reading guide 2023

200 great LGBTQ+ reads for ages 0–18

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every child a reader

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every child a reader

Children's Books Ireland is the national charity and arts organisation that champions every child's right to develop a love of reading. Through our many activities and events we aim to engage young people with books, foster a greater understanding of the importance of books for young people and act as a core resource for those with an interest in books for children in Ireland. Our mission is to inspire a love of reading in children and young people in Ireland, to share our expertise and enthusiasm with the adults who guide and influence them, to champion every child's right to excellent books and live literature events and support the artists who make that goal possible across the island of Ireland.

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At **An Post**, our brand purpose is to act for the common good, to improve the quality of life in Ireland now and for generations to come. We are on a journey to build an inclusive workplace, where differences are celebrated and everyone is welcome.

We know that seeing yourself represented in the books around you is undeniably good and we are delighted to partner with Children's Books Ireland to bring you this Pride reading guide for children and young people.

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Each review in this guide comes with a suggested age range. These are based on the information provided by the publisher as well as our own judgement of the level for which the language and content is most suitable. In some cases you may see two or more age ranges e.g. 12–14, 15+. In these cases, we feel that the book is suitable for a wider age span. These age ranges are a guide only – it is impossible to accurately predict the correct level for every child. If in doubt, parents/carers and teachers are advised to read the book themselves before deciding whether it is suitable for the child or young person.

SOPHIE BEER aistrithe ag SHANNA Ní RABHARTAIGH agus GILLIAN Nic IONMHAIN

CROÍ AN TEAGHLAIGH AN GRÁ

AN GÚM LÚNASA 2023 (CRUA) 24LCH €9.50 ISBN 9781857919899

Leabhar beag ildaite nua-aimseartha a léiríonn cineálacha éagsúla teaghlach, bíodh sin beirt mhamaithe nó aithreacha, tuismitheoirí aonair, seantuismitheoirí, nó tuismitheoirí ar daoine de dhath iad. Léirítear seo sna pictiúir, a théann in éindí le téacs nach ndéanann tagairt don eagsúlacht seo. Tá abairt amháin ar gach dhá leathanach a deir cad is grá ann. Tá codarsnacht mhór sna dathanna.Oiriúnach mar leabhairín suaimhneach am codlata do theaghlach ar bith le leanbh óg – críochnaíonn sé ar 'Oíche mhaith' ach d'fhéadfaí é a léamh am ar bith. (Aois 0–2)

Read also: *Mommy, Mama and Me* by Lesléa Newman and Carol Thompson

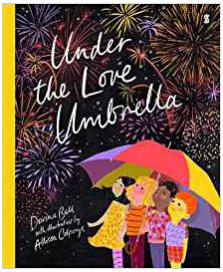
CHRISTIANE ENGEL

BABY'S FIRST WORDS

BAREFOOT BOOKS 2019 (BOARD) 20PP £5.99 ISBN 9781782858720

Baby's First Words is packed with a wide range of vocabulary for little ones. The illustrations are beautiful, full of interesting details and visual textures, perfect for curious, attentive little eyes. Another great merit of *Baby's First Words* is the depiction of baby's parents as a same-sex interracial couple, reflecting the diverse world we live in. (Non-fiction, Age 0–2)

Read also: *Find Out About: Families* by Pat-a-Cake and Louise Forshaw



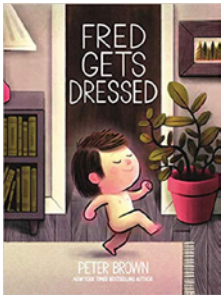
DAVINA BELL illustrated by ALLISON COLPOYS

UNDER THE LOVE UMBRELLA

SCRIBBLE UK 2018 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781925228977

From this award-winning creative duo comes a book about the wonder of ever-present love. Written in rhyming couplets, this is a stunning celebration of the joy and inclusivity of love as a force that's always with us, whoever we are and wherever we go in the big, wild world. Bright, expressive and featuring joyfully diverse illustrations throughout. A gorgeous book for families to share. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *Love is Powerful* by Heather Dean Brewer and Leuyen Pham



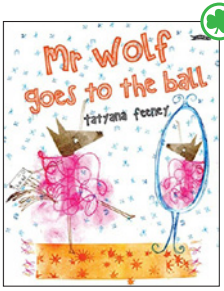
PETER BROWN

FRED GETS DRESSED

TEMPLAR PUBLISHING 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781787419506

Fred loves to romp around his house *au naturel* until one day he finds his parents' closet door open, ventures inside and decides to have a try for himself: Dad's clothes don't fit him properly but Mum's clothes actually fit him very well. Next he dabbles in the jewellery and make-up drawer and that's when his parents arrive – and join in the fun! The tone throughout the story and illustrations is light-hearted and cosy, opening up a safe space for parents and children to talk about non-traditional gender roles and self-expression. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *The Spectacular Suit* by Kat Patrick and Hayley Wells



TATYANA FEENEY

MR WOLF GOES TO THE BALL

THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2023 (HBK) 32PP €14.99 ISBN 9781788493345

When Mr Wolf chooses a gown over a tuxedo for the ball, some of his friends react strongly against his outfit. Disheartened by these comments, Mr Wolf is resigned to staying home. But when Sheep supports Mr Wolf in his personal choice, calling out the reactions of the other friends as 'nonsense', Mr Wolf gains a new sense of confidence. Set in the context of the appropriateness of a mister's choice of clothing, this fun and inclusive story is about unconscious bias versus personal choice. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *Perfectly Norman* by Tom Percival

PATRICIA HEGARTY illustrated by RYAN WHEATCROFT

WE ARE FAMILY

CATERPILLAR BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 24PP £7.99 ISBN 9781848576438

All families are different – and yet in many ways the same! This book uses a gentle rhyming text to follow eight different families, celebrating their everyday differences as well as the similarities they share. Through illness and health, in celebration and disappointment, families stick together. Even though every family is different, the love is all the same. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *Peanut Goes for the Gold* by Jonathan Van Ness and Gillian Reid

GILLIAN HIBBS

COVERED IN ADVENTURES

CHILD'S PLAY 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781786283474

Sasha's dads want her to get a new jumper as her old one is covered in stains. But where the grown-ups see mess, Sasha sees all the fun she's had with her friends and family. The adventures Sasha shares with her friends are not bound by gender or ability – from building pirate ships and volcanoes to playing football and camping, this is a glorious celebration of childhood. The illustrations are bright and joyful, and celebrate diversity in both family and friendship. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *The Pronoun Book* by Chris Ayala-Kronos and Melita Tirado

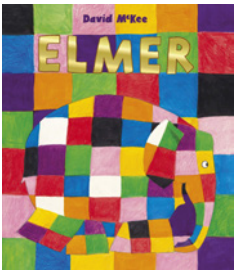
JODIE LANCET-GRANT illustrated by LYDIA CORRY

THE PIRATE MUMS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9780192777799

Billy's parents are not like everyone else's. His mums are always singing sea shanties, have a pet parrot and use smelly old maps instead of a sat-nav. It's SO embarrassing. Billy wishes his family was 'normal'. But then a swashbuckling adventure changes everything ... This is an entertaining story about appreciating the value of being unique. The quirky illustrations match the energetic story and have lots of fun details for readers to enjoy. A lively story that is perfect for reading aloud. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *My Mums Love Me* by Anna Membrino and Joy Hwang Ruiz



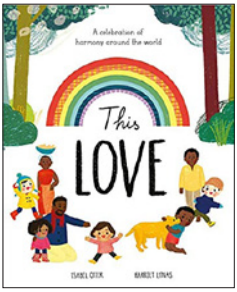
DAVID McKEE

ELMER

ANDERSEN PRESS 2007 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781842707319

Elmer is different. Elmer is patchwork. He begins to think that the grey elephants are mocking him when they laugh at him, and he soon starts to wonder what it would be like to be just the same as them. When he disguises himself to fit-in, he finds that the herd have lost their sense of joy and realises that they were laughing with him. Little readers will love this enduring story full of colour, wisdom and pathos. First published in 1989, *Elmer* has become an icon of happiness and celebrating difference. A modern classic. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *We Are the Rainbow! The Colours of Pride* by Claire Winslow and Riley Samels



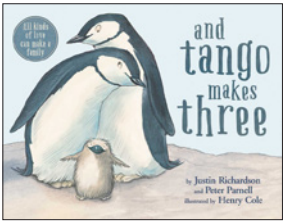
ISABEL OTTER illustrated by HARRIET LYNAS

THIS LOVE

CATERPILLAR BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781848578548

What is love to you? *This Love* is a collection of different 'moments' when different people feel love. The moments, captured in rhyme, are heartwarming and the sentiment, that love is what they all have in common, is an important idea. These words and accompanying illustrations work seamlessly together to create layers to show what difference means. The narrative touches on differences like place, race, faith, family and age. The illustrations are warm and beautiful, making this a wonderful celebration of diversity. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *ABC Pride* by Louie Stowell and Elly Barnes



JUSTIN RICHARDSON and PETER PARNELL illustrated by HENRY COLE

AND TANGO MAKES THREE

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2007 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781847381484

Based on real events at the penguin house at the Central Park Zoo, this is the story of two penguins named Roy and Silo who were a little bit different from the others. But their desire for a family was the same. And with the help of a kindly zookeeper, Roy and Silo got the chance to welcome a baby penguin of their very own. A simple story of love and acceptance. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *Forever Star: A Quest to Find a Forever Family* by Louie Stowell and Elly Barnes

JESSICA SPANYOL

CLIVE AND HIS BABIES

CHILD'S PLAY 2016 (BOARDBOOK) 14PP £5.99 ISBN 9781846438820

This series introduces readers to Clive, who loves to share his many collections of 'things', from his hats to his bags and his dolls, with his many friends. In this book we meet Clive's dolls (his babies). Clive nurtures and feeds them, potty trains them, plays and has fun with them, and with his friends and their babies too! In this very gentle exploration of stereotypical gender roles, we see Clive and his friends naturally imitating the caring and nurturing behaviour they see their parents and guardians offering. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *Clive and His Bags* by Jessica Spanyol

JESSICA SPANYOL
ROSA LOVES CARS
CHILD'S PLAY 2018 (BOARDBOOK) 14PP £5.99 ISBN 9781786281258

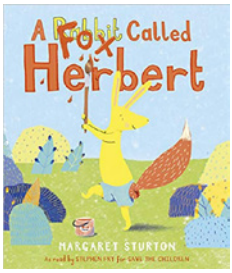
This series introduces very young readers to Rosa – she loves to kick balls, ride her scooter and play with her dinosaurs. But perhaps most of all, Rosa loves all kinds of vehicles, from trucks to diggers to campervans. Rosa loves playing with her collection of cars and trucks and sharing them with her friends, and they even make their own car out of a cardboard box! A colourful boardbook with simple, clear text, perfect for young children. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *Rosa Loves Dinosaurs* by Jessica Spanyol

STEPHANIE STANSBIE illustrated by KATY HALFORD
MY FRIENDS AND ME: A CELEBRATION OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF FAMILIES
LITTLE TIGER PRESS 2020 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781788817318

Some of Jamie's friends have two moms while some have two dads. Some of them have beds in two different houses while others live on a boat. While all these families might look different, there's some things they all have in common – they are filled with love (and the adults are bad at dancing!). With fun details on every page to amuse readers, this book is sure to entertain while celebrating family love in all its forms. (Age 2–4)

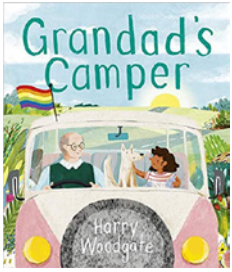
Read also: *Fabulous Frankie* by Simon James Green and Garry Parsons



MARGARET STURTON
A FOX CALLED HERBERT
ANDERSEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781783449330

Born a rabbit, bright young Herbert is determined to become a fox, but through his efforts meets the ire of his mother, who just wants him to 'be a good rabbit'. An impossible ask for Herbert who, throughout this charming picturebook, transforms himself into a red-dotted, pointy-eared, bushy-tailed fox. With bright, expressive illustrations, this is a positive, heartwarming story about the struggles of becoming who you've always wanted to be and eventually finding acceptance, expertly crafted for young children. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *I'm a Girl!* by Yasmeen Ismail



HARRY WOODGATE
GRANDAD'S CAMPER
ANDERSEN PRESS 2022 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781783449927

This beautiful picturebook navigates the grief associated with the loss of a grandparent through a celebration of their life, stories and adventures. Filled with love, *Grandad's Camper* explores elements of the LGBTQ+ experience and family through vibrant, colourful illustrations. Truly, the core of *Grandad's Camper* is a message about how the people we love always stay with us on the journey we call life. Stories like this allow us to cherish their legacy. (Age 2–4)

Read also: *Grandad's Pride* by Harry Woodgate

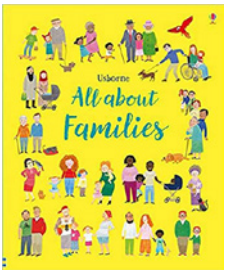
KELLY & ZOEY ALLEN illustrated by TARA O'BRIEN

MY MOMMA ZO

UCLan PUBLISHING 2023 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781915235084

Addressing a big topic such as the transition of a parent can seem overwhelming, but this heartfelt, easy-to-read book makes a good start. Molly shares the story of how unhappy her Momma Zo was when she used to be called Daddy. Since becoming Momma Zo she is much happier and so is everyone else. With colourful illustrations, through Molly's eyes we see what is important about family: that they support and love one another, helping each other through good times and bad. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *My Brother George* by Kelly & Zoey Allen, and Tara O'Brien



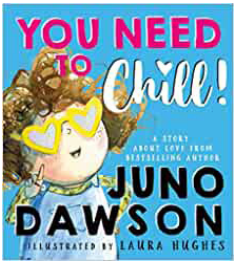
FELICITY BROOKS illustrated by MAR FERRERO

ALL ABOUT FAMILIES

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2018 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9781474949071

An engaging book highlighting the many variations of family, *All About Families* is an informative resource to encourage awareness, understanding and connection. Blended families, same-sex parents, single-parent families, foster parents, adoptive families and much more all feature. Brooks writes in a clear, simple style, exploring questions such as 'What is a family for?' 'How can a family change?' and topics like languages, foods and celebrations. Mar Ferrero's bright, busy illustrations are full of activity and are a true celebration of family diversity. Ideal for every school library. (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)

Read also: *The Family Book* by Todd Parr



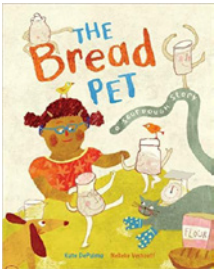
JUNO DAWSON illustrated by LAURA HUGHES

YOU NEED TO CHILL!

FARSHORE 2022 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9780008488284

The children in school are curious about what has happened to our heroine's 'brother Bill': was he eaten by a whale? Taken by aliens to Mars? Why has Bill disappeared? When all the hysteria gets to be too much, everyone simply needs to chill! With a clear and sassy explanation, we learn that Bill now goes by Lily, and as sisters go, she really is the best! A funny and child-friendly way to start a conversation on supporting a loved one exploring their gender identity. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *Billy's Bravery* by Tom Percival



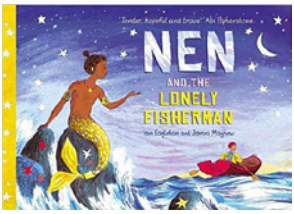
KATE DePALMA illustrated by NELLEKE VERHOEFF

THE BREAD PET: A SOURDOUGH STORY

BAREFOOT BOOKS 2020 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781646860654

Cora has been gifted some sourdough starter and instructions to keep it growing. The 'bread pet' quickly becomes a very active part of her inclusive home. As her kitchen becomes overwhelmed with starter and surplus loaves, her mum and mama step in to help Cora feed their multi-ethnic community. The rich diversity of Cora's community is affectionately captured with textural illustrations, and Cora's signature cobalt-blue hearing aids, yellow hair clips and light blue glasses add colour and vibrance to each page's gentle and warm palette. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *Aalfred and Aalbert* by Morag Hood



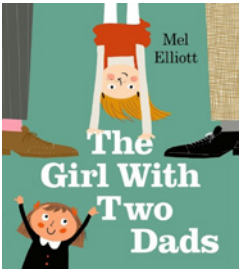
IAN EAGLETON and JAMES MAYHEW

NEN AND THE LONELY FISHERMAN

OWLET PRESS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781913339098

This is the story of the romance between a lonely fisherman named Ernest and a merman named Nen. Nen sings a sad song out across the ocean which is finally heard by Ernest. However Nen's father, Pelagios, does not want his son venturing to the surface world and sends a storm to separate them. This beautiful tale, with an age appropriate and poignant romance at its heart, that is matched by gorgeous illustrations by James Mayhew. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *My Shadow Is Pink* by Scott Stuart



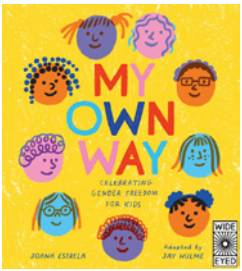
MEL ELLIOTT

THE GIRL WITH TWO DADS

EGMONT PUBLISHING 2019 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781405292436

Matilda is a new girl at Pearl's school, but there's something really cool about her family – she has TWO dads! Pearl is sure that Matilda's family must be very different to her own but, as they become friends, she starts to discover that maybe Matilda's family isn't so different after all. A funny, heartwarming tale, showing how much all kinds of families have in common. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *My Daddies* by Gareth Peter illustrated by Garry Parsons



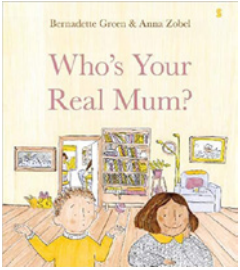
JOANA ESTRELA adapted by JAY HULME

MY OWN WAY: CELEBRATING GENDER FREEDOM FOR KIDS

WIDE EYED EDITIONS 2022 (HBK) 48PP £10.99 ISBN 9780711265844

This books helps introduce the idea of gender freedom, aiming to show that the perceived stereotype of the world being only pink or blue isn't true. The sparse poetic rhyming statements and bold illustrations cover quite a lot, but the book would be best shared in a space where discussion is encouraged. It opens up the juxtaposition of how we present ourselves to the outside world and how we may feel inside, with the core message of understanding that when it comes to who we are, it's what's in our hearts that matters most. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *An ABC of Equality* by Chana Ewing and Paulina Morgan



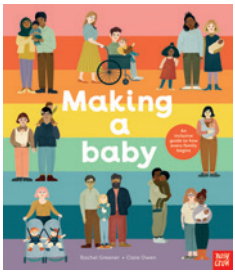
BERNADETTE GREEN illustrated by ANNA ZOBEL

WHO'S YOUR REAL MUM?

SCRIBBLE UK 2020 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781913348137

Elvi, who is of mixed race, has two mothers, one of whom has brown skin. Her friend Nicholas asks her which woman is her real mother. She patiently explains that both are. Children of same-sex parents will identify with Elvi's attempts to answer questions about her parents, while children of traditional family units will see that not all families look like theirs. This funny and touching book explores how all families are different yet very similar when it comes to the important things. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *He's My Mom!* by Sarah Savage and Joules Garcia



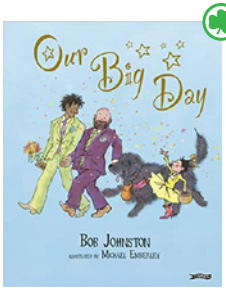
RACHEL GREENER illustrated by CLARE OWEN

MAKING A BABY: AN INCLUSIVE GUIDE TO HOW EVERY FAMILY BEGINS

NOSY CROW 2021 (HBK) 32PP £11.99 ISBN 9781788008013

This book is a perfect starting point to explain how new life can begin, including IUI, IVF, adoption and surrogacy. Using questions ('What is a person's sex?') and conversational, inclusive language ('Isn't it amazing to be able to see a baby growing inside a person's womb!') as well as a glossary, this is an honest, clear introduction to baby-making and birth. Owen's illustrations are emotive and stylish, depicting same-sex families, single parents and a diversity of ethnicities, religions and abilities. (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)

Read also: *Growing Up: An Inclusive Guide to Puberty and Your Changing Body* by Rachel Greener and Clare Owen



BOB JOHNSTON illustrated by MICHAEL EMBERLEY

OUR BIG DAY

THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2022 (HBK) 32PP €12.99 ISBN 9781788493147

Uncle David and his partner Simon have lived together with their fluffy dog, Bear, for a long time. They are due to get married. The narrator, David's young niece, explains that, in Ireland, everyone is now allowed to marry the person they love the most. This is since the Irish public voted that men can marry men and women can marry women. There is lots to do, and Uncle David's niece helps Uncle David and Simon prepare for their wedding. This is a celebration of love, of family and of a commitment to marriage equality. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *Uncle Bobby's Wedding* by Sarah S. Brannen and Lucia Soto

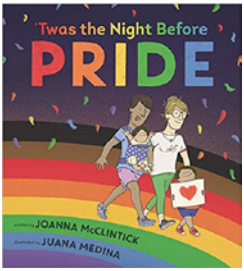
JESSICA LOVE

JULIAN IS A MERMAID

WALKER BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 40PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406386424

Julian and Nana spot some beautiful mermaids on their way home from the pool, which inspires the little boy to play dress-up. But what will Nana think? This incredibly beautiful picturebook, with minimal text and gorgeous illustrations, explores what it means to be yourself and to be loved unconditionally. A story overflowing with charm, tenderness and humour, with glorious illustrations that lift the whole thing to another level. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *Julian at the Wedding* by Jessica Love



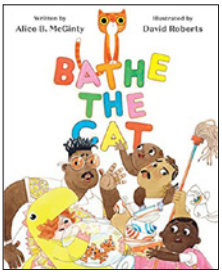
JOANNA McCLINTICK illustrated by JUANA MEDINA

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE PRIDE

WALKER BOOKS 2022 (HBK) 32PP £12.99 ISBN 9781529506372

While the rhyming in this picturebook can feel a little forced at times, perhaps hamstrung by being modelled on the classic verse, it does however do a good job of showing the excitement of a young family preparing for the next day's Pride parade. A book of two halves, the first is a happy family vignette and the second a well explained history of Pride, from resistance and riots to the family friendly marches we know today. The two combine to clearly illustrate the importance of why we still march. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders and Steven Salerno



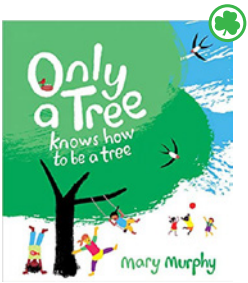
ALICE B. McGINTY illustrated by DAVID ROBERTS

BATHE THE CAT

CHRONICLE BOOKS 2021 (HBK) 48PP £12.99 ISBN 9781452142708

An utterly charming romping riot of a book. All busy families will recognise the chaos of family life at chore-time here. The family cat ensures that the 'to-do list' is continually scrambled, giving the creative team behind this book licence to run wild with stylish illustrations and clever rhyming word-play that gets funnier the more frantic the two stressed-out dads become. In this tale designed for bedtime and reading aloud, the outrageous chaos is eventually wrangled into loving calm, and your young readers will merrily drift into sleep, worn out from all the laughing. (Age 5–8)

Read also: *Cinder and Ella* by Barbara Slade and Lucia Soto



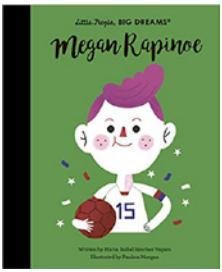
MARY MURPHY

ONLY A TREE KNOWS HOW TO BE A TREE

OTTER-BARRY BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781913074524

This picturebook is an exploration of the world and our place in it and how everyone and everything a child can imagine belongs and is valued, both as itself and as a part of various communities, societies and systems. This is a celebration of uniqueness and of commonality, of individuals and animals belonging together in a world that holds endless potential for wonder and kindness. This is the kind of picturebook that will lead to important conversations about identity, what it means to belong and our capacity for empathy and imagination.
(Age 5–8)

Read also: *Pride and Joy* by Frank J. Sileo, Kate Lum-Potvin and Emmi Smid



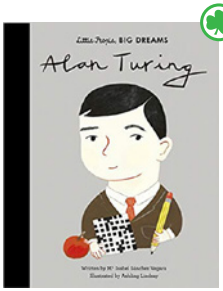
MARIA ISABEL SÁNCHEZ VEGARA illustrated by PAULINA MORGAN

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG DREAMS: MEGAN RAPINOE

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9780711257818

Little Megan realised at a young age that she had a gift when it came to soccer. While she did not always feel that she fitted in at school, she knew she belonged on the soccer pitch. In fact, she was a star – her skill and talent led her, as captain, to becoming an Olympic gold medallist, a two-time Women's World Cup champion and a Golden Boot winner! An advocate for women's sports and gender equality, she is also an outspoken LGBTQ+ advocate. A biography of Billie Jean King is also available as part of this series. (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)

Read also: *Little People Big Dreams: Elton John* by Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara and Sophie Beer



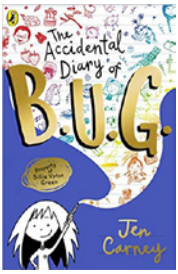
MARIA ISABEL SÁNCHEZ VEGARA illustrated by ASHLING LINDSAY

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG DREAMS: ALAN TURING

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2020 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9780711246775

Open this book and discover – bit by bit – the biography of the founding father of modern computer science. Inspiring and educational, this book is a great resource for use in the classroom, as it touches on many aspects of the curriculum: threads of STEM, history and LGBTQ+ education are all seamlessly woven into the narrative. The book does well to distil Turing's multifarious life into such a short and breathable word count, and in doing so it reinforces one clear message: dream big, little ones! (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)

Read also: *Little People, Big Dreams: RuPaul* by Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara and Sophie Beer



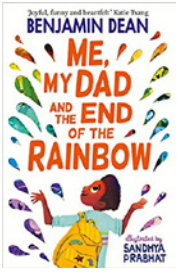
JEN CARNEY

THE ACCIDENTAL DIARY OF B.U.G.

PUFFIN 2021 (PBK) 272PP £6.99 ISBN 9780241455448

Enter the world of Billie Upton Green, or B.U.G. as she hates to be known. Reading through her diary gives the reader a Billie-eyed view on life – and it's every bit as hilarious, eye-rolling, sassy and forthright as you'd expect from an opinionated ten-year-old! Adoption and same-sex parents are normal parts of her everyday life, as is Billie's weariness at having to forever explain her family. Other major pluses include: its illustrated diary style, making it accessible for more reluctant readers; it's the start of a series; and there are Biscuit Laws! (Age 9–12)

Read also: *The Accidental Diary of B.U.G.: Basically Famous* by Jen Carney



BENJAMIN DEAN illustrated by SANDHYA PRABHAT

ME, MY DAD AND THE END OF THE RAINBOW

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2021 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781471199738

Archie's parents are acting strange and he's sure it's about a secret they're keeping from him. Along with his best friends, Seb and Bell, Archie attempts to fix his family, even if it means a journey to London Pride and some broken rules along the way. Archie is a compelling character who draws you right in, and his relationships with others are described superbly. This joyful book is a celebration of family and friendship, and is full of humour and heart. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *The Pants Project* by Cat Clarke

BENJAMIN DEAN illustrated by SANDHYA PRABHAT

THE SECRET SUNSHINE PROJECT

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2023 (PBK) 336PP £7.99 ISBN 9781471199752

When Bea's sister Riley reveals she is attracted to girls, her family attend London Pride together, showing their support. But the family is left struggling as Bea's father passes away shortly after, leading to a move from London to the sleepy village of St Regent's Vale. Spirits are low, but they soon discover that happiness and Pride do not exist in London alone. The representation of LGBTQ+ culture throughout the novel is excellent and offers young readers a beautiful message of acceptance, tolerance and love. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *Ellie Engle Saves Herself!* by Leah Johnson

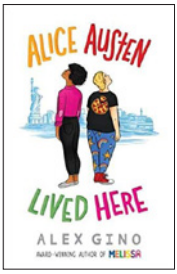
EMMA DONOGHUE illustrated by CAROLINE HADILAKSONO

THE LOTTERYS PLUS ONE

MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 320PP £7.99 ISBN 9781509803200

Nine-year-old Sumac lives with her two mothers, two fathers and six siblings – all named after trees, just like her – in a huge house called Camelottery, so called because of the lottery win that paid for it. Life in the mansion is chaotic yet predictable – until the Lotterys' ailing grandfather Iain arrives. The story itself could not be more relevant to the turbulent times the world finds itself in, exploring the true meaning of belonging, home, tolerance and acceptance. Offbeat, funny, wise and deliciously different, Donoghue's first book for children is an essential read. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *The Lotterys More or Less* by Emma Donoghue and Caroline Hadilaksono



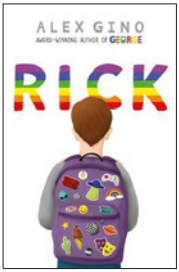
ALEX GINO

ALICE AUSTEN LIVED HERE

SCHOLASTIC 2022 (PBK) 176PP £6.99 ISBN 9781338733891

In New York, we meet maths enthusiast Sam and their fashion-and-style-expert best friend TJ. They take on a school history challenge to find a new statue that represents the present Staten Island community. This is a truly inspirational trip for both non-binary pre-teens as they explore history. These two likeable characters are very comfortable in who they are, but as history teaches them, it wasn't always so. Through a wonderful network of family, friends and older residents, they discover that the school challenge also brings with it all the trials and wondrousness of being a young person. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *Melissa* by Alex Gino



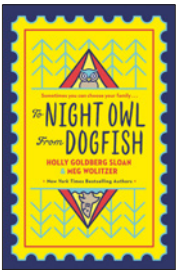
ALEX GINO

RICK

SCHOLASTIC 2020 (PBK) 240PP £6.99 ISBN 9780702301827

As Rick tries to fit in at his new middle school, he realises that his best friend, Jeff, is a bully. He's also not getting crushes like his classmates. Through his new friends at the Rainbow Spectrum club (and some insights from not-so-boring-after-all Grandpa Ray), Rick finds the courage to ask the big questions – who am I, and what kind of person do I want to be? An informative and warm look at identity and belonging, with some familiar faces from Gino's popular début, *George* (now published under the title *Melissa*). (Age 9–12)

Read also: *Better Nate Than Ever* by Tim Federle



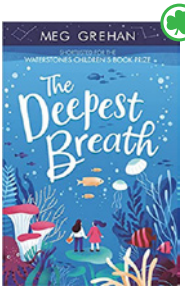
HOLLY GOLDBERG SLOAN & MEG WOLITZER

TO NIGHT OWL FROM DOGFISH

EGMONT PUBLISHING 2019 (PBK) 304PP £6.99 ISBN 9781405294836

When bookish Avery and adventurous Bett's dads fall in love, the girls are not happy about the prospect of being sisters and hatch a plan to break them up. This reverse *Parent Trap* is wonderfully told via the medium of emails and letters between all the characters in this story. Avery (now Night Owl) and Bett (Dogfish), sent away to camp, bond against their will and, against the odds, become the unlikeliest of friends. A heartwarming tale about all types of families and relationships. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *The Last Firefox* by Lee Newbery



MEG GREHAN

THE DEEPEST BREATH

LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 180PP €9.00 ISBN 9781912417186

Stevie is eleven and loves reading and sea creatures. There's a girl at school that she likes. Actually, she's a bit confused about how much she likes her. It makes her fizz inside. That's a new feeling, one she doesn't understand. Stevie needs to find out if girls can like girls – love them, even – but it's hard to get any information. Maybe she can find an answer in a book. With the help of a librarian, Stevie finds stories of girls loving girls and builds up her courage to share the truth with her mum. Winner of the Judges' Special Award at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2020. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *Harriet Versus the Galaxy* by Samatha Baines and Jessica Flores

MEG GREHAN illustrated by NENE LONERGAN

THE LONELY BOOK

LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2023 (PBK) 161PP €10.99 ISBN 9781915071446

Annie's mums are the owners of a magic bookshop. Each day a stack of books appears, and somehow, they are exactly the books that customers are looking for. One day, a book turns up in the stack that can't be matched with anyone, leaving the shop's magic anxious and chaotic. This verse novel depicts a young person figuring out their non-binary gender. With sensitivity and kindness, Grehan skilfully depicts the power of communication to provide the essential support to children and young people in this situation. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *The Whispers* by Greg Howard

SARAH HAGGER-HOLT

JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2023 (PBK) 307PP £7.99 ISBN 9781801315784

Aidan spends most of his time doing his best to blend in. But fitting in is not easy, especially because Aidan has been having confusing feelings about his sexuality. Can you really be gay if you enjoy sports, haven't kissed a boy and aren't like the presenters of *Queer Eye*? Aidan's home life has also become chaotic, as his Mum has agreed to become a surrogate for her friends Justin and Atif. How can Aidan be like everyone else with a family that means he stands out? (Age 9–12)

Read also: *Glitter Boy* by Ian Eagleton

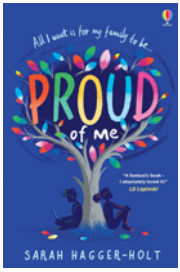
SARAH HAGGER-HOLT

NOTHING EVER HAPPENS HERE

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2020 (PBK) 272PP £6.99 ISBN 9781474966238

Izzy has just managed to find her feet, and her friendship with Grace means the world. She thinks she's ready for her next year of secondary school – until her father reveals that he's transgender and, all of a sudden, Izzy's family is the centre of attention. This book sensitively follows the family on their journey to a new normal as they find both intolerance and support in unexpected places. This is a beautiful story about love, family and the right to be who you are. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *King and the Dragonflies* by Kacen Callender



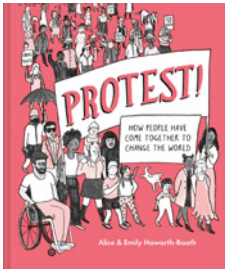
SARAH HAGGER-HOLT

PROUD OF ME

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2021 (PBK) 272PP £6.99 ISBN 9781474966245

Not-quite-twins Josh and Becky have a family that can be complicated to explain. Not only that, they are both going through very different issues, including questions about where they are from and who they are. *Proud of Me* is a warm, humane story about how even today, despite increasing acceptance in society, LGBTQ+ families can still face prejudice and misunderstandings. Not afraid to look at complicated issues but ultimately hopeful, Sarah Hagger-Holt has written a book to be proud of. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *Max Kowalski Didn't Mean It* by Susie Day



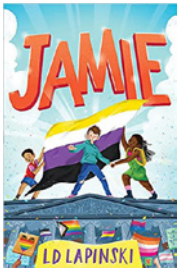
ALICE & EMILY HAWORTH-BOOTH

PROTEST! HOW PEOPLE HAVE COME TOGETHER TO CHANGE THE WORLD THROUGHOUT HISTORY

PAVILION BOOKS 2021 (HBK) 168PP £14.99 ISBN 9781843654582

The history of peaceful protest – from the early strikes by Egyptian pyramid workers for food all the way up to Greta Thunberg and the Extinction Rebellion – is outlined in this brightly illustrated and fascinating book. *Protest!* explores the myriad ways that groups have protested creatively, including singing protests, guerrilla gardening and strikes. Packed with quirky cartoons, each chapter shows how a community came together to protest for better lives and equal rights. Young activists can even read advice on how to organise their own protest. (Non-fiction, Age 9–12)

Read also: *Rise Up! The Art of Protest* by Jo Rippon



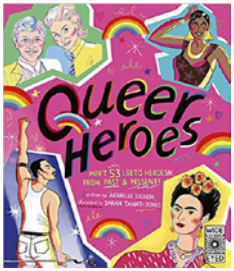
L.D. LAPINSKI

JAMIE

ORION CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2023 (PBK) 272PP £7.99 ISBN 9781510110922

Jamie is non-binary; they are not a boy, and they are not a girl. When forced to make a choice between going to an all-boys or all-girls secondary school, Jamie and their friends fight for their right to attend a school that accepts Jamie as they are. Our protagonist is wonderfully brave and resolute in their convictions as they lead an inspiring protest. A stunning, heart-warming read, this book introduces LGBTQ+ terminology in an accessible manner throughout. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *The Strangeworlds Travel Agency* by L.D. Lapinski



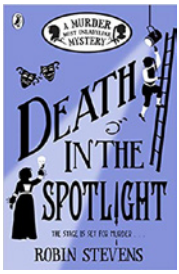
ARABELLE SICARDI illustrated by SARAH TANAT-JONES

QUEER HEROES: MEET 53 LGBTQ HEROES FROM PAST & PRESENT!

WIDE-EYED EDITIONS 2019 (HBK) 64PP ISBN 9781786034861

Queer Heroes gives a lively and celebratory account of fifty-three LGBTQ+ people using a mixture of zany illustrations and clear text. Demonstrating achievements of queer people throughout the last century, *Queer Heroes* has a special focus on overcoming discrimination and adversity. Each biography is brief but gives a sense of the heroes, who come from a wide range of backgrounds and whose achievements range from science to fine art, music to advocacy. The book is fun to flick through and an engaging read. (Non-fiction, Age 9–12)

Read also: *A Fairytale for Everyone* by Boldizsár M. Nagy, Lilla Bölecz and Anna Bentley



ROBIN STEVENS

DEATH IN THE SPOTLIGHT: A MURDER MOST UNLADYLIKE MYSTERY

PUFFIN 2018 (PBK) 416PP £7.99 ISBN 9780141373829

Fresh from their adventure in Hong Kong, Hazel Wong and Daisy Wells are off to the Rue Theatre in London to face an entirely new challenge: acting. But the Detective Society is never far away from danger, and it's clear there's trouble afoot at the Rue. The seventh instalment in the endlessly intriguing Murder Most Unladylike series sees Daisy develop her first crush – on the mysterious Martita. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *Top Marks for Murder* by Robin Stevens

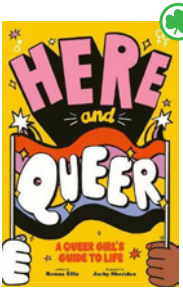
NOELLE STEVENSON, GRACE ELLIS & SHANNON WATTERS illustrated by BROOKE A. ALLEN

LUMBERJANES VOL. 1: BEWARE THE KITTEN HOLY

BOOM! BOX 2015 (PBK) 128PP £10.99 ISBN 9781608866878

The Lumberjanes graphic novel series is about female friendship and set in a summer camp. However, undermining this so-far-so-ordinary description, it features shape-shifters, gods, mysteries and yetis. That any expletives take the form of a woman's name, be she activist, scientist or musician, emphasises how female centred the series is. Jo, April, Mal, Molly and Ripley come from a wide range of backgrounds and the series features same-sex parents and lesbian and transgender characters. (Age 9–12)

Read also: *The Sleeper and the Spindle* by Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell



ROWAN ELLIS illustrated by JACKY SHERIDAN

HERE AND QUEER: A QUEER GIRL'S GUIDE TO LIFE

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 160PP £9.99 ISBN 9780711264731

The start of the book explains terminology, the use of labels (and how this is for each individual to decide) and gender identification and concludes with several thinking points. These are questions aimed at helping the reader to consider the information they have read and realise and articulate their feelings and beliefs. There is an excellent glossary of terms and phrases used throughout the book, as well as useful websites for further information. The text covers multiple aspects of being a queer girl in today's world and is full of illustrations, with an informal yet dynamic layout, and uses consistently positive language throughout. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14)

Read also: *Fresh* by Margot Wood

ADIBA JAIGIRDAR

HANI AND ISHU'S GUIDE TO FAKE DATING

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781444962246

Hani and Ishu are nothing alike. They hate it when people expect them to be the same because they are both Bengali. Hani loves socialising; Ishu never stops studying. When Hani comes out to her friends they question her bisexuality. Ishu is desperate to be Head Girl, but she isn't well-liked at school. Unexpectedly, a fake relationship is the solution to both problems. But what happens when you start to fancy your fake girlfriend? Are they actually too different to make a real relationship work? (Age 12–14)

Read also: *The Henna Wars* by Adiba Jaigirdar

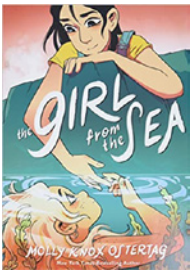
RIYADH KHALAF illustrated by MELISSA McFEETERS

YAY! YOU'RE GAY! NOW WHAT? A GAY BOY'S GUIDE TO LIFE

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 224PP £8.99 ISBN 9781786031914

In this personal, heartfelt go-to guide for young gay men, YouTuber and presenter Riyadh Khalaf shares frank advice about everything from coming out to relationships, as well as interviews with inspirational role models and encouragement for times when you're feeling low. There's a support section for family and friends written by Riyadh's parents and lots of hilarious, embarrassing, inspiring and moving stories from gay boys around the world. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14)

Read also: *Perfectly Queer: An Illustrated Introduction* by Victoria Barron



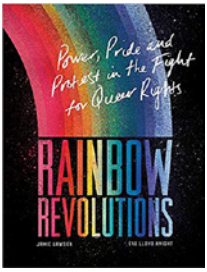
MOLLY KNOX OSTERTAG

THE GIRL FROM THE SEA

SCHOLASTIC 2021 (PBK) 256PP £10.99 ISBN 9781338540574

A fresh graphic-novel take on the age-old magical mermaid/selkie story. When Morgan kisses the strange girl in the water who saves her from drowning, Keltie is able to join Morgan on land. As she comes to terms with her identity, first love, coming out and friendships all come into play. Clever use of illustrated group texts figure prominently, showing true-to-life teenage friend-group dynamics, and serve to highlight the collision of Morgan's two lives – the one her friends know and her new secret one. (Age 12–14)

Read also: *Honor Girl* by Maggie Thrash



JAMIE LAWSON illustrated by EVE LLOYD NIGHT

RAINBOW REVOLUTIONS: POWER, PRIDE AND PROTEST IN THE FIGHT FOR QUEER RIGHTS

WREN & ROOK 2019 (HBK) 96PP £12.99 ISBN 9781526361257

When the police stormed the Stonewall Inn bar in New York City, the events that followed ignited the LGBTQ+ rights movement. Lawson depicts the variety of ways queer activists have spoken up and spoken out, with a dynamic account of poet Audre Lorde alongside the outrageous fun of Pride parades. Despite outlining the hardships faced by the LGBTQ+ community, hope remains. From the supportive surrogate families of the Ballroom community to the queer culture we now know as Pride, this account is insightful and inspiring. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14)

Read also: *Last Bus to Everland* by Sophie Cameron

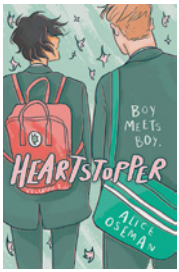
KELLY McCAUGHRAIN

FLYING TIPS FOR FLIGHTLESS BIRDS

WALKER BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 384PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406375657

From the high wire of the Big Top to the high wire of teenage sexuality, this warm and funny story of adolescence is a delight to read. It explores family, friendship and first love with an authenticity that is both engaging and emotionally satisfying. Through the eyes of the two main characters – one through very clever use of a blog – we learn the pros and cons of being different and of managing life in the margins. Winner of three CBI Book of the Year Awards, including the overall Book of the Year and the Children's Choice Award. (Age 12–14)

Read also: *Alex in Wonderland* by Simon James Green



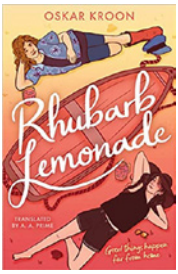
ALICE OSEMAN

HEARTSTOPPER: VOLUME 1

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 288PP £10.99 ISBN 9781444951387

This graphic novel is the first in the Heartstopper series. It is about love, friendship, loyalty and mental illness. Charlie and Nick are at the same school, but they've never met ... until one day when they're made to sit together. They quickly become friends, and soon Charlie is falling hard for Nick, even though he doesn't think he has a chance. But love works in surprising ways, and Nick is more interested in Charlie than either of them realised. This book encompasses all the small stories of Nick and Charlie's lives that together make up something larger, which speaks to all of us. Now a major Netflix series. (Age 12–14)

Read also: *Nick and Charlie* by Alice Oseman



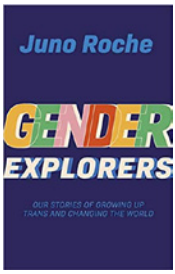
OSKAR KROON translated by A.A. PRIME

RHUBARB LEMONADE

HOT KEY BOOKS JULY 2023 (PBK) 224PP £7.99 ISBN 9781471413124

Summer on the island with her stoic, dependable grandpa is the perfect escape for Vinga. The certainty of slow, intentional days with no WiFi and a boat restoration project is transformative for her. However, interrupting this solitude are parental problems and her own anxieties, not to mention a new girl's arrival to the island which stirs things up for Vinga. Translated from the Swedish original, this story is epic in imagery and passion. A queer coming-of-age love story where hard lessons are learned. (Age 12–14)

Read also: *Love Frankie* by Jacqueline Wilson



JUNO ROCHE

GENDER EXPLORERS

JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS 2020 (PBK) 190PP £12.99 ISBN 9781787752597

This book is concerned with the emotional lives and lived experiences of trans families and features a series of interviews between a trans writer, trans children and teens, and the adults in their lives. With the text laid out like a script, there is no editorialising – the lived experience of these families is presented plainly for readers to witness. Powerful in its simplicity, the children and young people interviewed range in age from seven years old to adulthood. Please note there are mentions of suicidal thoughts throughout. (Age 12–14)

Read also: *Out of the Blue* by Sophie Cameron

REBECCA STEAD

THE LIST OF THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE

ANDERSEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 218PP £7.99 ISBN 9781839130458

Bea has had a lot to deal with since her parents broke up and her dad came out as gay. Her loving family and friends and a perceptive therapist have helped her through, and she now has a lot to look forward to as her family changes and expands. But will she be able to forgive herself for past mistakes? A captivating and moving novel which takes an honest look at the challenges and joys of family life and shines with love, hope and resilience. (Age 12–14)

Read also: *The Moonlight Dreamers* by Siobhan Curham

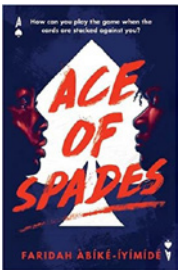
TILLIE WALDEN and ROBERT KIRKMAN

CLEMENTINE BOOK ONE

IMAGE COMICS 2022 (PBK) 256PP £13.99 ISBN 9781534321281

This black and white graphic novel is the first instalment in Tillie Walden's coming-of-age dystopian series. Clementine is a fiercely independent teenage girl with a prosthetic leg living in a post-apocalyptic zombie-filled world. Flashbacks provide context for Clementine's journey north alongside Amos, an Amish teen searching for adventure. Walden's strength lies in her depiction of subtly shifting relationships – in particular between Clementine and others. LGBTQ+ representation is threaded throughout with beautiful, emotive art capturing tender moments in the fight for survival. (Age 12–14)

Read also: *Deadendia: The Watcher's Test* by Hamish Steele



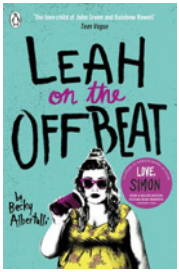
FARIDAH ÀBÍKÉ-ÍYÍMÍDÉ

ACE OF SPADES

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2021 (PBK) 480PP £8.99 ISBN 9781474967532

A first-rate thriller from a first-time author, *Ace of Spades* tells of two queer black students in a predominantly white school, who find themselves cruelly targeted by the anonymous scandalmonger Ace. Supported by credible characterisation and dialogue, this gripping story is full of unexpected twists and unnerving revelations, taking private-school social lives, sex and secrets beyond the classroom and into a wider world of shocking privilege, political manipulation and institutional racism. A story that takes the reader to fresh and unexpected places. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Transmogrify!: 14 Fantastical Tales of Trans Magic* by G. Haron Davis



BECKY ALBERTALLI

LEAH ON THE OFFBEAT

PENGUIN BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9780241331057

This sequel to *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* is narrated by Simon's best friend, Leah, a bisexual girl who is very definite in her own sexual identity but not comfortable sharing it with others. Set a little over a year after Simon's story, the gang find themselves facing not only graduation, but also the potential for their group to splinter apart. Leah's voice is as breezy and effortless as Simon's, while the conflicts and problems are a little darker this time, tackling not only romance and sexuality but also class and the worry of impending change. (Age 15+)

Read also: *The Lesbiana's Guide to Catholic School* by Sonora Reyes

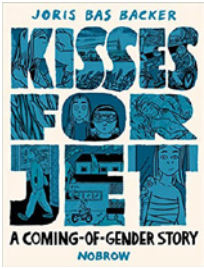
DEAN ATTA

ONLY ON THE WEEKENDS

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 521PP £8.99 ISBN 9781444960563

London teenager Mack has barely had time to find his feet in his burgeoning relationship with long-time crush, basketball player Karim, when his director father relocates them to a film set in Glasgow. However, when trans teen Finlay, a confident film-star in the making, captures Mack's attention, the results are an emotional exploration of young love, self-acceptance and taking ownership of your actions. Atta deftly weaves in frank representations of family relationships, body image, race and gender identity in this honest, multi-layered verse novel. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli



JORIS BAS BACKER

KISSES FOR JET: A COMING-OF-GENDER STORY

NOBROW 2022 (PBK) 205PP £14.99 ISBN 9781913123031

In this coming-of-age graphic novel set during the 1990s, Jet moves towards the realisation that they feel less connected to the gender they were assigned at birth. Helped by their best friend Sasha, they set out to find out more. Jet's journey and friendships are endearing, funny and authentic. *Kisses for Jet* is steeped in nineties nostalgia, with frequent references to pop culture of the time. This is a beautifully drawn story of one trans person's coming-of-gender, helped no doubt by the lived experience of the author. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi

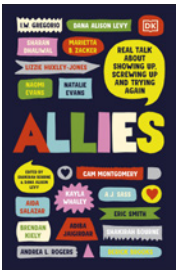
KALYNN BAYRON

CINDERELLA IS DEAD

BLOOMSBURY YA 2020 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781526621979

Sophia knows she must attend the King's Ball and secure a husband. She must be like Cinderella. Failing to do so could prove deadly. Yet, she yearns for the power of choice. She defiantly escapes and teams up with the fearless redhead Constance in a search for the truth behind Cinderella's twisted tale. In this feminist retelling, Bayron offers a dark but ultimately hopeful new spin on a classic. Read for an inclusive and compelling tale of resistance, deftly exploring oppression, unrealistic ideals and queerness. (Age 15+)

Read also: *This Poison Heart* by Kalynn Bayron



edited by SHAKIRAH BOURNE and DANA ALISON LEVY

ALLIES

DK 2021 (PBK) 240PP £12.99 ISBN 9780241505953

This collection of deeply personal essays from a wide variety of young adult authors drills down into the meaning of allyship and examines practical ways to bolster those who need our support. The essays encourage readers to question their own biases concerning race, disability and sexuality, and to use their own power and platforms to amplify the voices of others or support them. Allies acknowledges that we live in an imperfect world, but it offers hope that we can create a more equitable one. (Age 15+)

Read also: *All That's Left in the World* by Erik J. Brown

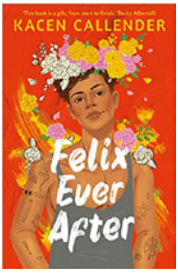
TANYA BYRNE

AFTERLOVE

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781444955958

Ash Persaud has a brave, romantic, stupid heart. Unlucky in love, when she meets Poppy Morgan on a school trip, Ash thinks she could be the one to end all the false starts. Except starts don't get falser than dying at sixteen and waking up with a job to do. An intense blush of delighted first love, *Afterlove* sweeps Ash and readers up in the tide of the uncontrollable universe. But with love and family, there is always a reason to look to hopeful shores. (Age 15+)

Read also: *The Life & Lies of Rukshana Ali* by Sabina Khan



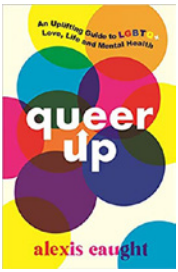
KACEN CALLENDER

FELIX EVER AFTER

FABER & FABER 2021 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9780571368013

This is a truly honest story following Felix Love, a boy who feels like he never really fits in, being Black, queer and transgender alongside attending a prestigious school and coming from a working-class family. Between receiving transphobic messages, his father struggling to accept his transition and his mother fleeing, Felix is also confronted with the complexities of gender labels. Callender bravely questions definitions of gender while also challenging the reader to never assume about people's private lives. This story is raw, open and breathtakingly real. (Age 15+)

Read also: *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta



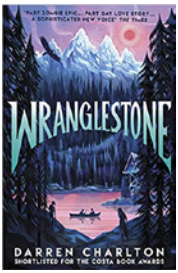
ALEXIS CAUGHT

QUEER UP: AN UPLIFTING GUIDE TO LGBTQ+ LOVE, LIFE AND MENTAL HEALTH

WALKER BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 256PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406399226

Positive, frank, empathetic, kind – this is a complete guide to the social, emotional and political complexities of learning to navigate life as an LGBTQ+ person, with a strong emphasis on mental health and empowerment. For those that want to learn more or are seeking a little bit of friendly guidance, this is the book for you. The writer, who amongst other things is a podcaster, reaches out to others for any areas that are outside of his own experiences. The result is a book that is respectful, inclusive, helpful and useful – with really well-thought-out sections for allies. (Non-fiction, Age 15+)

Read also: *Can We Talk about Consent?* by Justin Hancock and Fuschia MacAree



DARREN CHARLTON

WRANGLESTONE

STRIPES PUBLISHING 2020 (PBK) 384PP £7.99 ISBN 9781788951210

An isolated community fights for survival against the odds in a post-apocalyptic America. In normal conditions the surrounding water provides safety, but now, in the harsh icy conditions, their protection is gone. Then Peter breaks a rule and is banished. Together with Cooper the rancher, he must face survival and discovery. Heartwarming and horrifying by turns, this is the book you never knew you needed – a thrilling, epic, apocalyptic zombie tale with a really tender love story at its heart. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Timberdark* by Darren Charlton

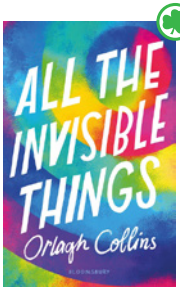
CAT CLARKE

LETTING GO

BARRINGTON STOKE 2019 (PBK) 104PP £7.99 ISBN 9781781128381

Agnes has been hiding from life since her world-ending break-up with Ellie, but because of a promise she made in the past, she has somehow ended up on top of a mountain with her ex and her ex's new boyfriend, Steve. Totally normal. Agnes is way out of her comfort zone, but when the weather turns and tensions rise, she finds her inner strength again. This uplifting quick read about loss, acceptance and finding yourself is particularly suitable for reluctant or dyslexic readers. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Skylarks* by Karen Gregory



ORLAGH COLLINS

ALL THE INVISIBLE THINGS

BLOOMSBURY YA 2019 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9781408888339

For four years Vetty Lake has been keeping her heart in hiding. Since her mum died and her family moved out of London it's felt so much safer not to tell people how she really feels. She's never even told anyone she's attracted to girls as well as boys. But now that Vetty's seventeen and coming back to London, she's determined to start living out loud. A warm, witty, important story about being a young woman today, and what it's like to find a real connection amid all the noise. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Every Sparrow Falling* by Shirley Anne McMillan

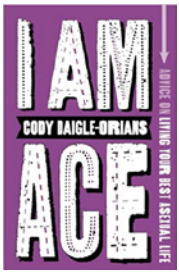
HELEN CORCORAN

QUEEN OF COIN AND WHISPERS

THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2020 (PBK) 447PP €12.99 ISBN 9781788491181

Lia always knew she would rule one day. She just had to hope that her uncle didn't completely ruin their country before he passed away. Xania, her new spymaster, needs to keep her queen alive during the political upheavals. These two girls, brought together by duty, must find a way to protect their growing friendship and love. Corcoran writes with a vividness that engages the reader while drawing out the intrigue in the story, allowing an intricate plot to unfold. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Sixteen Souls* by Rosie Talbot



CODY DAIGLE-ORIANS

I AM ACE: ADVICE ON LIVING YOUR BEST ASEXUAL LIFE

JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS 2023 (PBK) 352PP £12.99 ISBN 9781839972621

I am Ace provides a comprehensive overview of asexuality: on an individual level, in relationships, within the LGBTQIA+ community and in the wider world. In a frank and reassuring tone, readers are introduced to a wide range of topics, from addressing asexual stereotypes to navigating different types of relationships. Although presented in a very digestible Q&A format, this is an undeniably personal publication that maintains a straightforward honesty throughout. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Amazing Ace, Awesome Aro: An Illustrated Exploration* by Victoria Barron

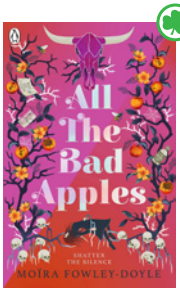
JUNO DAWSON illustrated by SOOFIYA

WHAT'S THE T? THE NO-NONSENSE GUIDE TO ALL THINGS TRANS AND/OR NON-BINARY FOR TEENS

WREN & ROOK 2021 (PBK) 304PP £8.99 ISBN 9781526362827

What's the T? is a guide written primarily for trans, nonbinary and questioning teens. There is also a section for parents and guardians. Juno Dawson's conversational style is accessible and engaging. She manages to cover a huge range of topics, including medical and legal advice and how to access services. There is information on trans terminology, history and the gamut of hurdles and delights a transgender or nonbinary individual might face. This guide answers all the questions the reader might have, whatever their age or gender identity. (Non-fiction, Age 15+)

Read also: *What Is Gender? How Does It Define Us? And Other Big Questions* by Juno Dawson



MOÏRA FOWLEY-DOYLE

ALL THE BAD APPLES

PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE 2019 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9780241333969

On Deena's seventeenth birthday, the day she finally comes out to her family, her wild and mysterious sister Mandy is seen leaping from a cliff. The family is heartbroken, but not surprised. The women of the Rys family have always been troubled – 'bad apples', their father calls them – and Mandy is the baddest of them all. But then Deena starts to receive the letters. Letters from Mandy, claiming that their family's blighted history is not just bad luck or bad decisions, but a curse, handed down to the Rys women through the generations. (Age 15+)

Read also: *All Our Hidden Gifts* by Caroline O'Donoghue

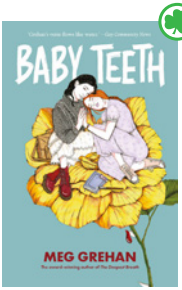
JARLATH GREGORY

WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE

THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 240PP €9.99 ISBN 9781788491624

Meet Ben, seventeen, gay and looking for love. Refreshingly honest, yet sometimes naïve, Ben has everything mapped out – teacher training awaits, family life is good. His best friends, Chelsea and Soda, bring advice and life tips on the joys and perils of love in contemporary Dublin's LGBTQ+ community with their own compelling stories. Navigating bullying, anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and the North/South view of 'coming out' in Ireland, Gregory gives a realistic and optimistic picture of life for Irish teenagers exploring their sexuality. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* by John Green and David Levithan



MEG GREHAN

BABY TEETH

LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 192PP €10.00 ISBN 9781912417902

This is a unique and elegant take on the vampire romance trope, falling victim to none of the usual clichés. Written in a lyrical verse form that has the soothing quality of a lullaby one minute and lies like a lead weight on your heart the next, this is a story of tragedy, tenderness and compelling beauty. Claudia learns Immy's incredible secret, but being loved by a vampire was never going to be easy. The pair's need for each other drowns out all fear and doubt, at least for now. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Unbecoming* by Jenny Downham

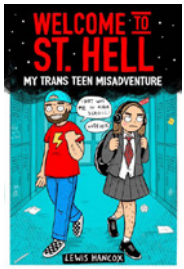
SIMON JAMES GREEN

GAY CLUB!

SCHOLASTIC 2022 (PBK) 374PP £8.99 ISBN 9780702313677

Ostensibly a gloriously back-stabbing, melodramatic school election/rom-com teen drama, this is in fact a clever and heartfelt comment on the continuing struggle of queer people in society and especially in schools. An election for president of the school 's LGBTQ+ society takes a turn for the dramatic when a rival enters the race. Filled with scandals, betrayals and missteps but with heartfelt solidarity ultimately winning through, this hilarious novel is one for the upper end of young adult. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Boy Like Me* by David Levithan



LEWIS HANCOX

WELCOME TO ST. HELL: MY TRANS TEEN MISADVENTURE

SCHOLASTIC 2022 (PBK) 304PP £10.99 ISBN 9780702313905

Challenging and funny in equal measures, this graphic memoir covers dealing with family and friends, navigating healthcare and coming to terms with your gender identity. Told from the author's personal perspective, reflecting on his teenage years coping with gender dysphoria and the early stages of his transition, imagining what advice he would give to his younger self. The juxtaposition of Hancox's animated illustrations with his raw accounts of the confusion of dysphoria is a potent combination. Themes, content and imagery suited to older readers. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Heartbreak Boys* by Simon James Green

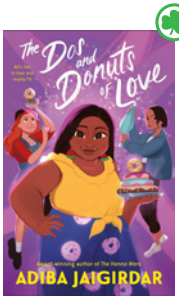
WILLIAM HUSSEY

BROKEN HEARTS AND ZOMBIE PARTS

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2023 (PBK) 400PP £8.99 ISBN 9781803700038

Gloriously out, extremely talkative, horror-movie-obsessed teen Jesse and his best friends Cass and Morgan are in their final year of school, and things are changing. A major medical event interrupts their lives, bringing with it a tight deadline for their next film. Hussey takes in some heavy themes with a wonderfully light touch. Mortality, body image, homophobia, class and friendship intertwine with zombie movies, love interests and high school drama creating something at once substantial and light as a feather. Enormous fun to read. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Noah Can't Even* by Simon James Green



ADIBA JAIGIRDAR

THE DOS AND DONUTS OF LOVE

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2023 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781444967579

Donuts are not the only sweet thing in this young adult contemporary lesbian romance! Shireen Malik is reeling from a break-up with her girlfriend, so being chosen to take part in a national baking championship seems like the way to cheer her up – the only problem is, her ex happens to also be one of the contestants. With deft observations and pun-filled humour, Jaigirdar explores racism and the rise of online bullying while normalising queer identity. A very sweet read! (Age 15+)

Read also: *Zara Hossain Is Here* by Sabina Khan

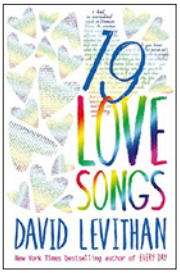
TJ KLUNE

THE EXTRAORDINARIES

HODDER & STOUGHTON 2021 (PBK) 400PP £8.99 ISBN 9781473693067

Sixteen-year-old Nick writes fanfiction about his local superheroes, but when his idol, Shadow Star, sweeps him off his feet in a daring and romantic rescue to rival any of his imaginings, Nick embarks on a quest to get closer to his hero and become one of the city's 'Extraordinaries'. Along the way, Nick battles anxiety, ADHD and an abundance of superhero genre tropes in this fun and romantic fantasy. The first in an engaging trilogy for anyone who has ever wished that superheroes were real. (Age 15+)

Read also: *The Other Ones* by Fran Hart



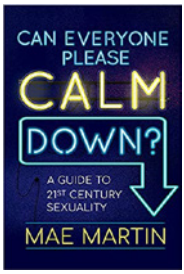
DAVID LEVITHAN

19 LOVE SONGS

ELECTRIC MONKEY 2020 (PBK) 353PP £7.99 ISBN 9781405298056

A mix-tape-style collection of nineteen odes to love – some are in verse, others are short stories, all are filled to the brim with LGBTQ+ love in all its guises. From first sparks to sad endings, this collection covers relationships from start to finish. Fans will recognise some characters form previous Levithan titles, but newcomers can happily read this as a stand-alone. It is a lovely life-affirming collection that pays tribute to friendship, self-acceptance and above all else love. There is something here for everyone. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Boy Meets Boy* by David Levithan



MAE MARTIN

CAN EVERYONE PLEASE CALM DOWN? A GUIDE TO 21ST CENTURY SEXUALITY

WREN & ROOK 2019 (PBK) 288PP £9.99 ISBN 9781526361653

A thoughtful discussion of sexuality, gender, spectrums, the binary and nonbinary, fluidity and varying experiences of LGBTQ+ people, this insightful book explains a range of terms and shares ideas on how to tackle homophobia and transphobia and, indeed, support LGBTQ+ people for allies from within or outside the community. It offers reflections on LGBTQ+ history from past to present and much more. Mae Martin's tone is light and fun, with plenty of humour thrown in, discussing important issues for us all, as LGBTQ+ people and allies. (Non-fiction, Age 15+)

Read also: *Gwen & Art Are Not in Love* by Lex Croucher

CASEY McQUISTON

I KISSED SHARA WHEELER

MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 368PP £14.99 ISBN 9781529099430

Chloe Green has survived almost four years at her ultra-conservative high school, focused on the one thing that's kept her going: winning valedictorian. Her fiercest rival, Shara Wheeler, is practically perfect. But a month before graduation, Shara kisses Chloe – and then vanishes. Combining irresistibly likeable and complex characters with the classic 'rivals to lovers' trope, copious amounts of queer positivity and tight plotting, this is an uplifting and memorable coming-of-age story that's a worthy addition to any LGBTQ+ romcom library. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Imogen, Obviously* by Becky Albertali

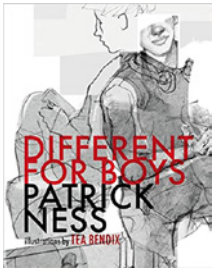
C.G. MOORE illustrated by BECKY CHILCOTT

GUT FEELINGS

UCLan PUBLISHING 2021 (PBK) 426PP £7.99 ISBN 9781912979431

Chris is eleven when he first learns that he has inherited a condition that predisposes him to cancer. This realistic and insightful verse narrative follows Chris through his teen years to university, as he experiences preventative surgeries, the resultant scarring and chronic illness, and his emotionally distant father's traumatic brain injury. The impact of illness on Chris's dating life as a young gay man is sensitively handled, as he grows to accept his body. Daily life with chronic illness is especially well depicted. Winner of the 2022 KPMG Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year Award. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Fall Out* by C.G. Moore



PATRICK NESS illustrated by TEA BENDIX

DIFFERENT FOR BOYS

WALKER BOOKS 2023 (HBK) 104PP £12.99 ISBN 9781529509496

Ant knows he is attracted to boys but has no one he can turn to, especially as Charlie, his best mate, is unashamedly homophobic. With old friendships rekindled, Ant struggles with the secrets he is hiding and an increasingly angry Charlie. Typography is used cleverly here with text referencing swear words or sex redacted, highlighting how the characters are supposedly too young to read about their own experiences. This short novel is unafraid of confronting the experience of masculinity and sexuality for teenage boys. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Final Draft* by Riley Redgate

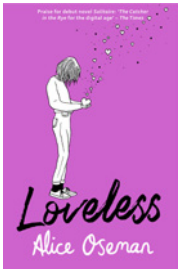
PATRICK NESS

RELEASE

WALKER BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 288PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406378690

This story all takes place across one day – interwoven with a ghost story. The author does an excellent job of interweaving the realistic elements with the fantastical. In this bittersweet and emotional story of Adam, who is coming into his own and starting to move away from the ideals and oppressive domination of his deeply religious and homophobic upbringing. A story about change and release, told through the lens of the raw and intense feelings of early adulthood. (Age 15+)

Read also: *More Than This* by Patrick Ness



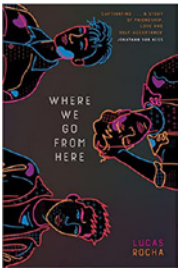
ALICE OSEMAN

LOVELESS

HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2020 (PBK) 432PP £9.99
ISBN 9780008244125

Fanfic-obsessed romantic Georgia is impatiently waiting to meet the first person she wants to kiss. When Georgia's grammar school prom afterparty ends in personal disaster, her hopes are pinned on university, entangling her old best friends and new college roommates in her quest. This coming-of-age story is more about coming to terms with your sexuality than coming out. It is authentic to the author's experiences as an aromantic asexual. The book is a well written and comforting affirmation of a so-called 'invisible' queer orientation. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Radio Silence* by Alice Oseman



LUCAS ROCHA illustrated by MARINA ESMERALDO
translated by LARISSA HELENA

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

DAVID FICKLING BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 288PP £14.99 ISBN 9781788451925

Lucas Rocha's LGBTQ+ novel depicts the lives of three men struggling with their connection to HIV. Ian is newly diagnosed and hiding it from family and friends. Henrique has only bad experiences after telling a romantic partner. Victor doesn't feel he can be in a relationship with someone that has HIV. The frustrations of young adulthood and misunderstandings allow for Rocha's novel to take the reader on a painful, humorous and, most importantly, realistic journey to acceptance. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Destination Unknown* by Bill Konisberg

RICHIE SADLIER

LET'S TALK: ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND INTIMACY

GILL BOOKS 2022 (HBK) 224PP €16.99 ISBN 9780717191901

Delving into topics such as sexuality, consent, sexual health and safety, this book presents them not just as issues that teenage boys will face but as things they need to be aware of as they may also impact their friends. The tone is conversational and frank, never shying away from the emotional, physical and legal consequences of impulsive behaviour. This is a book that is sorely needed, not just for teenage boys, but for their parents, guardians and teachers too. It neither condemns nor condones but seeks to offer as much information as possible to help make informed, healthy decisions. (Non-fiction, Age 15+)

Read also: *Sex Ed: An Inclusive Teenage Guide to Sex and Relationships* by The School of Sexuality Education

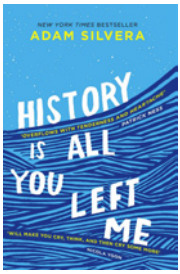
VARIOUS ARTISTS

GLÓRTHA AITEACHA/QUEER VOICES

SHOUTOUT 2023 shoutout.ie

Glórtha Aiteacha/Queer Voices is a vibrant and beautiful collection put together by ShoutOut to share the resilience and experiences of members of the LGBTQ+ community in Ireland. Founded to help LGBTQ+ teenagers navigate the loneliness that can sometimes be felt in secondary school, ShoutOut have created a relevant resource for LGBTQ+ teens and allies. Including illustrations, recipes, interviews, poetry and personal essays, this is a gorgeous collection that acts as the perfect pick-me-up on days when you might feel alone in the world. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Proud* compiled by Juno Dawson



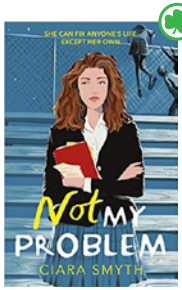
ADAM SILVERA

HISTORY IS ALL YOU LEFT ME

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2017 (PBK) 304PP £7.99 ISBN 9781471146183

Griffin is grieving. He has just lost Theo in a tragic accident and he is devastated by sorrow. It's made worse because the sorrow is a complicated one – Theo was his best friend, but also his ex-boyfriend. Silvera shows relationships for what they are – intricate and confusing – and how love and friendship can intertwine, tangle and become impossible to undo. Ultimately, this is what the novel demonstrates: that grief is complex, but that the history someone leaves can also create a future for those left behind. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Straight Expectations* by Calum McSwiggan



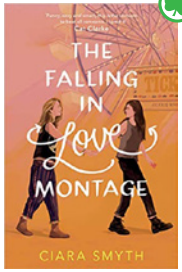
CIARA SMYTH

NOT MY PROBLEM

ANDERSEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 276PP £8.99 ISBN 9781839130854

This coming-of-age novel explores the struggles and relationships of Aideen, a savvy high school student with attitude (the interplay between herself and her teacher Miss Devlin is one of the book's most appealing features). A slapstick series of incidents with her fellow students hides the serious challenges and worries Aideen faces with her troubled mother and life in general. A contemporary look at friendship, the book is filled with all the heartache, hiccups and hilarity experienced by a young girl as she faces the world. Shortlisted for the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2022. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Perfect on Paper* by Sophie Gonzales



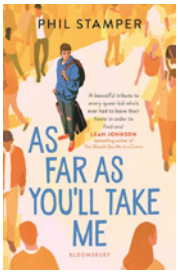
CIARA SMYTH

THE FALLING IN LOVE MONTAGE

ANDERSEN PRESS 2020 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781783449668

Saoirse has a lot going on. She has just finished the Leaving Cert, her mum doesn't live at home any more and she's on the outs with her best friend. But then she meets Ruby – fun, mischievous, fascinating Ruby. Saoirse feels she can leave all her problems behind if she just follows some rules for life. But can she keep Ruby from getting too close? Smyth deals with difficult issues deftly and realistically, with body-positive, self-assured young women working out their place in the world. Winner of the Junior Juries' Award at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2021. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Lose You to Find Me* by Erik J. Brown



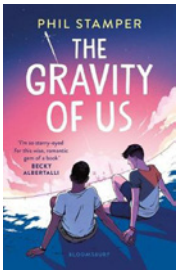
PHIL STAMPER

AS FAR AS YOU'LL TAKE ME

BLOOMSBURY YA 2021 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781526630728

Seventeen-year-old Marty travels to London with his oboe and a bit of savings. He's lied to his parents to make his escape from conservative small-town Kentucky. This is a coming-of-age story about a young man who is figuring out how to live life on his own terms, including exploring his sexuality, without judgement from others. Marty is a multifaceted character, balancing anxiety, shyness and a lack of confidence with loyalty, kindness and a passion for music. The author has written a book that is rich and complex but still light and a joy to read. (Age 15+)

Read also: *I'll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson



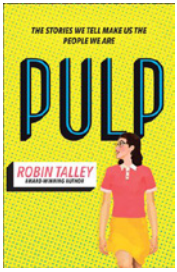
PHIL STAMPER

THE GRAVITY OF US

BLOOMSBURY YA 2020 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781526619945

Popular live-streamer Cal moves from Brooklyn to Houston because his father is hired to be a pilot on a NASA mission to Mars. One problem: all of the astronauts and their families are filmed for a reality show and Cal is asked to adhere to a non-compete clause. There, he meets fellow astrokids Kat and Leon, who becomes Cal's boyfriend. A reminder that hubris can get the best of everyone, to never stop questioning the powers that be and that first love is all-consuming. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Golden Boys* by Phil Stamper



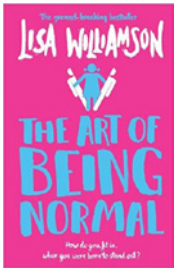
ROBIN TALLEY

PULP

HQ YOUNG ADULT 2018 (PBK) 416PP £7.99 ISBN 9781848457126

Explorations of metafiction, intertextuality and sexuality are deftly woven together in this rewarding, timely novel. Seventeen-year-old Abbey Zimit is out, proud and actively resisting Trump's America, although the pressures of adult life are beginning to creep up on her. Her senior project on classic lesbian pulp fiction is her chief source of solace, especially her growing obsession with the mysterious author Marian Love, whose writing provides the framework for Abbey's own foray into the genre. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Lies We Tell Ourselves* by Robin Talley



LISA WILLIAMSON

THE ART OF BEING NORMAL

DAVID FICKLING BOOKS 2020 (PBK) 384PP £7.99 ISBN 9781788451338

This incredible début from Lisa Williamson is witty, thought-provoking and sure to blow you away. Protagonists David and Leo devastate and inspire us with their compelling voices and authentic experiences – each chapter is a rollercoaster. This empowering exploration of the transgender experience is remarkable for its universality as much as its subject matter – exploring human nature and the desire to be one's true self in a sensitive and entirely natural way. A must read. (Age 15+)

Read also: *Between Perfect and Real* by Ray Stoeve

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