

No Shelf Control

Edition 18: October 2022

Q&A with Natasha Hastings



This month's **BOOK OF THE MONTH** is the wonderfully wintery 'The Miraculous Sweetmakers: The Frost Fair' by Natasha Hastings. The story follows Thomasina and her family as they pin their hopes of happiness on the magic of a mysterious visitor. Obviously with a book called The Sweetmakers, I need to know what your favourite sweets are?

Rhubarb and custards, lemon sherbets, and mint imperials.

Great choices. I loved the description of when Thomasina and the other Londoners first saw the frozen Thames. What is your earliest awe inspired memory?

I remember when I first saw snow (apart from as a baby, I suppose). It covered my street, including the lampposts and our neighbours' cars, like a quilt, and I took a picture on a polaroid camera my mum had at the time. I remember feeling amazed that snow and ice can change the feel and character of a place so entirely.

The illustrations by Alex T Smith are amazing, what is it like seeing someone else illustrate and interpret your ideas? Are they the same as you imagined or are there subtle differences?

I feel so lucky to work with such a talented illustrator. It's surreal and heart-warming to see the story I wrote come to life. I'm not very good at visualising things in my head, so didn't know what to expect, and think Alex conjured up the feeling of excitement, wonder, and adventure I want readers to feel while reading The Miraculous Sweetmakers & The Frost Fair.

So many magical books are set in the Winter, why do you think it is seen as such a magical season?

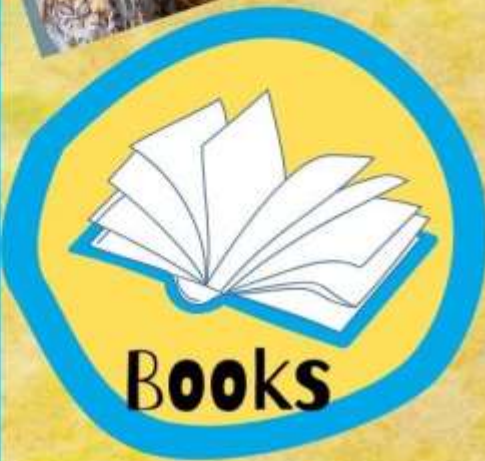
The long nights provide an enchantment of sorts in winter, I think: amid the darkness, imaginations can be sparked. Winter

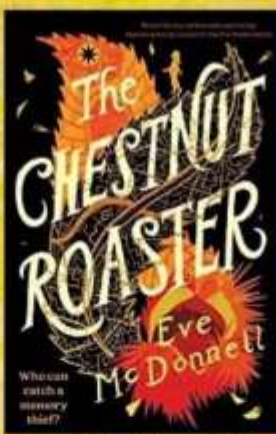


is also a time when there's a real sense of community - whether that's strolling along Christmas markets, singing along to festive music, or gathering to eat. What are your favourite recent books for children

Sadé and Her Shadow Beasts by Rachel Fatureoti, Hedgewitch by Skye Mckenna, and Einstein the Penguin by Iona Rangely.

The Miraculous Sweetmakers is out now in hardback for £12.99 from Harper Collins





The Chestnut Roaster

Eve McDonnell

Everything With Words 9+

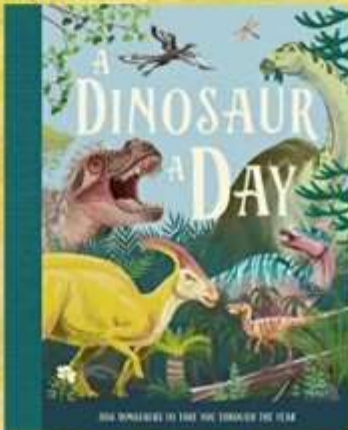
We're big fans of Eve's writing and this book proves why. Piaf remembers everything since the moment she was born. When everyone in Paris forgets the last year and some children go missing, it is up to Piaf to find the memory thief and save the children!

The Three Billy Goats Gruff

Mac Barnett & Jon Klassen

Scholastic 3+

Who doesn't love a reworked classic? Who doesn't love a Barnett and Klassen masterpiece? This doesn't disappoint! With the gorgeous illustrations and humour that you'd expect, this retelling will quickly become a story time favourite for adults and children alike!



A Dinosaur a Day

Miranda Smith, Jenny Wren, Xuan Le, Max Rambaldi, Juan Calle & Olga Baumert

Red Shed 6+

Kudos to anyone that shows the restraint to make this book last a year... Who knew that there were 365 dinosaurs? Each is beautifully illustrated with a fact file. Even the most knowledgeable dino experts are sure to learn a thing or two from this!

Wren

Lucy Hope

Nosy Crow 8+

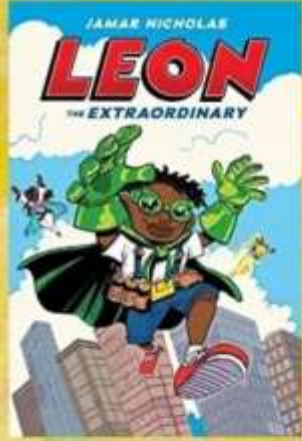
Wren loves building and mechanics but her father sends her away to finishing school. One day upon returning home to her ancient castle in the mountains near the sea, she hears her home singing and sets out to find the source of the noise. The mystery deepens and Wren's resolve is tested. Can she get to the bottom of it all?



One To Wait for...

Saving Neverland - Abi Elphinstone - Puffin
Jan 23

Abi has given Peter Pan a much needed update. I love the original but there are many things that don't quite sit right. This promises to be a brilliant adventure for all ages.



Leon The Extraordinary

Jamar Nicholas

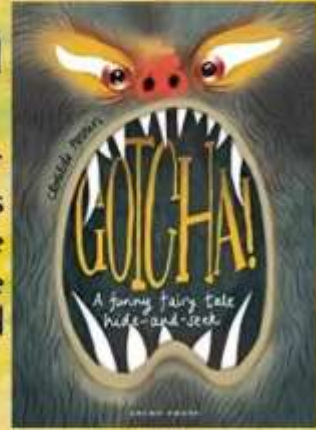
Scholastic 7+

How does an ordinary child become an extraordinary hero? By defeating a super villain, obviously! When a new app turns his school friends into mindless zombies, it is up to Leon to save the day. A great new graphic novel packed with awesome colourful illustrations, plenty of excitement and barrels of laughs!

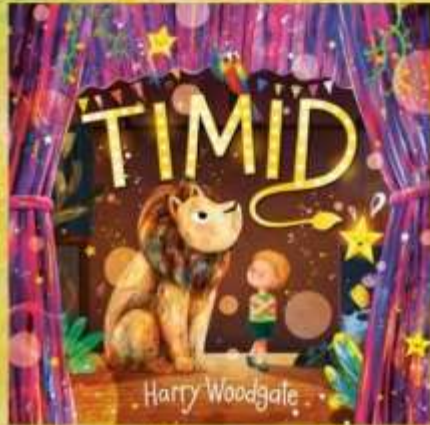
Gotcha

Clotilde Perrin

Gecko Press 3+



This is a huge picture book that could be explored for weeks! Monsters are coming so it is time to jump in to fairy tales to seek shelter. There are lots of flaps to lift and explore different fairy tale homes from the three little pig's brick house to the Hansel and Gretel's Gingerbread house. The perfect book to share and explore together!



Timid

Harry Woodgate

Little Tiger 3+

A gorgeous book that explores shyness and introverted feelings. Timmy loves to perform, but only when no-one is looking. Their shyness is stopping them from doing what they love. Can they be brave and be part of the school performance? With the help of their friend Nia can Timmy summon the courage needed?

The Faber Book of Bedtime Stories

Various Authors & Sarah McIntyre

Faber & Faber 5+

Sometimes, a big book is too much for bedtime and shorter stories are what's needed. Here are 17 new stories from a wide range of authors which are all illustrated by the magnificent Sarah McIntyre. Will you re-read your favourite multiple times, read them in order or choose randomly each time? The only thing that is certain is that you'll hear a brilliant story every time you pick it up!



One You Might Have Missed

Christmas Dinner of Souls - Ross Montgomery

Faber & Faber - 10+ Oct 2018

A gruesome and scary tale set on Christmas Eve in the dining room of ancient Soul's College. Each guest is tasked with telling a story to frighten the others. Each tale is more terrifying than the last, but what will happen once the festivities are over? Kitchen boy Lewis is nervous and doesn't really want to find out, will you be able to keep reading?



9 New Christmas books



September - November is when all the new amazing Christmassy books are released. Here's our roundup of the best new Christmas books ready for you to put on your Christmas lists! Which will become the new favourites?

1. Operation Nativity

Jenny Pearson



2. The Grampus

Alex T Smith



3. Humbug: The Elf Who Saved Christmas

Steven Butler



4. The Woodcutter and the Snow Prince

Ian Eagleton & David Ortu



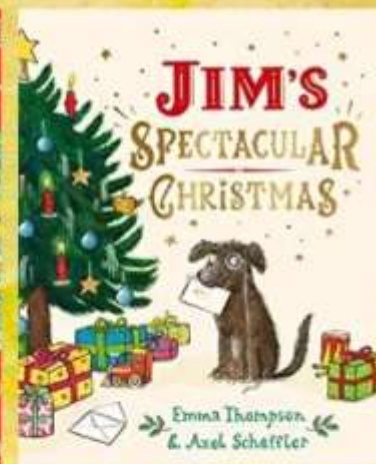
5. The 156-Storey Treehouse

Andy Griffiths & Terry Denton



6. Jim's Spectacular Christmas

Emma Thompson & Axel Scheffler



7. The Christmas Department Store

Maudie Powell-Tuck & Hoang Giang



8. Kid Christmas

David Litchfield



9. Happy Narwhalidays

Ben Clanton

