



The days are getting shorter, the mornings feel a little colder, and we are heading into that part of the year where cosy evenings and small moments feel extra special. Autumn 2 is often a busy half term, yet it is also full of chances to pause, talk and share time together at home.

This newsletter highlights Empathy Action Month and the way stories can help us understand and share the feelings of others. November also brings Non-fiction November, a lovely opportunity to explore books full of real-life stories, fascinating facts and discoveries.

We will share some gentle ideas for marking Remembrance Day through books, as well as ways to enjoy the fun of World Nursery Rhyme Week. World Kindness Day also falls in November, reminding us of the many simple ways we can spread kindness together. And as the colder days set in, we'll finish with ideas for winter reading, because there really is something special about snuggling up with a story when the weather outside feels grey.

Happy reading and exploring!

Please note that the following texts are suitable from the age group stated, but please do research the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child.



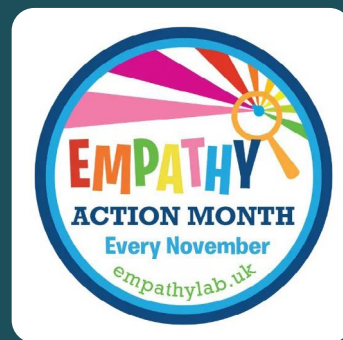
EMPATHY ACTION MONTH

Empathy Action Month, which runs throughout November, is a chance to encourage ourselves and each other to put empathy into action. It doesn't have to be a big thing. Sometimes it's just listening to someone who is upset and letting them know they aren't alone. It's also about trying to imagine how other people might feel in different situations.

Stories are a lovely way to do this because they let us step into worlds we may never have experienced ourselves. When you're reading together, you might like to stop and ask, "How do you think that character felt then?" or "What would you have done in that situation?"

Ways to explore empathy at home

- Story talk: When reading together, pause and ask, "How do you think they felt?" or "What would you do if that was you?"
- Kindness notes: Write or draw a small note to cheer someone up, such as "I hope you have a happy day."
- Helping hands: Encourage children to notice when someone needs help at home, like carrying something heavy or tidying up together.
- Imagining games: Ask "What if?" questions, like "What if your friend forgot their toy? How would they feel?"



RECOMMENDED READS TO GET YOU STARTED:

APRIL'S GARDEN

ISLA MCGUCKIN (AUTHOR), CATALINA ECHEVERRI (ILLUSTRATOR)

April and her mother have been housed in temporary accommodation. Promised a brighter future by her mother, April finds her life there to be filled with things that are old, broken and impersonal. She longs for her own things and for some beauty in her life but experiences only frustration and disappointment until one day she plants some seeds...

A touching story about a young girl coming to terms with a change in circumstances, ideal for introducing children to the lives of those who are, for whatever reason, displaced or in need of security.

With charming illustrations by highly regarded illustrator, Catalina Echeverri, this story inspires a love of nature and gardening in children, highlighting gardening as a mindful activity helping children to deal with feelings of anger or frustration.



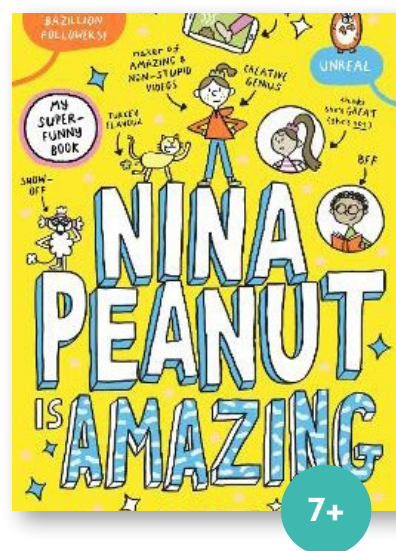
NINA PEANUT

SARAH BOWIE (AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR)

Nina Peanut - super-star in the making, frozen pizza chef, creative genius, owner of the world's stinkiest cat. The funniest new friend for all kids, everywhere.

Nina Peanut creates amazing videos - so why is it only her nan and best friend Brian who watch them? Surely everyone should be interested in her SERIOUS and NOT-STUPID videos about potatoes with faces? Nina dreams about being as popular as class queen bee Megan Dunne, who films NOT AMAZING AT ALL content of her pampered dog, Princess Trixie Bell.

So when Nina's stinky cat Les wanders into one of Megan's videos by accident, and goes viral, Nina and Les are suddenly internet famous! But is overnight stardom as wonderful as Nina always imagined it would be?



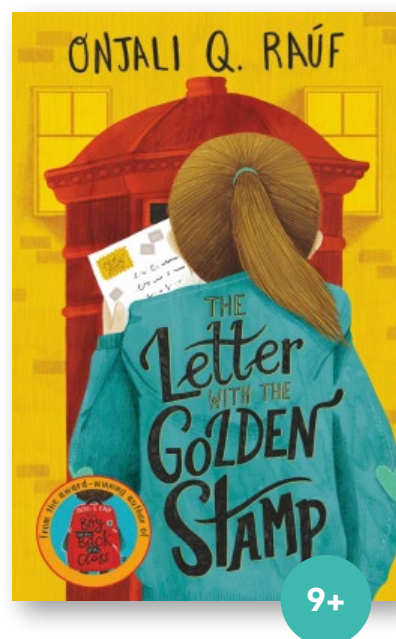
THE LETTER WITH THE GOLDEN STAMP

ONJALI Q RAÚF (AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR)

10-year-old Audrey has a secret. A secret no one - not her friends, her teachers, not even her neighbours - knows about. And to keep it hidden she has become one of the best actresses on the planet. As soon as she steps out of the front door, the show is on, and all the world becomes her stage! No-one would ever guess that she is a nurse and doctor for her mam, the family food shopper (and sometimes shoplifter), a medicines collector, and even bedtime-reader for her younger siblings.

But when Audrey's mam gets sicker, things go from difficult to impossible. If Mam's condition doesn't improve, there's a chance the family will be separated. And so Audrey becomes determined to find a way to get her mam the best treatment available, so that they won't ever need to be apart. The only problem is, the treatment will cost her thousands. Thousands that Audrey doesn't have.

As Audrey sets about trying to make her dream for her family come true with a plan that involves her precious stamp collection, an unsuspecting postal system, and a journey all the way from Wales to London, someone else on the street embarks on a secret mission of their own. One that will alter Audrey's life - and that of her family - forever.



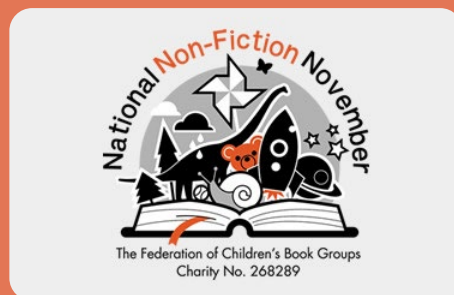
NON-FICTION NOVEMBER

Non-fiction November was set up by the Federation of Children's Book Groups to show just how exciting and important factual books can be. Non-fiction is not only about learning something new, it can also bring a real sense of joy when children discover facts that spark their curiosity.

This year's theme is Past Puzzles and Timeless Treasures. That could mean exploring books about animals, space or sport, or dipping into stories from history and the people who shaped it.

Ways to enjoy Non-fiction November at home

- Fact of the day: Pick up a non-fiction book and choose one interesting fact to share at mealtimes. Children often love surprising others with what they've learnt.
- Curiosity jar: Write down questions children ask, like "Why do stars twinkle?" or "How do bees make honey?" Then look for answers together in books or online.
- Everyday experts: Look around the home and think about how things work. How does the washing machine clean clothes? Where does tap water come from?



RECOMMENDED READS TO GET YOU STARTED:

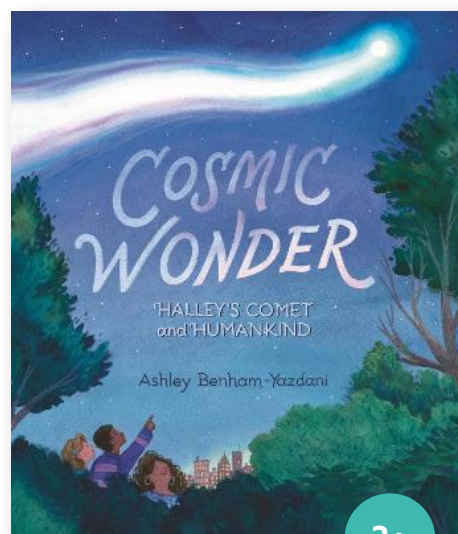
COSMIC WONDER: HALLEY'S COMET AND HUMANKIND

ASHLEY BENHAM-YAZDANI (AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR)

A lyrical look at the history of humankind, as told through the eyes of Halley's Comet as it passes by Earth every 76 years.

'The first time the comet visited Earth, nobody noticed. Well, almost nobody...'

This is an exciting exploration of the Earth's changes and developments – both good and bad – from the unique perspective of an ever-returning comet, whose passing was first recorded in 240 BC. With each orbit, readers will see the changes in Earth and its creatures, paying close attention to the history of human evolution.



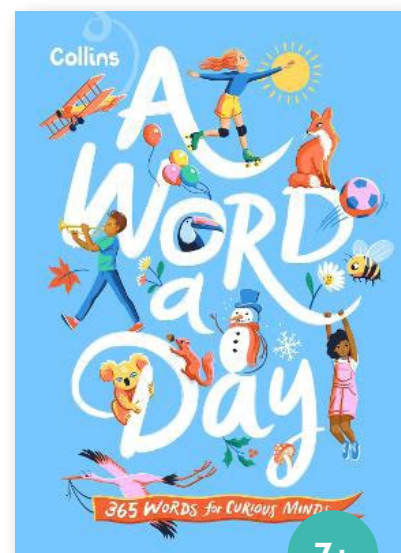
COLLINS A WORD A DAY 365 WORDS FOR CURIOUS MINDS

COLLINS KIDS (AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR)

Discover a wonderful word every day! A year's worth of intriguing words, including ones that reflect the changing seasons and link to the date or month on which they appear.

- suffragette on International Women's Day
- rewild on Earth Day
- empathise on International Day of Friendship

Beautifully illustrated, it explains what the words mean, how to say them and where they came from. Never be lost for words again.

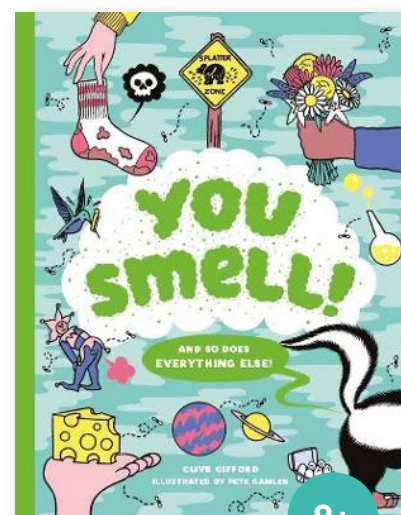


YOU SMELL!(AND SO DOES EVERYTHING ELSE)

CLIVE GIFFORD (AUTHOR), PETE GAMLEN (ILLUSTRATOR)

Everyone smells! The sense of smell plays a crucial part in survival, communication, and taste, and is the basis of a multi-billion-dollar industry. But, despite all this, it's the sense we often know least about.

This hilarious and fact-packed book puts that right. Find out everything you could ever want to know about stinks, whiffs and pongs, from the fruit so pungent it's banned from public transport to the top-secret military programme developing the stinkiest stink bomb.



REMEMBRANCE DAY

Remembrance Day is a moment to pause and think about people in the past and the sacrifices they made. Books and stories can be a gentle way to open up this theme with children, as they provide a safe space to talk about peace, courage and memory.

You might like to share a picture book or a short poem together, then ask simple questions such as, "What do you think this person was feeling?" or "Why do you think people wear poppies?" Even a short story, read aloud, can spark meaningful conversation without it feeling too heavy.

For older children, non-fiction books that explain historical events can help them understand the bigger picture, while younger ones may connect more through stories that focus on hope and peace. Sometimes the most powerful moments come from reading something small and then talking quietly about it together.

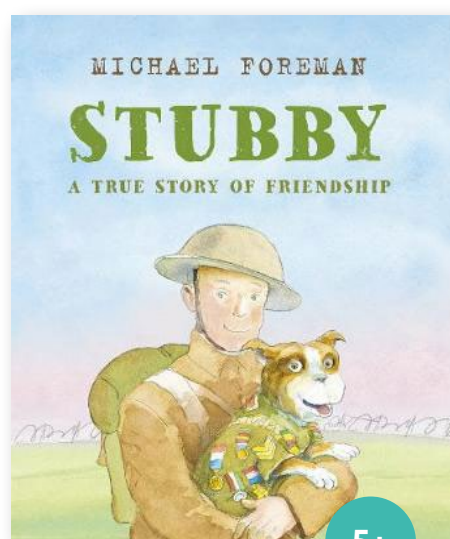


RECOMMENDED READS TO GET YOU STARTED:

STUBBY: A TRUE STORY OF FRIENDSHIP

MICHAEL FOREMAN (AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR)

Stubby was a brave soldier, a loyal friend... and a dog. From an army training camp to the trenches in France, this is the incredible true story of Sergeant Stubby, the dog who served bravely in the First World War, sniffing out gas attacks, catching spies and winning the hearts of his fellow soldiers.



THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE

HILARY ROBINSON (AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR)

It's Christmas Eve 1914. A group of tired soldiers start singing Stille Nacht, the soldiers on the other side of No Man's Land respond with Silent Night. The next day, German and British soldier, put down their guns and join in a game of football to celebrate the spirit of Christmas Day.

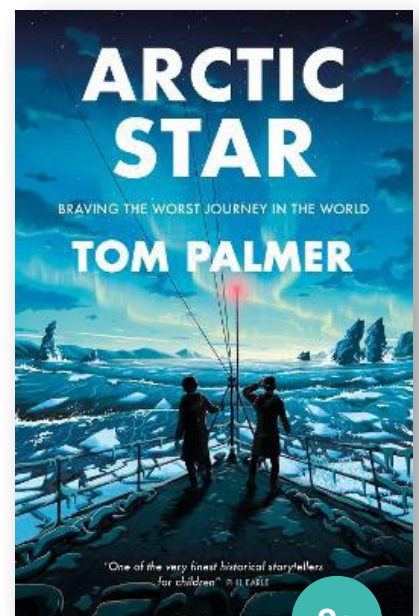


ARCTIC STAR

TOM PALMER (AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR)

Winter 1943. Teenagers Frank, Joseph and Stephen are Royal Navy recruits on their first mission at sea during the Second World War. Their ship is part of an Arctic Convoy sailing to Russia to deliver supplies to the Soviets.

The convoys have to navigate treacherous waters, sailing through a narrow channel between the Arctic ice pack and German bases on the Norwegian coast. Faced with terrifying enemy attacks from both air and sea, as well as life-threatening cold and storms, will all three boys make it home again?



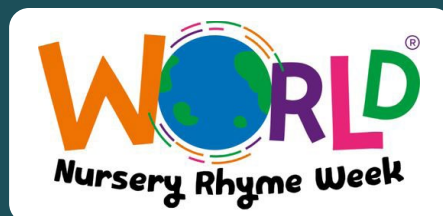
WORLD NURSERY RHYME WEEK

Nursery rhymes might seem simple, but they play a really important role in early learning. They help children develop language and literacy, build confidence with numbers, and support social and emotional growth too. Most importantly, they are fun and often become the songs and verses that children remember for years to come.

World Nursery Rhyme Week takes place from 10th to 14th November 2025. Each year there is a Rhyme a Day Challenge, where five rhymes are chosen for families to enjoy together. The official rhymes for this year are:

- Sing a Song of Sixpence
- Humpty Dumpty
- When I Was One (I played the drum)
- I Hear Thunder
- Two Little Dickie Birds

At home, you might like to join in by singing one rhyme a day, adding actions, or even making up your own silly verse.



RECOMMENDED READS TO GET YOU STARTED:

NURSERY RHYMES

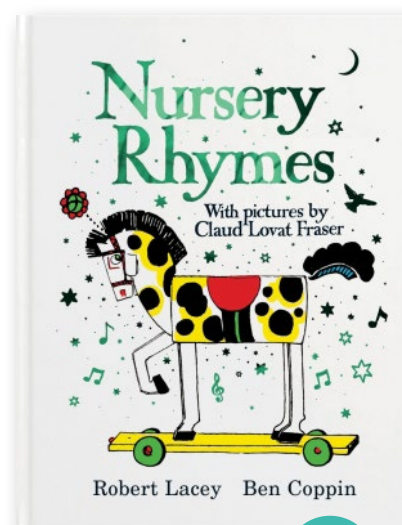
ROBERT LACEY (AUTHOR), BEN COPPIN (ILLUSTRATOR)

Best-selling historian Robert Lacey re-presents 82 of the most beloved nursery rhymes in a shared reading experience for children, parents and grandparents.

The book explores the magic of nursery rhymes and the meaning of their not-so-childish nonsense, and provides a reference section which details the history of the rhymes.

Accompanying the collection are 151 drawings by early 20th century stage designer and illustrator Claud Lovat Fraser, sourced from the Royal Academy archives, which have been vividly updated by Ben Coppin.

A proportion of the royalties will be paid to the *Royal Academy Library*, and to *Storybook Dads and Mums* supporting imprisoned parents to record stories for their children.



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WORLD KINDNESS DAY

World Kindness Day, on **13th November**, is a gentle reminder that kindness doesn't have to be a big gesture to make a difference. Small things like a smile, saying thank you, helping at home or including a friend at school can all mean a lot.

Books can be a lovely way to explore kindness together. Stories often show how characters help each other, make mistakes, or find ways to put things right. You might like to pause as you read and ask, "What was the kind thing they did here?" or "How would you have shown kindness in that moment?" These little questions can lead to thoughtful chats.

Random acts of kindness you might enjoy at home

- Share a favourite story: Read a book aloud over the phone or video call to a grandparent, cousin or family friend.
- Leave a book surprise: Choose a book you've finished and pass it on to someone else with a little note inside wishing them happy reading.
- Make a kindness story: Write or draw your own short story about a character who shows kindness, then share it with family or friends.



RECOMMENDED READS TO GET YOU STARTED:

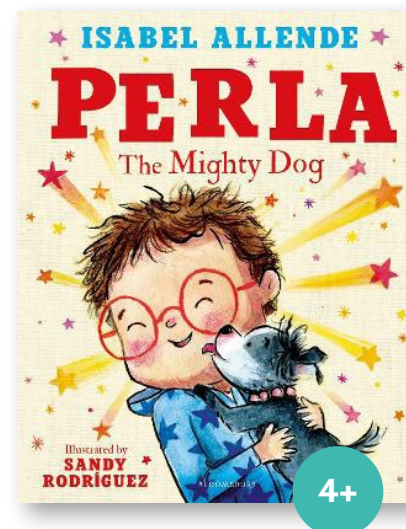
PERLA THE MIGHTY DOG

ISABEL ALLENDE (AUTHOR), SANDY RODRIGUEZ (ILLUSTRATOR)

Meet Perla. She's a small dog with a BIG personality and a very impressive roar. When she's adopted by the Ricos, a Mexican-American family in search of a guard dog, Perla quickly makes friends with seven-year old Nico Rico – who needs someone to help him deal with the school bullies.

Soon, Perla has changed the lives of everyone in the Rico family ... and found a place in their hearts forever.

Exploring the importance of family, courage and standing up to the bullies, it's perfect for reading out loud.



THE SMALL THINGS

LISA THOMPSON (AUTHOR), HANNAH COULSON (ILLUSTRATOR)

Anna's anxious when she's picked to befriend the new girl in her class. For a start, Ellie is ill and can't come to school herself. So Anna has to communicate with her through a new kind of robot. But Anna is also worried that her life's too small and boring to be of interest to her new friend. Compared to the other girls, she doesn't have anything exciting to talk about and so when Ellie asks her a question, a little white lie pops out. Then another and another. When Ellie finds out the truth, can their friendship survive ...?

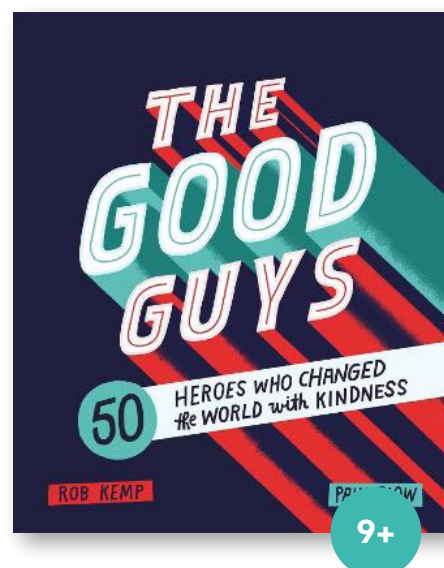
Inspired by a true story, a groundbreaking robot helps friendship blossom in this poignant and uplifting novella from bestseller Lisa Thompson.



THE GOOD GUYS 50 HEROES WHO CHANGED THE WORLD WITH KINDNESS

ROB KEMP (AUTHOR), PETER BLOW (ILLUSTRATOR)

A life-changing book that shows kids it's cool to be kind. A gloriously illustrated celebration of heroes who have changed the world with kindness and compassion, from David Attenborough to Nelson Mandela, Oskar Schindler to Usain Bolt. What if we celebrated boys for their kindness as well their strength? For their generosity as well as their success? For their loyal friendship as well as their charm? The Good Guys introduces us to 50 heroes who have shown that changing the world doesn't require a sword or a corporate jet. Readers will find stories of extraordinary men including Muhammad Ali, Professor Green, Patrick Stewart and Lionel Messi, as well as unsung heroes such as James Harrison, who has spent fifty years donating his rare blood to save millions of babies. There's even a section celebrating ten boys who didn't let their young age stop them from helping others, such as Matthew Kaplan, who responded to his brother's bullies by setting up an anti-bullying programme for schools. The Good Guys celebrates the feats of heroes and everyday men, and will show kids that it really is cool to be kind.



WINTER READS

Winter often gives us more time indoors, which makes it a good season for sharing stories together. Reading doesn't need to be fancy, just finding a comfy spot, pulling a blanket around you, or switching on a small lamp can make it feel special. Even ten minutes together can turn into a moment children remember.

You might decide to pick one story to come back to each winter, or try something new each week. It could be a funny book, a snowy adventure, or simply an old favourite. However you do it, a bit of shared reading can brighten up the darker days and give everyone something to look forward to.

RECOMMENDED READS TO GET YOU STARTED:

I DEFINITELY DON'T LIKE WINTER

FIONA BARKER (AUTHOR), CHRISTINE PYM (ILLUSTRATOR)

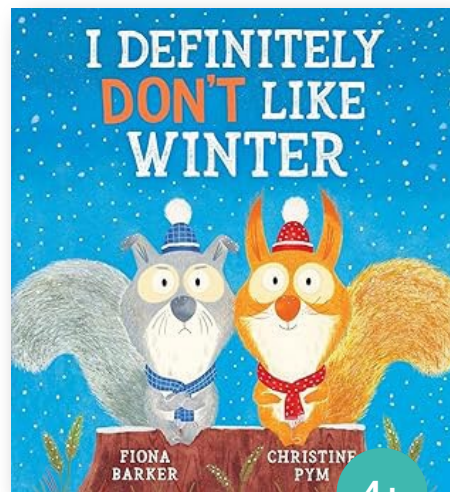
Hank and Hoog are best friends - they do EVERYTHING together.

Until one morning, when a single, crisp, brown leaf falls to the ground...

Hank is so annoyed! Falling leaves mean winter is coming, and Hank definitely does not like winter. BRRRRRRR!

But Hoog is overjoyed! Hoog loves winter - the snow, the snuggles, all of it! AHHHHHHH!

Will these two friends learn to put their differences aside? You bet they will! They may not agree on winter, but there's something they both definitely like: each other.



COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS

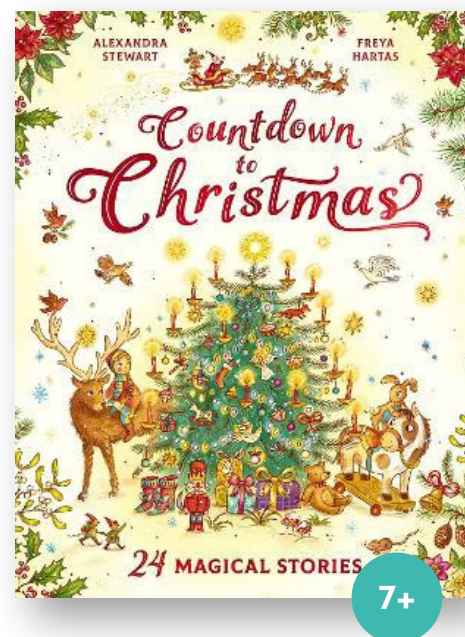
24 MAGICAL STORIES

ALEXANDRA STEWART (AUTHOR),
FREYA HARTAS (ILLUSTRATOR)

A beautiful gift treasury of twenty-four of the most beloved classic stories, poems and songs from all around the world that love to be shared in the countdown to Christmas.

Ride on the Snow Queen's sleigh, discover the elves secretly making shoes in the night, learn about the first ever Christmas in space and enjoy a new Christmas story every night as you count your way down to the big day.

With stories beautifully retold by Alexandra Stewart and gloriously illustrated by Freya Hartas, Countdown to Christmas is the perfect stocking filler to help little ones feel the magic of Christmas.

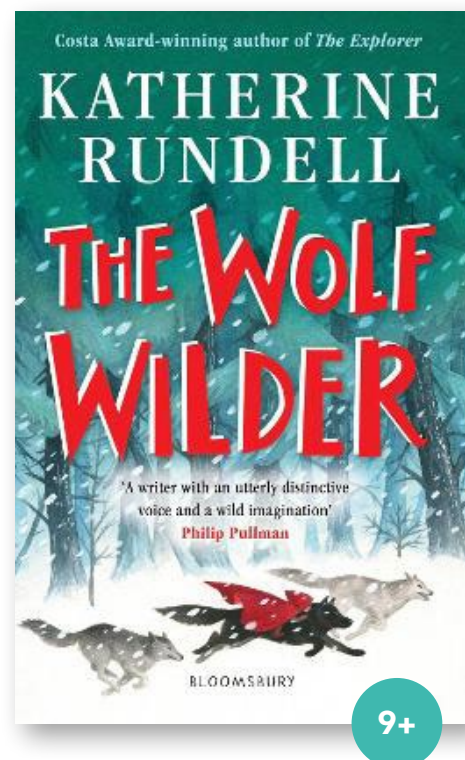


THE WOLF WILDER

KATHERINE RUNDELL (AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR)

Feodora and her mother live in the snowbound woods of Russia, in a house full of food and fireplaces. Ten minutes away, in a ruined chapel, lives a pack of wolves. Feodora's mother is a wolf wilder, and Feo is a wolf wilder in training. A wolf wilder is the opposite of an animal tamer: it is a person who teaches tamed animals to fend for themselves, and to fight and to run, and to be wary of humans.

When the murderous hostility of the Russian Army threatens her very existence, Feo is left with no option but to go on the run. What follows is a story of revolution and adventure, about standing up for the things you love and fighting back. And, of course, wolves.





**IGNITING LEADERS,
CHANGING LIVES**

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