

A Few Good Reads - Year 5

***The Accidental Prime Minister* - Tom McLaughlin**

We've all thought it sometimes: a 12-year-old boy could do an MP's job at least as well as the present lot, probably better. That's the premise in this very funny book, only the 12-year-old in question - Joe Perkins - doesn't just get to be an MP, he accidentally becomes Prime Minister. A hilarious story of one boy's meteoric rise to power! But beneath the humour there are serious points being made about democracy and government which could actually inspire future generations of politicians. And if you enjoy this, you will also like Tom McLaughlin's other '*Accidental*' books.

***The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips* - Michael Morpurgo**

This extraordinarily absorbing story by the former Children's Laureate is written as a diary and movingly brings to life a true story of how a whole community got caught up in the Second World War. When the village of Slapton is evacuated, Lily and her family move to her uncle's farm for safety. Lily intends to take Adolphus Tips, her much loved cat, too. But Tips is nowhere to be found. How Tips survives the terror when the beach is given over to training soldiers is a thrilling story and the tale of how Lily braves the guns and bombs to search for Tips and meets some extra-special US soldiers is full of warmth and insight.

***Cosmic* - Frank Cottrell Boyce**

It's one giant leap for all boy-kind in this out-of-this-world story by award-winning author, Frank Cottrell Boyce. Liam is too big for his boots. And his football strip. And his school blazer. But being super-sized height-wise has its advantages: he's the only eleven-year-old to ever ride the G-force-defying Cosmic rollercoaster - or to be offered the chance to drive a Porsche. Long-legged Liam makes a giant leap for boy-kind by competing with a group of adults for the chance to go into space. Is Liam the best boy for the job? Sometimes being big isn't all about being a grown-up.

***Coraline* - Neil Gaiman**

There is something strange about Coraline's new home. It's not the mist, or the cat that always seems to be watching her, nor the signs of danger that Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, her new neighbours, read in the tea leaves. It's the other house - the one behind the old door in the drawing room. Another mother and father with black-button eyes and papery skin are waiting for Coraline to join them there. And they want her to stay with them. For ever. She knows that if she ventures through that door, she may never come back. Sometimes funny, always creepy, genuinely moving, this marvellous spine-chiller by best-selling author Neil Gaiman is a must read.

***The Dark is Rising* - Susan Cooper**

This is the first of a brilliant and award-winning fantasy sequence. It's midwinter and Will Stanton, the seventh son of a seventh son, discovers his destiny on the eve of his birthday. Will must learn to harness the powers of the Old Ones and embark on a quest to vanquish the terrifyingly evil magic of the Dark, an evil entity that threatens the world's very existence. If you enjoy this book, don't miss the other books in the series, starting with *Over Sea, Under Stone*.

***Dead Man's Cove: A Laura Marlin Mystery* - Lauren St John**

This multi-award-winning book is the first in an exciting adventure series featuring Laura Marlin - ace detective. Laura longs to be adopted and eventually her wish seems to come true and she moves to Cornwall to live with her uncle. Her new life however, seems to be full of secrets and as the mysteries pile up she finds she must put her keen detective mind to full use. Accompanied by her dog Skye she sets out on an adventure to uncover the mysteries - including a message in a bottle - of Dead Man's Cove. Don't miss Laura's other exciting adventures as she travels around the world.

***The Diamond of Drury Lane* - Julia Golding**

This book is the first in a hugely exciting and very successful series full of historical detail but which carry important contemporary messages, too. Cat Royal, the feisty little orphan-girl brought up in the Drury Lane theatre of the 1790s, is a brilliant narrator of this terrific action-packed adventure. There's intrigue, politics, class warfare and a lot of fighting as well some highlights from behind the scenes as Cat unravels a mystery. She's brave, cunning and smart but that doesn't stop her from getting into some very dangerous fixes.

Five Children and It - E Nesbit

Magic and adventure are beautifully combined in this wonderful classic story about wishes and what ifs? Arriving at the White House for their holiday, Cyril, Anthea, Robert, Jane and their baby brother set about looking for adventure by digging in the gravel pit where they unearth a strange creature - a Psammead who tells them he is able to give them one wish a day. But wishes don't always turn out as you think they will and the children find themselves in for some very exciting and magical surprises. If you enjoy this, look out for E Nesbit's other enthralling stories and also for Jacqueline Wilson's excellent 'sequel' *Four Children and It*, which was inspired by this book.

Gideon The Cutpurse - Linda Buckley-Archer

This award-winning book is an exciting time-travel adventure, slipping between two centuries. An encounter with an anti-gravity machine catapults Peter Schock and Kate Dyer back to the 18th century and sets in motion a calamitous chain of events. While a massive police hunt gets underway to find the missing children in the 21st century - in 1763 a hardened criminal, the Tar Man, steals the anti-gravity machine and disappears into the London underworld. Stranded in another time and forced to chase the Tar Man to his lair, Peter and Kate find a friend and guide in reformed cutpurse, Gideon Seymour. Gideon does everything he can to help them, but will his dark past catch up with him before the machine is recovered?

Gregor the Overlander - Suzanne Collins

The first of the enthralling *Underland Chronicles*, by the best-selling author of the *Hunger Games*. When eleven-year-old Gregor falls through a grate in the laundry room of his apartment building, he hurtles into the dark Underland, where spiders, rats and giant cockroaches coexist uneasily with humans. This world is on the brink of war, and Gregor's arrival is no accident. Gregor has a vital role to play in the Underland's uncertain future but he wants no part of it - until he realises it's the only way to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. Reluctantly, Gregor embarks on a dangerous adventure that will change both him and the Underland for ever.

Harriet the Spy - Louise Fitzhugh

This classic American novel has delighted readers for more than 40 years. Harriet - bossy and determined - has a great sense of who she is, and is an irresistible character. She spies shamelessly on friends, family and neighbours. Truth is what interests her but writing down exactly what she thinks about the people around her in her special notebook does not make her popular. Harriet's spirit, honesty and outspokenness make her a memorable heroine.

In Darkling Wood - Emma Carroll

A cleverly constructed and moving story by a best-selling author. When Alice's brother gets a longed-for chance for a heart transplant, Alice must go to stay with her estranged grandmother. There's nothing good about staying with Nell, except for the beautiful Darkling Wood at the end of her garden - but Nell wants to have it cut down. Alice feels at home there, at peace, and even finds a friend, Flo. Strangely, Flo doesn't seem to go to the local school and no one in town has heard of a girl with that name. When Flo shows Alice the surprising secrets of Darkling Wood, Alice starts to wonder, what is real? And can she find out in time to save the wood from destruction?

Just William - Richmal Crompton

This is the very first collection of stories about everyone's favourite troublemaker, William Brown. Whether it's trying to arrange a marriage for his sister or taking a job as a boot boy as step one in his grand plan to run away, William manages to cause chaos wherever he goes. This wonderful book captures the spirit of the period in which it was originally published nearly 100 years ago but is also completely timeless in its humour. If you enjoy this book, there are many other William books to choose from, and you should also look out for the brilliant audio books read by Martin Jarvis.

***The Kite Rider* - Geraldine McCaughrean**

Haoyou knows that his father's spirit lives among the clouds above Ancient China. He also knows that to save his mother from being forced into a new marriage he must now follow in his father's footsteps and take to the skies, riding a kite through the clouds and the spirits of the dead. Then the Jade Circus offers him a chance to escape his enemies and travel throughout the empire, and maybe even perform before Kublai Khan himself. But is going with the circus really the best option? It could be that the circus master is leading him into even greater danger. This outstanding story is like nothing else you've ever read - packed with action, adventure and emotion.

***Krindlekrax* - Philip Ridley**

Who is more likely to get the part of the hero in the school play? Ruskin or Elvis? Elvis of course, not skinny, squeaky voiced Ruskin. But under Lizard Street, the street where Ruskin lives, lurks the mysterious Krindlekrax, and when Krindlekrax threatens his neighbourhood, Ruskin has the chance to prove he's the stuff heroes are made of! This multi-prize-winning book is just one of Philip Ridley's thrilling, mysterious and often mind-boggling stories, including *Scribbleboy* and *Kaspar in the Glitter*, which you may also enjoy.

***Larklight* - Philip Reeve**

Larklight is a brilliantly exciting Victorian space adventure which mixes entertaining period jokes with a fantastical trip into unknown worlds. Arthur Mumby and his sister Myrtle live with their father in the huge and rambling house, Larklight, travelling through space on a remote orbit far beyond the Moon. They receive a message informing them that a Mr Webster and make ready to receive him - but it is the wrong sort of preparation, as they discover when their guest arrives. If you enjoy this, look out for the other books in the series.

***Molly Moon's Incredible Book of Hypnotism* - Georgia Byng**

Georgia Byng's larger-than-life and totally gripping story of orphan Molly Moon. For ten miserable years she's lived under the cruel rule of Miss Adderstone in grim Hardwick House. But her life changes overnight when she finds a mysterious book on hypnotism and discovers an amazing talent - the power to make people do anything she want them to. Escaping from the orphanage, Molly flies to New York in search of fame and fortune. But her adventures in hypnotism lead her into the clutches of a dangerous enemy ... Molly's adventures continue in the other four books in the series.

***The More the Merrier* - Anne Fine**

This is a seasonal tale filled with sharp humour by a former Children's Laureate. Christmas comes but once a year. Luckily for Ralph ...The Christmas holiday is, traditionally, a time when families gather. In Ralph's case this means ten or more relatives coming to stay, including assorted aunts and uncles, nutty Great-Aunt Ida (the Home tells them to be careful not to let her out) and his ghastly cousins: Titania in her silly, sick-making frilly fairy dresses and the twins Sylvester and Sylvia. Jammed into one small house for three days of merriment and family fun, with the TV on the blink and Mum on the verge of a breakdown, it soon becomes obvious that, in this house, more definitely does not mean merrier ... If you enjoy this, you can follow the further adventures of some of the same characters in *Eating Things on Sticks*.

***Muddle Earth* - Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell**

Prize-winning author and illustrator duo Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell are masters of creativity. *Muddle Earth* is a cracking adventure set in a topsy-turvy world peopled with incredible characters such as a wizard who knows only one spell, an ogre whose hobbies are thumb sucking and cake decorating and a schoolboy who, thank goodness, is almost completely normal! What happens to them in a world with purple moons, sinister flying wardrobes and much, much more is mad, magical and exciting to read. And don't miss the equally zany sequel.

***Murder Most Unladylike* - Robin Stevens**

The first in a fabulous, fast-paced, exciting detective series set during the 1930's. Daisy Wells (not just a perfect English Miss) and Hazel Wong (astute and observant) have started a secret Detective Society at Deepdene School for girls. The girls have a typical friendship, with some wonderful highs and sorrowful lows. After finding a dead body, which then disappears, the girls are racing to stay one step ahead and solve the clues. Can they do it before it's too late? If you find this gripping read, there are plenty more books in the series to enjoy when you have finished this one!

No Such Thing As Dragons - Philip Reeve

This is a dragon story with a brilliant twist from multi award-winning writer, Philip Reeve. Ansel's new master slays dragons for a living. He says he's hunted the monstrous worms all over Christendom and has the scars to prove it. But is Brock just a clever trickster in shining armour? Ansel is sure there are no such things as dragons. So what is the man-eating creature that makes its lair in the crags of Dragon Mountain? Ansel and Brock must climb the ice face to discover the terrifying truth.

Number the Stars - Lois Lowry

This award-winning book is inspired by true events of the Second World War. It is 1943 and life in Nazi occupied Copenhagen is becoming complicated for 10-year-old Annemarie. There are food shortages and curfews, and soldiers on every corner. But it is even worse for her Jewish best friend, Ellen, as the Nazis continue their brutal campaign. With Ellen's life in danger, Annemarie must summon all her courage to help stage a daring escape. This gripping and very moving novel brings the past vividly to life.

One Dog and His Boy - Eva Ibbotson

Award winning Eva Ibbotson's poignant and beautiful book celebrates a boy's passion for a dog. All Hal has ever wanted is a dog but his parents refuse to contemplate the idea. A dog would mess up their beautiful house and disturb their busy routine. When they discover East Pets, they hire Hal a dog for a weekend thinking that will do the trick. But they don't know Hal! Hal takes matters into his own hands. Soon Hal and all the dogs he has released from Easy Pets are out on the road - with a price on their head. How Hal makes his escape is both thrilling and moving as it marks his growth from sadness to great happiness.

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief - Rick Riordan

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief is the first book in Rick Riordan's phenomenally successful series. Percy Jackson was just a normal boy, going to school, playing basketball, skateboarding. The usual. Until he accidentally vaporized his maths teacher and learned he was a half-blood - the son of a Greek God. Suddenly he finds himself plunged into an adventure that takes him across America and into the underworld on the trail of the lightning thief. Now he spends his time battling monsters and generally trying to stay alive.

Ratburger - David Walliams

Another hilarious, action-packed and touching novel from the brilliant David Walliams - the story of a little girl called Zoe. Things are not looking good for Zoe. Her stepmother Sheila is so lazy she gets Zoe to pick her nose for her. The school bully Tina Trotts makes her life a misery - mainly by flobbering on her head. And now the evil Burt from Burt's Burgers is after her pet rat! And guess what he wants to do with it? The clue is in the title.

Red Sky in the Morning - Elizabeth Laird

Red Sky in the Morning is a remarkably moving and beautifully narrated book. A teenage girl worships and adores her disabled little brother but can't bring herself to tell her friends that he's anything but normal as she is terrified what her peers will think. That is until romance blossoms and her secret gets out but thankfully sympathy and understanding abound.

Redwall - Brian Jacques

The *Redwall* series of books - this was the first to be published - are great war/adventure stories with brilliantly drawn characters. Redwall Abbey, tranquil home to a community of peace-loving mice is threatened by Cluny, the Scourge and his battle-hardened horde of predators. Cluny is certain that Redwall will fall easily to his fearsome army, but he hasn't bargained for the courage and strength of the combined forces of the Redwall mice and their loyal woodland friends.

Rooftoppers - Katherine Rundell

This amazing book won multiple awards for its author when it came out. 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.

***The Saga of Erik the Viking* - Terry Jones**

This is a fantastically brilliant and amazingly adventurous award-winning tale by Terry Jones, who is of course, most famous for his membership of the Monty Python team. As Erik and the crew of the Golden Dragon set sail in search of adventure and to find out where the sun goes at night, little do they know that their courage, skill, strength and stamina will all be tested to the extremes. They must win through against storms, against the dogfighters, against giants and enchantments, face up to spirits and to trolls. Read this rollicking tale to find out whether they achieve their goal...

***Saffy's Angel* - Hilary McKay**

This is the first in a series of books filled with wit and warmth about Cadmium, Saffron, Indigo and Rose Casson, siblings who are each as colourful as their exotic names suggest. After Saffron Casson discovers that she's adopted, life is never quite the same again. Her artistic parents and doting siblings adore her, but Saffy wants a piece of her past. So when her grandfather bequeaths a stone angel to her, Saffy knows she has to find it. Indigo, the sole boy of the Casson family, is determined to rid himself of his fear of heights. And the youngest, Rose, a budding artist, has a knack for baiting her pompous dad, with entertaining results ...

***The Secret Garden* - Frances Hodgson Burnett**

Spoiled, angry, lonely Mary Lennox is left an orphan after an epidemic at her Indian home and is sent to live in her widowed uncle's huge mansion on the bleak and wind-blown Yorkshire moors. This is the classic story of how she learns to make friends, overcome her loneliness and to help herself and others find happiness through the rebuilding of the secret garden she discovers in her uncle's grounds. If you enjoy this book, look out for *Return to the Secret Garden*, the recently written and excellent sequel by Holly Webb, as well as Frances Hodgson Burnett's other brilliant classic story *A Little Princess*.

***Shadow Forest* - Matt Haig**

A dramatic adventure story set in an enchanted magical world. Samuel Blink's life changes forever when a giant log crashes out of the sky and kills his parents. As a result, he and his sister Martha are forced to move to Norway where Martha disappears into the Shadow Forest, a mysterious world ruled over by the evil Changemaker. It's a world full of deadly truth pixies, one-eyed trolls and a witch who steals shadows. People who enter, never return. How will Samuel get Martha back? If you enjoy this, there are further books in this series.

***The Silver Sword* - Ian Serraillier**

A classic story from World War Two, this tells how three children, Ruth, Edek and Bronia, are helped by the young orphan Jan to escape from the horrors of Warsaw after the arrest of their parents. How the children travel across war torn Europe surviving every kind of danger and privation is thrilling and deeply moving. It is the story of a terrible time made bearable by the strong streak of humanity at its heart and by the unusual acts of kindness the children experience on their travels.

***Skellig* - David Almond**

David Almond is a writer like no other, and this wonderfully eerie and magical tale about the power of believing is one of his most extraordinary and thrilling. Michael stumbles into the old garage of his new home, and finds a strange creature - part owl, part angel, a being who needs Michael's help if he is to survive. Michael nourishes Skellig back to health, while his baby sister languishes in the hospital. But as Skellig helps Michael breathe life into his sister, Michael's world changes for ever.

***Small Change for Stuart* - Lissa Evans**

This quirky puzzle-solving novel is a fast-moving blend of comedy and magic in which Stuart Horten - ten years old and small for his age - embarks on an awfully big adventure. Uprooted from London by his kindly but distracted parents, Stuart finds himself with nothing to do in his seemingly lifeless new home town. The only interest comes from the confusion caused by the identical triplets next door, and that just makes things worse. But a long-lost letter from a long-lost great uncle sets Stuart off unlocking one baffling puzzle after another, each more curious than the one before. You can discover what Stuart did next in *Big Change for Stuart*.

Stoneheart - Charlie Fletcher

This thrilling story is the first in an unmissable fantasy trilogy. Ancient powers, warring forces, in a parallel world that is the city of London, wreak havoc to two children whilst the rest of London appears unaware of what's going on. When George breaks the dragon's head outside the Natural History Museum he awakes an ancient power. This prehistoric beast, sentry-still for centuries, hunts him down with a terrifying wrath. And this is just the beginning - George and his companion Edie are trapped in a world of danger and worse, they are quite alone. If you enjoy this then don't miss the continuing story in *Iron Hand* and *Silvertongue*.

A Story Like the Wind - Gill Lewis

This powerful and lyrical story about contemporary refugees is fuelled by an ancient tale which tells how, throughout history, music has crossed barriers and bound people together encouraging them to stand up to oppression and injustice. Rami has nothing but his violin as he sets off on a terrifying journey to try to find safety. Starving and thirsty he takes nothing from his fellow travellers as he has nothing to share. Why did you not sell your violin, they ask? With his violin as an accompaniment Rami swiftly demonstrates why; his inspiring story of freedom from long, long ago unites his fellow refugees and stirs them all to believe in their journey and their hope of a better life.

Swallows and Amazons - Arthur Ransome

The first in a series of brilliant, classic adventure stories with a cast of unforgettable characters. John, Susan, Titty and Roger, on holiday in the Lake District, sail their boat, *Swallow*, to a deserted island for a summer camping trip. Exploring and playing sailors is an adventure in itself but the island holds more excitement in store. Two fierce Amazon Pirates, Nancy and Peggy, challenge them to war and a summer of battles and alliances ensues.

Tell Me No Lies - Malorie Blackman

Gemma longs for her lost mother, taking comfort from the cuttings in her scrapbook; pictures of mothers who loved their children come what may. Mike is new to the area; a boy with a terrible secret to hide, a secret about his missing mother. Gemma and Mike are two kids hurt by their past and now inextricably linked. Their effect on each other's lives will be explosive. This explosive thriller will have you on the edge of your seat right up until the last page.

Time Travelling with a Hamster - Ross Welford

A truly original debut novel from an extraordinary talent. Laugh, cry and wonder at this race-against-time story of a boy who travels back to 1984 to prevent a go-kart accident, and save his father's life... 'My dad died twice. Once when he was thirty nine and again four years later when he was twelve. The first time had nothing to do with me. The second time definitely did, but I would never even have been there if it hadn't been for his 'time machine'...' When Al Chaudhury discovers his late dad's time machine, he finds that going back to the 1980s requires daring and imagination. It also requires lies, theft, burglary, and setting his school on fire. All without losing his pet hamster, Alan Shearer...

Tom's Midnight Garden - Philippa Pearce

A classic time-slip story by an award-winning author. Tom is bored and lonely staying with his aunt and uncle while his brother is ill, so when one night he hears the grandfather clock strike thirteen he goes to investigate. But he is not prepared for what is going to happen. Outside the back door is a garden, which everyone tells him doesn't exist. But the magical place in which Tom finds himself is certainly a garden - his midnight garden. Here he meets Hattie, a little girl from another time, and everything changes.

The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler - Gene Kemp

A classic school story. Tyke Tiler and Danny Price are best friends, much to the despair of the headmaster of Cricklepit Combined School - because wherever the pair go, trouble is never far behind. Stolen money, a sheep's skeleton, fights in class...And somehow it's always trouble that Tyke has to sort out. Can Tyke help the hapless Danny stay out of trouble for their last term at Junior School? And what final surprise does Tyke have in store?

***Two Weeks with the Queen* - Morris Gleitzman**

This is a profoundly moving, deeply serious but also wickedly funny book. Sent away from his home in Australia to stay with his aunt and uncle in London while his parents nurse his brother Luke through the final stages of cancer, Colin sets out on a mission. If only he can reach the Queen, he reasons, she'll be able to put him in touch with the best cancer doctor in the world and Luke will be made well. But nothing is so straightforward. Instead, Colin meets some remarkable people and, through them, he is able to share some of the universal grief of losing a person you love.

***The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* - Alan Garner**

Alan Garner weaves together Arthurian Legend and local folklore brilliantly in this magical adventure. The story revolves around Susan and Colin, two children holidaying in the town of Alderley Edge in Cheshire. Out exploring one day, they find themselves pursued by sinister creatures who are after the strange glowing weirdstone which Susan wears on her wrist. In a breathtaking journey through a perilous landscape, the children struggle to deliver the stone to the wizard Cadellin Silverbrow. If they succeed the evil Morrigan and her deadly morthbrood will be vanquished. If not... This exciting story is continued in *The Moon of Gomerath*.

***Whistling in the Dark* - Shirley Hughes**

Best-selling author Shirley Hughes brings alive how it felt to be growing up in Liverpool during the Second World War in a gripping and touching story which draws on her own memories of that time. It is 1940 - thirteen-year-old Joan's home is under threat from the Nazi's terrifying nightly air raids. It is not an easy time to be a teenager, especially with the sweet rationing, strict curfews and blackouts. Joan and best friend Doreen love going to the cinema until the bombings intensify and then even that becomes too dangerous, especially when an army deserter is found lurking near their home. Who is he and why does he think Joan can help him? As the Blitz worsens, Joan and her friends make a discovery that will tear the whole community apart...

***The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* - Joan Aiken**

A wonderful and thrilling 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 name sounds 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. Bonnie and Sylvia are a determined pair though and nothing, not even the wolves, is going to stop them from getting back to London and Aunt Jane.

***A Wrinkle in Time* - Madeleine L'Engle**

This brilliant, award-winning Space fantasy explores time, place, age, energy, intelligence, in a thrilling story in which children use their normal (and, in one case, supernormal) powers in order to rescue their father from a pocket in time. Meg needs to find her scientist father who has mysteriously gone missing. With her little brother Charles and friend Calvin, Meg travels by tesseract, a wrinkle in space-time, on a treacherous journey that leads them into space and to the heart of the terrible struggle between the Dark Thing and the galaxy. Can Meg rescue her father and will they all return home safely?