is 1870 and Celeste is a lowly orphan who runs errands in a Royal Opera House. She wakes one day haunted by a dream in which an enigmatic emerald suited-man spoke ominously of her involvement in a game called the Reckoning. Celeste recalls a shipwreck from the dream too and then, back in what appears to be real life, the opera house’s huge galleon-shaped crystal chandelier splinters into a thousand pieces and everyone thinks Celeste is someone else. The opening in which she cascades into the story world is as exhilaratingly bewildering as Alice’s entry to Wonderland: “Down she falls. Oh, how the world has tumbled.” Why does everyone think she’s a gifted dancer called Maria? Why can’t everyone see her? And so an intricate, suspenseful tale of identity plays out as Celeste struggles to untangle the truth, with dreadfully high stakes. Gardner’s cast of larger-than-life characters is vibrantly drawn, and special mention must be made of vindictive diva Madame Sabina and her awful daughter, and Celeste’s ally Viggo. But the true star of this production is - of course - Celeste, whose resolve is adeptly expressed through the thoughts of the mysterious man in the emerald suit: “Seldom has he met a child with strength enough to move on to the final part of the game.” This is a dream of a book for confident readers who relish fiction that ignites their imaginations and delight in flexing their cerebral muscles.



## Flambards

**Author:** K. M. Peyton **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/09/2019  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

Christina is sent to stay with her terrifying uncle and her cousins at Flambards, a rambling house in the country where riding and hunting are the most prized activities. Everything about the countryside - and her relatives - is new to Christina but she soon finds she loves riding. And, in different ways, she begins to love her cousins. The first volume in a hugely romantic trilogy.

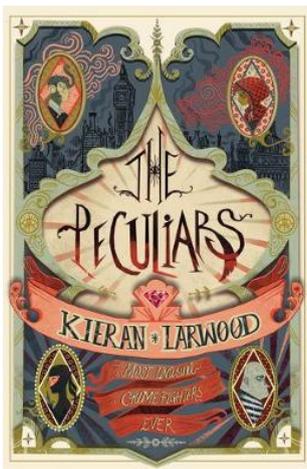


## The Clockwork Crow

**Author:** Catherine Fisher **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/10/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

**January 2019 Book of the Month | Shortlisted for the Blue Peter Book Awards 2019, Best Story category** Beautifully written in prose that sparkles like the snow that provides its backdrop, this fantasy novel is practically perfect in every way. Young orphan Seren (it's Welsh for star) is travelling alone through a winter's night to her godfather and his family. They live in a big house in the heart of Wales and though she's never met them before, a lifelong reader, she knows how this sort of story should go. Waiting for her next train on a freezing platform she meets a stranger. He's flustered, clearly frightened of something, and leaves a bulky parcel in her care before disappearing. When she finally arrives at her destination, to find that her godfather, his wife and young son Tomos are absent, and that there's only a skeleton staff of servants to meet her, she assembles the contents of the parcel to stave off boredom and loneliness. It's a clockwork crow – an awkward, clumsy-looking thing, yet magic: wound up it comes alive. Psammead-grumpy the crow becomes her ally and together they embark on a dangerous adventure to find out what has happened to Tomos, who disappeared mysteriously one frosty night a year ago. The story is rich with the sense of old magic and fairytale, yet is a totally original and particular bit of storytelling. At a time when books often sprawl over 300 pages or more, it is wonderfully concise too, and even better for that. A delight, and thankfully there should be more adventures for Seren to come. This review originally appeared in Books for Keeps.

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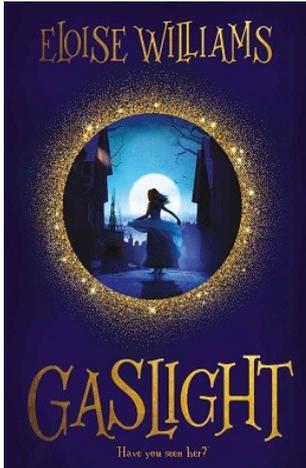


## The Peculiar

**Author:** Kieran Larwood **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/01/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

By night, the Peculiar is a travelling sideshow, but during the day Sheba, Sister Moon and Monkey Boy put their unusual talents to use, solving the crimes no one else cares about. For the stolen children of London's poorest, the Peculiar is their only hope.

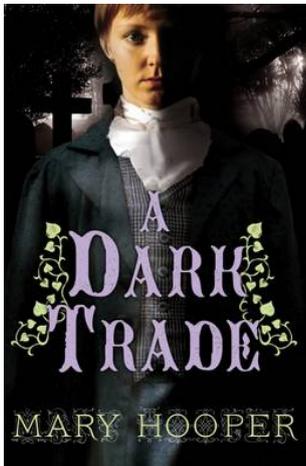
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## Gaslight

**Author:** Eloise Williams **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/04/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

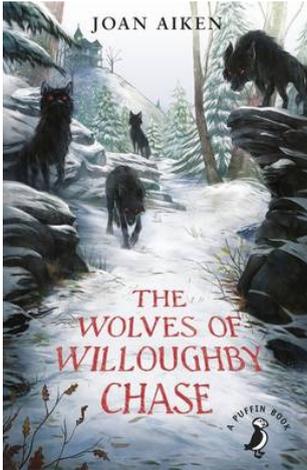
Nansi is fourteen and trying to survive as an orphan in Victorian Wales, Cardiff to be precise. She gets a home and protection of some sort from 'Pernicious' Sid, for working at his theatre, and thieving for him on the side. But all certainty in her life vanishes when she discovers that Sid is keeping secrets from her, secrets concerning her own mother. Can Nansi unravel the mystery and find her missing mother? Dark and often scary this is an excellent piece of melodrama for younger readers, setting and characters vividly described. Recommended for fans of Philip Pullman's Sally Lockhart books, and you could follow up with some Dickens too.



## A Dark Trade

**Author:** Mary Hooper **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 15/01/2016 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

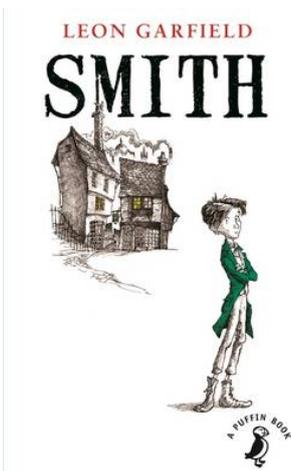
**Interest Age Teen Reading Age 8** Mary Hooper tells a thrilling tale of secrets, deception and escapes set in Victorian England, a period she writes about with passion and precision. Life for poor young women in the century was extremely limited. Georgina is employed as housemaid to a wealthy family, but finds it as hard as life in the orphanage she recently left. A bright young woman, she runs away disguised as a boy, actions that open up new opportunities. Employed by a clothes seller who has his own secrets, much darker than hers, it's not long before she must escape again, this time in the company of another clever young woman. Tautly plotted, this gothic tale with its determined young heroines will fascinate teenage girls from the first page to the last. Particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant and dyslexic readers aged 12+



## The Wolves of Willoughby Chase

**Author:** Joan Aiken **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/07/2015  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

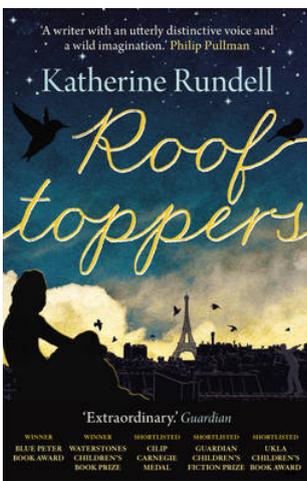
A wonderful adventure as two children flee from the tyranny of their wicked guardian and bravely set out on the road to London. Miss Slighcarp is as chilling as her words sound and she is now in charge of Bonnie and Sylvia. How will they ever escape from her clutches? It would be hard in any circumstances but it is especially hard since the snow lies thick on the ground around Willoughby Chase and the wolves are snapping closer and closer. It's scary enough, but Bonnie and Sylvia are a determined pair and nothing, not even the wolves are going to stop them from getting back to London and Aunt Jane. Helped on their way by Simon and the flock of geese he is taking to market, Bonnie and Sylvia's journey is a thrilling adventure – and not for the faint hearted!



## Smith

**Author:** Leon Garfield **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/07/2014  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

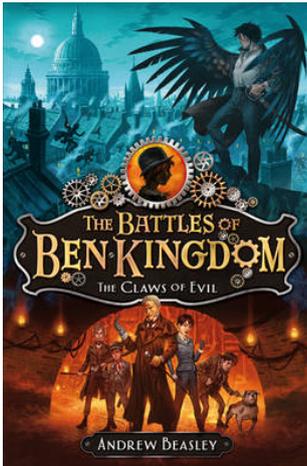
Smith, though only 12, is an accomplished pickpocket, saved from the gallows by his own stealth and speed. One dark evening he witnesses a murder, a stabbing, and finds a document belonging to the dead man, which he feels must be valuable. The only problem is, Smith can't read.



## Roof-toppers

**Author:** Katherine Rundell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/03/2013  
**Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

Overall Winner and Winner of Fiction for 5-12's category 2014  
Waterstones Children's Book Prize Winner of the Blue Peter Book of the Year 2014 - Best Story Shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal 2014  
Abandoned as a baby, Sophie's determination to find her missing mother leads her to Paris where she meets Matteo, living off the local pigeons, washing in rainwater and travelling unseen across the great roofscape of Paris. With Matteo's help Sophie learns the tricks of roof-top living and also how to break into buildings and bamboozle officials – exactly the trick she needs to find her mother. An exciting, tender and original adventure. Shortlisted for the 2013 Guardian Children's Fiction Prize



## The Claws of Evil

**Author:** Andrew Beasley **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/03/2013 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

**One of our Books of the Year 2013 & March 2013 Book of the Month - Shortlisted for the Leeds Book Awards 2014 9-11 category.** An action-packed plot drives this exciting thriller set in the dark and dangerous streets of Victorian London. Ben Kingdom is just a small street urchin but, when he becomes the owner of a mysterious coin, he finds himself caught up in a battle between two long standing enemy forces, the Watchers and the Legions. Ben will have to choose which side to go with – and it won't be an easy choice to make.

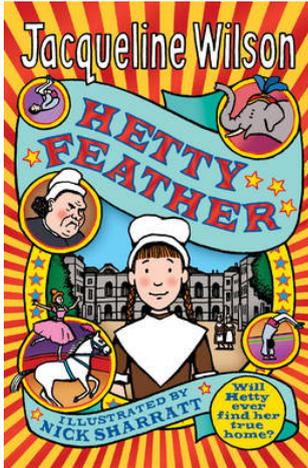
----- In addition to our Lovereading expert opinion for The Claws of Evil a small number of children were lucky enough to be invited to review this title. Here's a taster... 'I really enjoyed this book because the author, Andrew Beasley, has combined mystery and war into one epic, mind-blowing read..'.... Scroll down to read more reviews...



## Twelve Minutes to Midnight

**Author:** Christopher Edge **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/02/2012 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

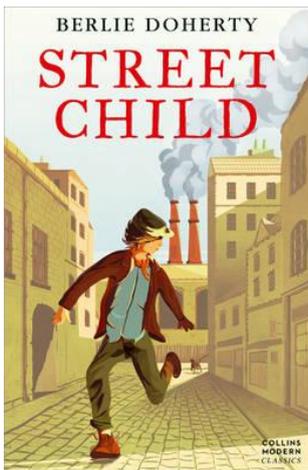
**December 2012 Book of the Month** A thriller with a fast-paced cinematic style, Twelve Minutes to Midnight is an electrifying story from an exciting new author featuring a feisty 13 year old heroine. It is the first book in a must-read series for fans of Philip Reeve, Marcus Sedgwick and Anthony Horowitz.



## Hetty Feather

**Author:** Jacqueline Wilson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/08/2010 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

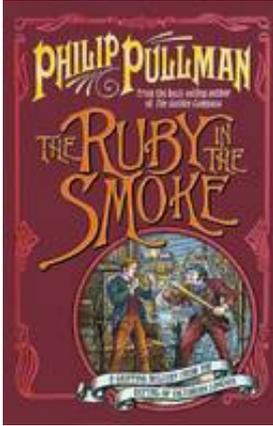
Best-selling author Jacqueline Wilson shows that her story-telling touch is just as sure when she turns to history as it is in her contemporary novels. As usual, Jacqueline Wilson uses a first person story telling voice as Foundling Hetty Feather tells the story of her life from the moment of her abandonment as a baby to the adventures she has growing up in the famous Foundling Hospital in Coram Fields and finally finding a new life for herself. A gripping story in its own right, Hetty Feather also brings the past with its mixture of extreme poverty and hardship and great kindness vividly to life. Books in The World of Hetty Feather Series: 1. Hetty Feather 2. Sapphire Battersea 3. Emerald Star 4. Diamond 5. Little Stars 6. Clover Moon 7. Hetty Feather's Christmas 8. Rose Rivers 9. Dancing The Charleston If they like Hetty Feather they'll love Raymie Nightingale!



## Street Child

**Author:** Berlie Doherty **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/09/2009 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

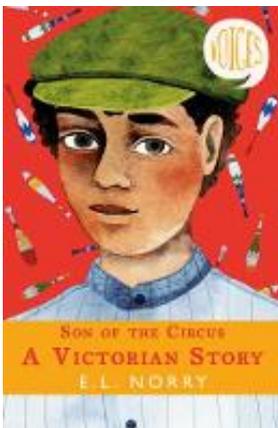
Julia Eccleshare's Pick of the Month June 2016 Twice the winner of the prestigious Carnegie Medal, here Berlie Doherty movingly captures the life of an orphan in Victorian London. Based on the true accounts of children whose lives led the famous philanthropist Dr Barnardo to set up his homes for children without families, Street Child is the troubling story of Jim Jarvis who is just a little boy when his mother dies leaving him all alone. Initially rounded up and taken to the workhouse, Jim soon escapes and finds a way of survival – and some friends. But surviving as a child in such a tough environment is tough. How can Jim stay out of trouble and be safe? Berlie Doherty makes the past come vividly alive in this story that will encourage all young readers to fight injustice. ~ Julia Eccleshare Click here to download a specially produced teachers resource to help children get the most from this Collins Modern Classic title.



## Ruby in the Smoke

**Author:** Philip Pullman **Format:** Paperback / softback **Release Date:** 01/06/2004

A gripping mystery from an incredibly talented author. Sally Lockhart is living quietly in London with her obnoxious cousin, after her father's tragic death at sea. But the peaceful, if hateful, existence is about to end. Sally's father left her a message, and deciphering it will lead her into a world of danger and excitement such as she's never known...



## Son of the Circus - A Victorian Story

**Author:** E. L. Norry **Format:** Paperback / softback **Release Date:** 05/09/2019

Voices: Son of the Circus - A Victorian Story explores the life of a young mixed-race boy, Ted, living with his mother and poorly older brother in Victorian Bradfield. When a stranger, a man the boys don't remember ever seeing before, appears in their kitchen, Ted is hit with a shocking revelation. This man is his father - the first black circus owner in Victorian Britain, Pablo Fanque. Before Ted can recover from his shock, he is sent away with Pablo to learn the tricks of the circus trade. Pablo is determined for Ted to follow in his footsteps. But can Ted adapt to this terrifying new life amongst strangers? And will he ever see his beloved mother and brother again? Fresh new voice, E. L. Norry, continues this exciting new series that explores authentic and moving accounts of the life of British immigrants throughout history. Norry shows us a fascinating and rarely seen world that's sure to hook young readers. \*\*\* 'E. L. Norry's Son of the Circus is perfect for children with an itch to run away to spit and sawdust and rearing horses, in a fictionalised account of Pablo Fanque, the first black circus proprietor in Victorian Britain. A joy of a book: exciting and brilliantly vivid.' -Katherine Rundell ABOUT THE SERIES: VOICES A thrilling series showcasing some of the UK's finest writers for young people Voices reflects the authentic, unsung stories of our past Each shows that, even in times of great upheaval, a myriad of people have arrived on this island and made a home for themselves - from Roman times to the present day Perfect for teaching children about inclusivity and diversity.