

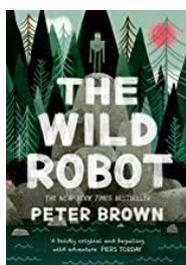
These lists are suggestions of books that might be of interest to the different year groups; they are not compulsory! Elsewhere in this section, however, there is also our Summer Book Bingo and we encourage all boys to try it. There are books listed here that encompass some of the categories in the Bingo grid.

Do also look at the weekly book recommendations offered for [Middle School](#) and [Upper School](#) in the English hub over the course of the summer term.

Entering Year 5

The Wild Robot by Peter Brown

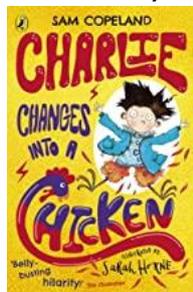
Followed by *The Wild Robot Escapes*



This charming story about a shipwrecked robot is set on a rugged island formed by rising seas, in a future when crates of robots are carted on cargo ships and climate change kicks up violent storms. ROZZUM unit 7134 (Roz) doesn't have emotions, but she's observant and programmed to be helpful and kind. So, as the author wrote, "What would an intelligent robot do in the wilderness? She'd make the wilderness her home." Perhaps that's a message for us all.

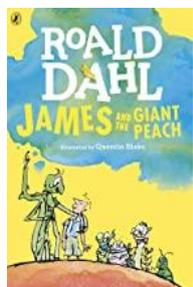
Charlie Changes into a Chicken by Sam Copeland

Followed by *Charlie Turns into a T-Rex* and *Charlie Morphs into a Mammoth*



You may be attracted by the sparkly cover and red pages of this book (hint for your Book Bingo!), but you will hopefully find the inside to be every bit as wonderful. It looks an easy read – and it is – but it's also brilliantly funny, completely bonkers and yet full of good advice about how to deal with anxiety. Charlie has a secret. He can change into animals. All sorts of animals: a flea, a pigeon, even a rhino. The trouble is, he can't control *when*, as it only happens when he gets worried. Right now, Charlie has quite a lot to worry about and, even though every kid wants a superhero power, Charlie isn't keen on changing into a chicken in the middle of the school play...

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl



Many of you may already have read this book, but I wanted to put it on this list to draw your attention to a really wonderful recording of it that is free to view on YouTube at the moment. If you haven't read the book then you definitely should, and if you have read it then head over [here](#) for a real treat as Taika Waititi and 'friends' present a reading of this classic book like you've never heard before!

Moon Bear by Gill Lewis



When developers move in, 12-year-old Tam and his family are relocated to the city from their forest home in Laos. There he finds work at a bear farm, looking after caged wild bears which are used to provide ingredients for folk medicines, but is quickly horrified by the way they are treated. Tam develops a bond with a sick cub he has secretly nursed back to health and longs to find a way to return his beloved cub to the wild. This author's books are always beautifully nuanced tales exploring some of the unethical practises endangering animals around the world. This particular title may help you understand a little more about Asian markets such as the one that is

thought to have unleashed the recent coronavirus.

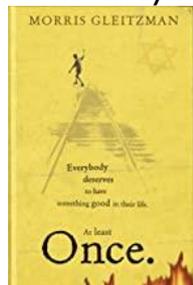
Storm Hound by Clare Fayers



Storm of Odin is the youngest storm hound of the Wild Hunt that haunts lightning-filled skies. He has longed for the time when he will be able to join his brothers and sisters but on his very first hunt he finds he can't keep up and falls to earth, landing on the A40 just outside Abergavenny. Enter 12-year-old Jessica Price, who finds and adopts a cute puppy from an animal rescue centre. And suddenly, a number of strange people seem very interested in her and her new pet, Storm. People who seem to know a lot about magic . . . This fast-paced and funny otherworldly adventure is a tale of friendship and loyalty with entertaining characters, a clever plot and bags of atmosphere.

Once by Morris Gleitzman

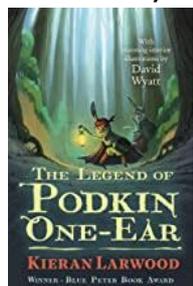
Followed by *Then, Now, After, Soon and Maybe*



This deceptively simple and short book is one that is read avidly by every Year group in Middle and Upper School, as well as many of the teachers. It is 1942 and 9-year old Felix escapes from his orphanage in Poland in a desperate attempt to find his Jewish parents who, he believes, are still alive and in danger. The book brilliantly captures the thinking of a small boy in a frightening world. It doesn't gloss over the atrocities and yet the way the author presents them through the innocent eyes of a child is nothing less than genius. Recommended for all children – and their parents.

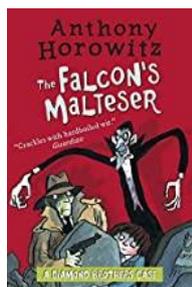
The Legend of Podkin One Ear by Kieran Larwood

Followed by *The Gift of Dark Hollow, The Beast of Grimheart and Uki and the Outcasts*



Podkin, son of the chieftain of the Munbury warren, is forced to flee with his baby brother and capable big sister Paz when their home is invaded by the terrifying 'Gorm', iron-clad monster rabbits turned evil by enchantment. The story of how they fight back - imbued with the magic of a timeless legend – won the Blue Peter Book Award on publication and has proved immensely popular with boys currently in Middle School.

The Falcon's Malteser by Anthony Horowitz

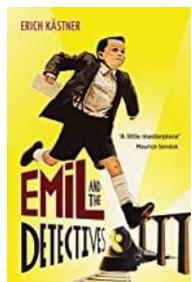


I often put this series on the reading list for boys entering Middle School, as Anthony Horowitz is a terrific writer whose *Alex Rider* series tends to eclipse some of the other great books he has written. This is the first book in his very funny Diamond Brothers series about the world's most defective detectives, and one of the author's full length books featuring the Diamond brothers. For slower readers however, there are several other short titles in the series such as *The Blurred Man* or *The French Confection*. There is also a brand new Diamond Brothers story, called **Where Seagulls Dare**, and you can read it for free [here](#).

Emil and the Detectives by Erich Kästner

Also *Emil and the Three Twins*

Translated by Eileen Hall



If his mother had known the amazing adventures Emil was going to have in Berlin, she would never have let him go. When his money goes missing, Emil teams up with some detectives to get it back - and that is just the start of a terrific old-fashioned adventure. It may seem a little slow at the start (it was written in 1929) but give it a chance and you may find you are richly rewarded...there's a reason it has stayed in print all this time! (And it will fill the 'Book in translation' box in your Book Bingo!)

Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet by Zanib Mian

Followed by *Unexpected Super Spy* and *Incredible Rescue Mission* (23rd July)



This will be quite an easy read for many of our boys about to enter Year 5, but there's nothing wrong with that! It's a graphic chapter book (like *Tom Gates* or *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*) but the wonderful Omar has a refreshing innocence which allows the series to tackle all sorts of issues – from dealing with prejudice to forming new friendships and adjusting to change – with a light and humorous touch. *Planet Omar* was first released under the title *The Muslims*, and won the Little Rebels Award 2018, as well as being shortlisted for the UKLA Award.

Entering Year 6

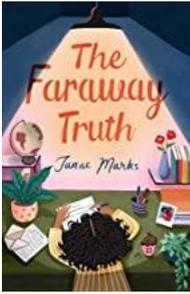
Bloom by Nicola Skinner



I saw several boys reading this last year, but decided to wait until it was in paperback before buying it for the library. Now, having read it, I'm rather sorry I waited! It's a thoroughly entertaining story, full of messages about the importance of green spaces, not building on the green belt land we have, the power of corporations, and the damage they can do. On a more individual level, there are themes of friendship, diversity, the importance of family and, above all, the need to speak out, rather than just keeping quiet. So, lots of messages, but all wrapped up in a brilliant magical story with vivid

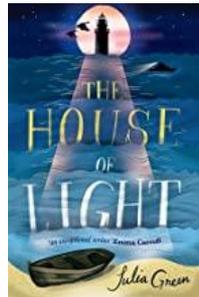
imagery and satisfying characters. It's very funny too!

The Faraway Truth by Janae Marks



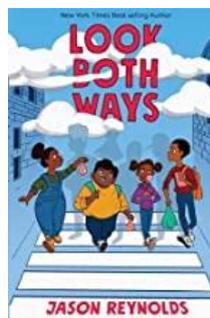
This brand new novel from a debut American author is a warm and wise mystery which is especially relevant in the light of the recent focus on the Blacks Lives Matter movement. Zoe loves to bake, and dreams of being on a children's cookery TV show - but just as she begins to follow those dreams, a letter arrives from her father who has been in prison all her life, revealing that he may not have committed the crime he is in prison for. Zoe decides to try and prove his innocence by following a cold trail to a missing witness. Descriptions of Zoe's cupcake recipes (which might inspire keen cooks!) create a comforting background for this insightful exploration of race and justice.

The House of Light by Julia Green



In an unspecified future – but after climate change has wreaked havoc on the world - Bonnie lives by the sea with her Granda. Her mother left when Bonnie was a baby, presumably for a new life away from the harsh regime that is Bonnie's world. When a strange boy lands on the beach, with a forbidden boat, this is Bonnie's chance for freedom. But will they be able to get away, and what about Granda? This imaginative and beautifully written story feels very timely, and shows us the power of hope and resilience that makes human beings want to flee their homelands for a better life.

Look Both Ways by Jason Reynolds



Jason Reynolds is a rising star in American children's literature. He is a black American poet and author who uses simple language to tell a powerful story. This book is actually a collection of ten short stories about different children, and each story takes place in that in-between time between school and home, when children of a certain age are allowed to walk home without adult supervision. The American setting of the ten blocks around Latimer Middle School is a bit different from what goes on in the UK but this portrayal of a diverse group of children, their fears and their hopes, has universal appeal.

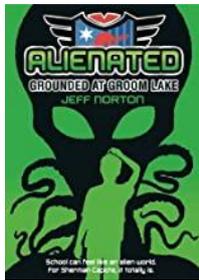
Pages & Co: Tilly and the Bookwanderers by Anna James

Followed by *Tilly and the Lost Fairy Tales*



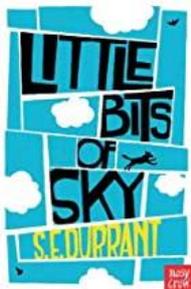
The book for all you true bookworms out there – where fiction really does come to life! 11-year-old Tilly has lived above her grandparents' bookshop ever since her mother disappeared shortly after she was born. Like the rest of her family, Tilly loves nothing more than to escape into the pages of her favourite stories... One day however, Tilly realises that classic children's characters are actually escaping into *her* world – crossing over from the page into real life! With the help of Anne (of Green Gables) and Alice (in Wonderland), Tilly goes 'bookwandering' and steps bravely into the unknown determined to solve the mystery of what happened to her mother all those years ago.

Alienated by Jeff Norton



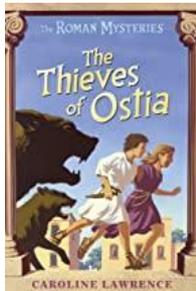
Sherman Capote is quite used to moving schools, but he's never been to a place like Groom Lake High, the high school for aliens at Area 51. As one of only two humans there (the other is his twin sister), he soon makes friends with a gang of galactic misfits: Octo, a quick-witted Ventitent (a twenty-tentacled "octopus"), Houston, a moody robot, Sonya, a rebellious lizard, and Juliet, an omnipotent goddess. So when the school bully, Ned, initiates a War of the Worlds, Sherman and his new friends must set aside homework in order to save the planet! This is one for the stronger readers, and would be equally suited to Year 7, but it's a lovely story – exciting and funny – and, if you prefer - you can also listen to the author reading the whole thing (for free!) [here](#).

Little Bits of Sky by S. E. Durrant



Those of you who read this author's book *Listening to the Moon* for the Easter Family Book Club might be interested in this one. It was her debut novel (Book Bingo hint!) but, in the words of one reviewer, "reads as if written by an experienced children's author at the height of her powers". The story follows Miracle (Ira) and her younger brother, Zac who are 'care kids'. They have a 'book of memories' that shows them on a chair with a black dog, but that's about it. They dream of a time when they may find their mum again or of being wanted by a normal family but, in reality, they expect very little out of life. So realistic, yet ultimately so uplifting, this book is highly recommended.

The Thieves of Ostia by Caroline Lawrence



Followed by 17 other titles in the Roman Mysteries series! There's never a bad time to introduce a new group of readers to this internationally bestselling series of detective novels set in the first-century AD. The chief protagonists are four children: Flavia, the daughter of a ship's captain living in Ostia, the port of Rome, in AD79; Jonathan, a Jewish boy; Nubia, an African slave girl; and Lupus, a mute beggar boy. Their adventures are full of intrigue and danger, and you will also earn a lot about life in Ancient Rome before starting Latin next term!

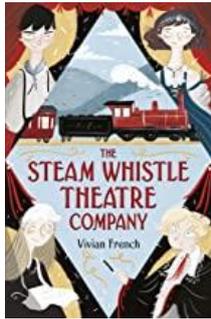
Inkheart by Cornelia Funke

Followed by *Inkspell* and *Inkdeath*
Translated by Anthea Bell



This wonderful trilogy (now described as a 'modern classic') has just been reissued in a new 5th edition so it seems a good time to reintroduce you to the story of Meggie, the daughter of a bookbinder called Mo who, when his past catches up with him, is forced to reveal to his daughter his terrible secret: he has the ability, or curse, to breathe life into any story he reads and make the characters come alive. There is a movie available if you are interested, but please read the book first – it is much, much better! (And it fits into Book Bingo as a book translated from another language OR a one-word title!)

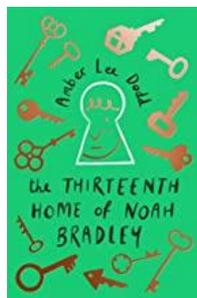
The Steam Whistle Theatre Company by Vivian French



I've always loved this highly acclaimed author who, with more than 250 books under her belt, always manages to provide vivid settings, brilliant characters and, best of all, great humour. Her latest book doesn't disappoint, and is set in Victorian England with dark and deadly deeds, piratical plots, helpless heiresses and poor little orphans. To avoid financial ruin, the Bottle family's theatre-troupe has left London behind, travelling to the north of England in search of new audiences to play to. But will their plans be foiled by the odious Olio Sleevevery? It's time for young actors Rosie and Charlie, with the help of their new friend Edie, to save the day.

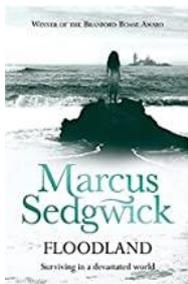
Entering Year 7

The Thirteenth Home of Noah Bradley by Amber Lee Dodd



Moving house is no fun. And no one knows that better than Noah Bradley, as an ancient curse has forced his family to move thirteen times. Whether it's a typhoon, a flash flood or a flock of persistent birds, the curse always wins. Now, the Bradley family have just moved into their thirteenth home and Noah loves everything about it... he has his own room, he's made friends at school and he's happy. So when the curse returns, Noah decides that this time, there will be no more running away. This is a terrific book – an absorbing, atmospheric adventure, with characters you really care about. A great read for anyone who has ever worried about friendship groups and 'fitting in'.

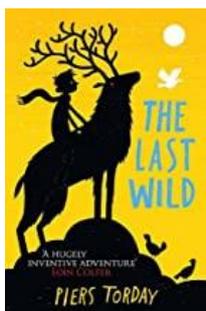
Floodland by Marcus Sedgwick



This powerful debut novel about surviving in a sinking world marked the beginning of this author's multi-award-winning career. England is drowning, Norwich is an island and Zoe, left behind in the confusion when her parents escaped, survives there as best she can. The belief that she will one day find her parents spurs Zoe on to a dramatic escape. It's not a long book, but quite intense and better for the more serious and thoughtful reader. If you prefer, you can listen to the author reading the whole book, for free, [here](#). (Note for those doing Book Bingo – debut novel, eco theme, one word title!)

The Last Wild by Piers Torday

Followed by *The Dark Wild* and *The Wild Beyond*



Another ecologically-themed book, this was also the debut novel for this author and one that tends to have a real impact on all who read it, as it's magical, engaging (and often funny) and yet also thought-provoking. In a world devastated by global warming, food is no longer grown and animals are dying from a mysterious plague. Kester realises he is able to communicate with animals when a cockroach enlists his help to save animals surviving in the Last Wild. This wonderful book reminds us of the damage we will do if we aren't vigilant about our connection to the natural world.

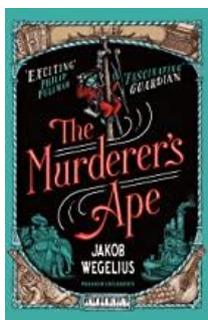
The Good Hawk by Joseph Elliott



Agatha is a Hawk, who protects her people by patrolling the high walls of their island home. She is proud of her job, though some whisper that it is meant to keep her out of the way because of the condition she was born (Down's Syndrome, although it isn't given a name in the book). Jaime, thoughtful and anxious, is an Angler, but he hates the sea. When their clan is taken captive, the two children have to leave their remote Scottish island and embark on a perilous journey to try to save their people. This gripping, suspenseful historical fantasy, with some terrifying mythical creatures, would be perfect for all Upper School readers (although there is the occasional gruesome detail so leave it until later in the year if you are worried).

The Murderer's Ape by Jakob Wegelius

Translated by Peter Graves



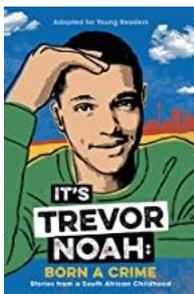
Sally Jones is an intelligent, thoughtful, loyal and highly literate gorilla. She can't talk (of course not; she's a gorilla!), but she can write, and her clear-sighted recounting of the chain of events that leads to her friend, 'the Chief', being falsely convicted of murder, and her tireless mission to clear his name make for a compelling story of mystery, betrayal and friendship. This utterly charming, totally original book was hailed as a Sunday Times, Observer, Guardian, Times, Telegraph and Book Trust Book of the Year when it was first published in English in 2017.

The Night Diary by Veera Hiranandani



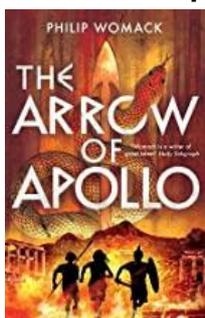
It's 1947, and India, newly independent of British rule, has been separated into two countries: Pakistan and India. The divide has created much tension between Hindus and Muslims, and half-Muslim, half-Hindu 12-year-old Nisha doesn't know where she belongs. When Papa decides it's too dangerous to stay in what is now Pakistan, Nisha and her family become refugees and embark on a long and dangerous journey to reach their new home. *The Night Diary* is told through Nisha's letters to her dead mother, and the diary format gives striking immediacy to a fraught moment in history. Highly recommended for all.

It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime by Trevor Noah



I don't usually include a book in a reading list until I have read it myself but, when I arrived back in school this week, I was immediately accosted by a boy who wanted to recommend this book to me (thank you, Tanav!). From all the excellent reviews, it sounds as if this will provide a fascinating, honest (and funny!) perspective on apartheid. Trevor Noah, host of *The Daily Show*, grew up in South Africa, with a black mother and a white father at a time when it was against the law for a mixed-race child like him to exist. Yet from an early age Trevor used his keen humour to navigate a harsh life under a racist government. It's important to note that this recommended book is the young readers' adaptation of his bestselling adult memoir.

The Arrow of Apollo by Philip Womack



This author, who has visited our school book club, is a Classics scholar whose books are suffused with his knowledge of the Ancient World. In his latest book, it is a generation after the fall of Troy and the gods are abandoning the earth, to live in peace in other worlds. In their place, dark forces are rising and Python is massing an army of immense power. The only thing that can save the world is the Arrow of Apollo - but it has been split into two. Silvius, son of Aeneas, and Elissa, niece of Dido, have to join forces with Tisamenos, son of Arestes and their natural enemy. They must put aside their bitter rivalries from the past to bring together the pieces of the Arrow and use it to lay Python low once more.

Waiting for Anya by Michael Morpurgo



We would usually recommend that boys begin reading this author's books from around Year 4 or 5. Yet, although Morpurgo's simple prose means that none of them are difficult to read, they vary in emotional depth and content. This book was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal when it was first published in 1990, and is set, like many of the author's books, in World War II. Shepherd Jo stumbles on a dangerous secret: Jewish children are being smuggled away from the Nazis, close to his mountain village in Spain. Now, German soldiers have been stationed at the border and Jo must get word to his Jewish friends that the children are trapped.

The slightest mistake could cost lives. If you are interested, you might also like to watch the film of the book which was released in February.

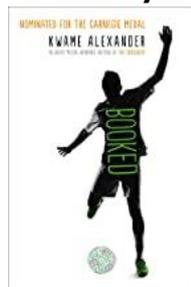
Dragon Pearl by Yoon Ha Lee



'Rick Riordan Presents' is a small arm of a publishing company that aims to publish about four books a year from underrepresented cultures and backgrounds. *Dragon Pearl* is a fascinating mixture of sci-fi and Korean mythology in which Min, a girl with shape-shifting powers, 'charms' herself onto a spaceship in search of her beloved brother who is accused of going AWOL in search of the unimaginably powerful dragon pearl. Her mission uncovers deception and sabotage, as well as space pirates, vengeful ghosts and a host of supernatural creatures of Korean mythology.

Entering Year 8

Booked by Kwame Alexander



Twelve-year-old Nick is a football-mad boy who absolutely hates books. Football, family, love, and friendship take centre stage as Nick tries to figure out how to navigate his parents' break-up, stand up to bullies, and impress the girl of his dreams. These challenges – which seem even harder than scoring a tie-breaking, game-winning goal – are narrated in energetic free verse by the poet Kwame Alexander, who captures all the thrills and setbacks, the action and emotion of a World Cup match. This was the first 'verse novel' to captivate many of our Upper School readers, and still one

of the best – although there are many more on the market now.

In the Shadow of Heroes by Nicholas Bowling



recommended!

Fourteen-year-old Cadmus has been scholar Tullus's slave since he was a baby - his master is the only family he knows. But when Tullus disappears and a taciturn slave called Tog - formerly a British princess - arrives with a secret message, Cadmus's life is turned upside down. The pair follow a trail that leads to Emperor Nero himself, and his crazed determination to possess the Golden Fleece of Greek mythology. This madcap quest will push Cadmus to the edge of the Roman Empire - and reveal unexpected truths about his past. Wonderful characters and great story – highly

Outwalkers by Fiona Shaw



Scotland. There is plenty to think about here, but the primary focus is on Jake and the gang of children called the Outwalkers as they struggle towards freedom.

This is a fat book (over 400 pages) but please don't let that put you off – you will most probably fly through it! It's a hard-hitting novel set in a dystopian England of the near future. The borders with continental Europe are closed, and the New Wall along the Scottish border is heavily guarded. Everyone in England has a chip implanted in the back of their necks so the government can track their movements. Jake is an orphan who escapes from a grim care 'Academy' and sets off with his dog on a desperate cross-country trek towards the New Wall and his grandparents, who live in

The Beast Player by Nahoko Uehashi

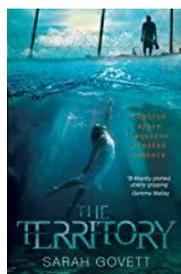
Translated by Cathy Hirano



Many boys become interested in Japanese culture through the medium of Manga, and this spine-tingling fantasy by a best-selling Japanese author has all the authentic strangeness of a society preoccupied with tradition, responsibility, honour and power. Erin's family care for the fearsome serpents at the core of the kingdom's army. When the beasts suddenly die, Erin's mother is executed but manages to send her daughter to safety. The story of how Erin learns to speak with serpents and saves her country is an epic read for every fantasy lover.

The Territory by Sarah Govett

Followed by *The Territory: Escape* and *The Territory: Truth*



intense but hopeful – this is a trilogy you won't forget in a hurry.

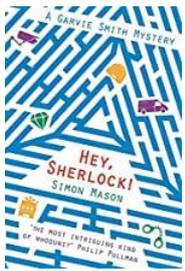
This book has been in the library for some time and always proved exceptionally popular with those who have read it. It was the author's debut novel, and has an ecological theme – so would fit two different boxes on your Book Bingo! In a flooded world of dwindling resources, the richest children have a node inserted on the back of their necks so they can download information without studying. Those without nodes – the Norms – have to struggle to compete, as anyone who fails the exams will be shipped off to the Wetlands and a life of misery, if not certain death. Gripping,

Deep Secret by Berlie Doherty



The brand new re-release of this book, first published in 2003, made me want to recommend it to boys who may not be aware of one of our finest witters for young people who has won the Carnegie Medal twice! Loosely based on a real historical event – the drowning of a village to create the Ladybower Reservoir in Derbyshire – *Deep Secret* is the story of identical twins Grace and Madeleine and their village community. It's 1945 and, after the upheaval of the war, the characters in the book now face losing their homes so their valley can be flooded. It's a touching description of a lost way of life and the kind of story that will resonate with you long after the final page.

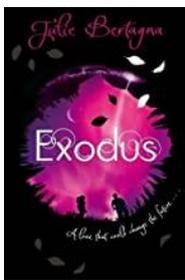
Hey, Sherlock! by Simon Mason



This is actually the third Garvie Smith mystery, but each can be read as a standalone title and this one is, in my opinion, the most appropriate for those boys just at the start of Year 8. All three books are incredibly entertaining; funny, action-packed and guaranteed to keep you guessing. The hero, Garvie Smith, is very smart indeed. He's also lazy, cocky, irritating and prone to poking his nose in where he's not wanted. In this title, he has left school and taken on a new job as a fencer (rather badly). The disappearance of the teenage daughter of the house whose fence he is fixing is a mystery that Garvie feels better able to solve than the police, of whom he has a very low opinion...

Exodus by Julie Bertagna

Followed by *Zenith* and *Aurora*



Like *The Territory* earlier in this list, *Exodus* is a book that has been around for some time – in this case, since 2002. It was one of the first children's novels to try to inform young readers about global warming, a topic that is now tackled in many books, and is still one of the best. It is set in 2099 and the world is drowning as Arctic ice floes melt and the seas rise. Packed into tiny boats, Mara and her community are attempting to flee their fast-disappearing island, but when they reach a bizarre city built on the drowned remains of the ancient city of Glasgow, they realise that they are asylum-seekers in a world torn between high-tech wizardry and the most primitive injustice.

Contender: The Chosen by Taran Matharu



This author's 'Summoner' series has been hugely popular in school, so the first in a new series, now available in paperback, is very exciting. When Cade is convicted of a crime he didn't commit, he's sent away to reform school, where life is predictably grim and brutal. But this in no way prepares him for the day he opens his eyes to find himself on a narrow shelf of rock overlooking a deep canyon... with a razor-clawed, needle-toothed monster prowling below him... This fantasy thriller has many elements of a video game as Cade is forced to become a contender in a deadly game of the highest stakes, controlled by invisible overlords.

All Fall Down by Sally Nicholls



It was the author's note in this book that made me feel I should include it in this list: "I wanted to write a book which showed that catastrophes have happened here, and could happen again. And I wanted to show that human beings have an astonishing ability to stand in the ruins of their world and to build it up again from the ashes." This meticulously researched book takes place in the summer of 1349 and events are narrated by fourteen year old Isabel who lives in the tiny village of Ingleforn in Yorkshire. She and her family are "villeins", tied to the land they rent, so they can only watch and wait as the 'Black Death' consumes the country. This was published last September, before we had any inkling of Covid 19 on the horizon, but in the light of what has happened in the world recently it seemed an appropriate book for all to try.