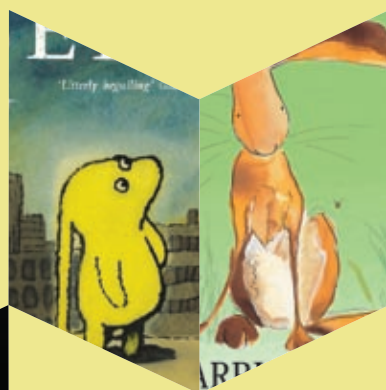


booktrust

the big picture best new illustrators

best book guide





In February 2008 Booktrust selected ten Best New Illustrators as part of its Big Picture campaign. This new generation of talented illustrators is bringing a fresh and vibrant approach to picture books; you can read about some of their books here.

These reviews, along with hundreds of other book recommendations for children of all ages, can be found on our website www.booktrust.org.uk

The Big Picture

Booktrust's Big Picture campaign aims to put picture books in the public eye. It will encourage new audiences to discover picture books, support new and emerging illustrators and celebrate the contribution that picture books can make to a child's development.

The Best New Illustrators have been published in the UK since 2000. More examples of their work, along with illustrator interviews and picture book resources, can be found at [**www.bigpicture.org.uk**](http://www.bigpicture.org.uk)

www.booktrust.org.uk

Our website contains features on and interviews with many of the illustrators whose books are included in this guide, and we've highlighted these links in our reviews. You can

also explore our online illustrators' gallery and, if you are a teacher, access free educational resources.

Booktrust book reviews

For each book reviewed we have recommended a suitable reading age, which refers to the age the child would have to be to read the text themselves, and interest level, the age range in which children will enjoy the book, whether they read it themselves, or have it read aloud to them.

We have provided a list of keywords for each title, to help you identify the themes and issues dealt with in each book.

You can search our extensive online database of book reviews at [**www.booktrust.org.uk**](http://www.booktrust.org.uk) by age range, as well as keywords.



Anthony Browne is one of the UK's best-loved picture book authors and has written and illustrated over 30 children's books. His books, which include *Gorilla*, *Zoo* and *Willy the Wimp* have been widely acclaimed, and in 2000 he was awarded the prestigious international Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration.

Monkeys and gorillas appear frequently in your work. Why do you identify with them so strongly?

There are many answers to that question but I suppose the main reason is because they are so much like us. To look into a gorilla's eyes is very much like looking into the eyes of a human being. Sometimes it feels as though there is a person inside the gorilla looking out at us.

Many of your illustrations reference the work of famous artists, from Da Vinci to Dali, but which picture books and illustrators have inspired you the most?

The two illustrators who have inspired me most are Maurice Sendak with *Where the Wild Things Are*, and Chris Van Allsburg with *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*.

Your books are multi-layered and have both child and adult appeal; did you consciously decide to create books with such a wide audience in mind?

Not really, I wanted to put as many layers in my books as possible so that they could be appreciated at different levels at different stages of development. I like the idea of the readers seeing more each time they read them.

I do think however, it's quite a good idea to interest the adult who may be reading to the child, a bored adult communicates that boredom to the child.

You were once illustrator-in-residence at Tate Britain. What did you learn about the way children respond to pictures?

The main thing I learned was how visually literate children can be and how capable they are at interpreting pictures. I also found out how much fun they could have discovering meanings and stories in paintings.



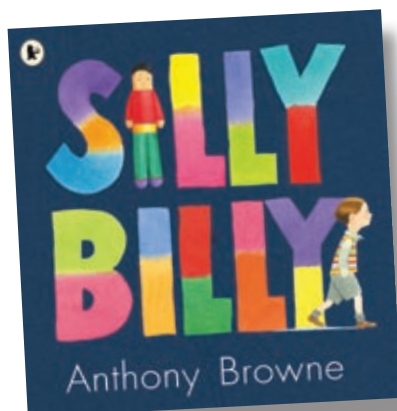
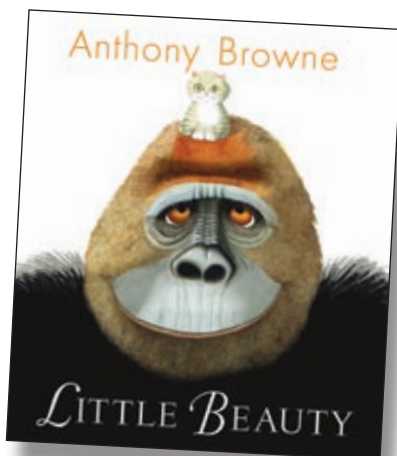
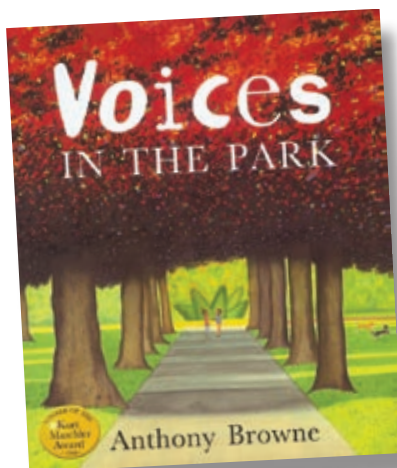
Why do you think picture books are important?

Seeing comes before words, and I believe it is just as important to develop a child's visual literacy alongside verbal literacy. Too often they are encouraged to think that maturing and becoming educated is a matter of leaving pictures behind and going into the world of words (or 'proper' books as I've heard them called).

Which emerging illustrators do you admire at the moment and why?

It's exciting to see so many good new illustrators emerging in this country, and what I'm always most impressed with is the development of a personal point of view of the world shown through the pictures and the words.

Anthony Browne was one of the judges for the Big Picture Best New Illustrators. Read about the winners he helped to select over the next few pages.



Gorilla, Little Beauty and Silly Billy are published by Walker Books and Voices in the Park is published by Corgi.

about booktrust

Booktrust is an independent national charity that encourages people of all ages and cultures to discover and enjoy reading.

Booktrust runs a variety of programmes, projects, prizes and websites, all of which aim to promote books and reading. Listed below are some of the things we do relating to children's books.

> **Bookstart**

A national programme that works through locally-based organisations to give three free packs of books to babies with guidance materials for parents and carers.

It is based on the principle that every child in the UK should enjoy and benefit from books from as early an age as possible.

www.bookstart.org.uk

> **Booktime**

Promotes reading for pleasure by giving the gift of a book pack to children across the UK shortly after they start school.

www.booktime.org.uk

> **Booked Up**

A national programme that encourages children to read for pleasure by providing each Year 7 child with a free book of their choice.

www.bookedup.org.uk

> **The Letterbox Club**

Provides a parcel of books and other materials for children aged 7-11 in foster families, every month for six months.

www.booktrust.org.uk

> **Children's Book Week**

Each year schools and libraries hold events and activities that focus on the enjoyment of reading and aim to encourage as many children as possible to enjoy books. Booktrust provides useful resources for schools to help run successful book weeks.

www.booktrust.org.uk

> **Everybody Writes**

Offers classroom teachers innovative ideas and practical resources to get primary pupils and secondary students excited about writing.

www.everybodywrites.org.uk

> **Bookmark: books and disability**

This website is for anyone looking for information or advice about reading difficulties, disability and children's books.

www.bookmark.org.uk

> **Children's Laureate**

The post of Children's Laureate is awarded once every two years to an eminent writer or illustrator of children's books to celebrate outstanding achievement in their field. Visit the website for current laureate Michael Rosen's tips on creating a poetry-friendly classroom and much more.

www.childrenslaureate.org.uk

> **Booktrust Early Years Awards**

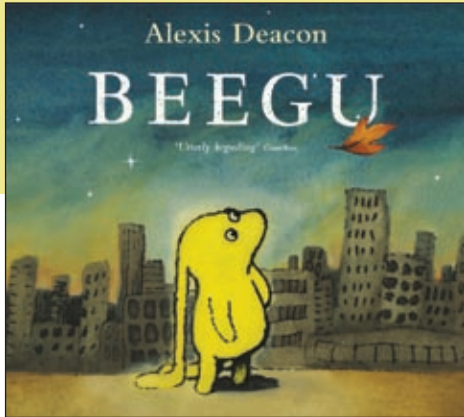
This prize is divided into three categories: Baby Book Award, Pre-School Award and Best Emerging Illustrator Award.

www.booktrust.org.uk

> **Booktrust Teenage Prize**

Recognises and celebrates the best contemporary teenage fiction.

www.bookheads.org.uk



Reading Age: 6+
Interest Level: 4+
Keywords: being different, social issues, fantasy, friendship

Publisher: Red Fox

> Alexis Deacon studied illustration at the University of Brighton. His books include *Slow Loris*, *While You Are Sleeping* and *Jitterbug Jam*. *Beegu* was shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal.

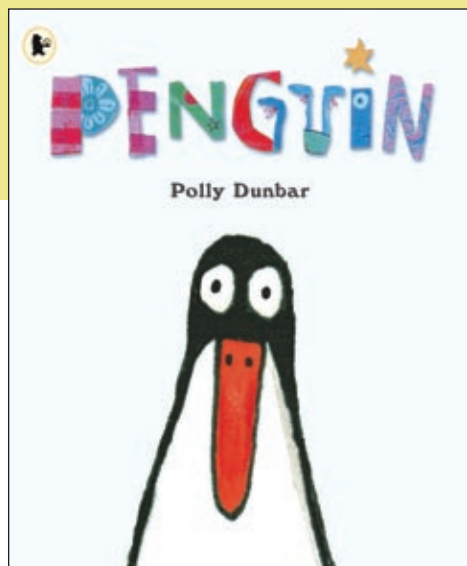
Beegu

Written and illustrated by Alexis Deacon

Beegu is from another world and somehow gets lost on Earth. Lonely and confused, she wanders off to a nearby city to find some friends.

But the only friendly people she comes across are the children, while the big Earth creatures just don't seem to understand.

Deacon's simple text and soft illustrations cleverly convey a child's feelings of uncertainty and confusion when faced with new surroundings. This is a heart-warming and satisfying tale that is certain to provide comfort to young children.



Reading Age: 5+

Interest Level: 2+

**Keywords: animal story,
friendship**

Publisher: Walker Books

> Polly Dunbar lives and works in Brighton. Her other books include *Dog Blue* and *Flyaway Katie*. Visit the illustrators' gallery at www.bigpicture.org.uk to find out more.

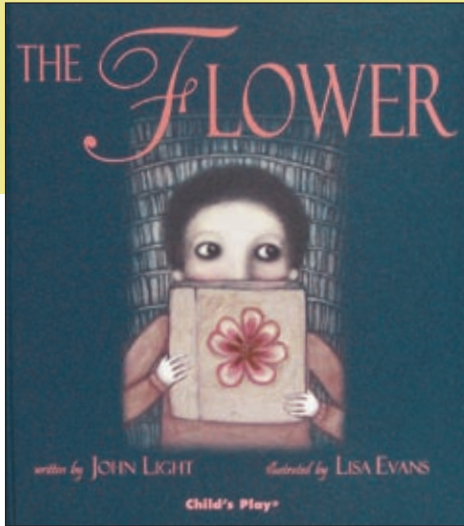
Penguin

**Written and illustrated
by Polly Dunbar**

Ben is given a penguin as a present. Try as he might, however, he cannot get a reaction from his inscrutable companion.

He pokes him, sings for him and eventually fires him into outer space but to no avail – Penguin still ignores him. When Ben loses his temper with Penguin, a big blue lion gobbles him up.

Ben's unlikely saviour makes him realise that Penguin loves him after all. Polly Dunbar's illustrations are gorgeous and her palette stylish – from the endearing Ben's rosy cheeks to the magnificent turquoise lion who eats him up.



Reading Age: 6+

Interest Level: 8+

**Keywords: environment,
social issues, being different**

Publisher: Child's Play International

> Lisa Evans lives in Bath. Her one ambition has been to make a living using her imagination. *The Flower* is her first children's book.

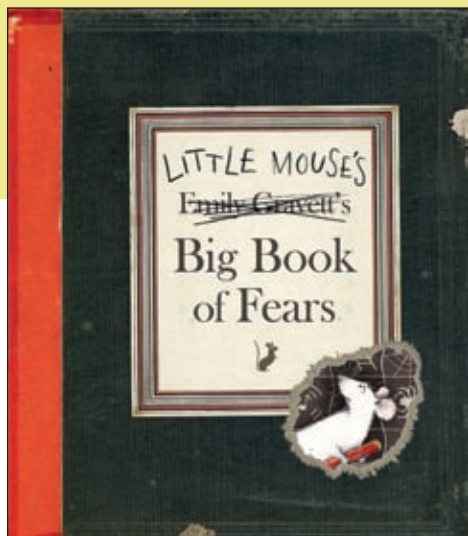
The Flower

**Written by John Light and
illustrated by Lisa Evans**

Brigg's room is like a prison cell. No plants grow in this soulless world. There is not even soil. In the library, Brigg opens a book marked "Do not read", in which he sees pictures of flowers for the first time.

Discovering these symbols of beauty and life compels him to search for more; when he finds a packet of seeds, his awareness of another way of living literally begins to grow.

This intriguing story powerfully suggests that changing the world for the better starts with a seed, an idea, and a person. Grainy textures and grey pencil lines suit this sophisticated story well.



Reading Age: 6+

Interest Level: 4+

Keywords: animal story, fears

Publisher: Macmillan Children's Books

> Emily Gravett won the 2005 Kate Greenaway Medal for *Wolves*. Her other titles include *Orange Pear Apple Bear*, *Meerkat Mail* and *Monkey and Me*. Read an interview with Emily at www.bigpicture.org.uk

Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears

**Written and illustrated
by Emily Gravett**

Little Mouse is scared of most things, from creepy crawlies and loud noises, to getting lost. These fears are pinpointed in intricate detail in a fold-out map of the Isle of Fright at the end of the book.

In a series of striking double-page spreads, the mouse's fears are gradually revealed until – on the very last page – we learn that, despite his diminutive stature, he is still capable of scaring someone much bigger than himself.

This book is a delight; complete with nibbled pages, fold out features, Gravett's trademark collage technique, and a charming rodent protagonist.



Reading Age: 5+

Interest Level: 4+

Keywords: familiar environments, bravery, adventure, humour

Publisher: Red Fox

> Mini Grey won the 2007 Kate Greenaway Medal for *The Adventures of the Dish and the Spoon*. Her other titles include *Biscuit Bear* and *Egg Drop*. See more of Mini's illustrations at www.bigpicture.org.uk

Traction Man is Here

Written and illustrated by Mini Grey

Mini Grey's sense of humour is in full surreal flow in this book. For Traction Man, feats of derring-do are all in a day's work.

Do your toy animals need rescuing from evil pillows? Are your dolls in danger of being buried alive? Traction Man always saves the day with aplomb.

One day, though, his confidence takes a severe knock when Granny knits him an all-in-one green wool outfit with matching cap. Transformed in an instant from combat cool to sartorial nightmare, can Traction Man ever be a superhero again?

Readers so inclined can easily discern a positive message about one's true nature residing within. Most, however, will be happy simply to revel in Grey's wild imagination.

best new illustrators



Reading Age: 6+
Interest Level: 3+
Keywords: adventure, friendship

Publisher: HarperCollins Children's Books

> Oliver Jeffers lives and works in Belfast. His other books include *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* and *Lost and Found*, which won the Nestlé Children's Book Prize Gold Award in 2006. Read an interview with Oliver at www.bigpicture.org.uk

The Way Back Home

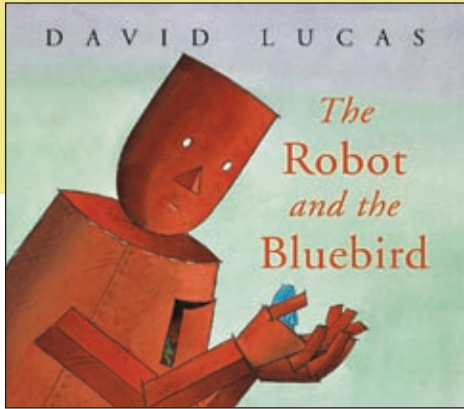
**Written and illustrated
by Oliver Jeffers**

The boy from *How to Catch a Star* and *Lost and Found* returns for a third adventure, this time discovering an aeroplane in his cupboard.

He flies it to the moon but runs out of petrol and ends up there, alone and afraid. Little does the boy know that a Martian's spaceship has also fallen into trouble nearby; soon he has a small green companion stranded alongside him to share his fear.

The pair work together to escape from the moon and, despite a few mishaps, both eventually head back to their own homes, wondering if they will ever meet again.

Oliver Jeffers' rich illustrations are as distinctive and expressive as ever, telling the story just as fluently as the simple text.



The Robot and the Bluebird

**Written and illustrated
by David Lucas**

Reading Age: 7+
Interest Level: 3+
**Keywords: adventure,
friendship, birds**

Publisher: Andersen Press

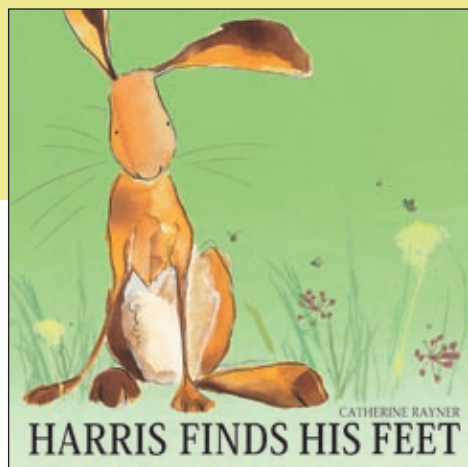
> David Lucas was born in Middlesbrough and studied at St Martin's School of Art and the Royal College of Art. His other books include *Halibut Jackson*, *Whale* and *Nutmeg*. Read an interview with David at www.bigpicture.org.uk

A Robot with a broken heart is sent to the scrapheap. An exhausted, migrating Bluebird shelters where the Robot's heart used to be; he builds her a nest of wires.

The Robot loves the warmth and life the Bluebird brings to him and he offers to carry it through the cold lands to the warm south. When the Robot reaches his destination he is exhausted.

He asks the Bluebird to make its home in his heart. Now he stands forever, his rusted arms outstretched, while families of birds make their nests inside him and perch on him to sing.

This touching and uplifting story of friendship has large, bright and evocative illustrations and is ideal for sharing or classroom use.



Reading Age: 6+
Interest Level: 3+
Keywords: growing up,
animal story, grandfather

Publisher: LittleTiger Press

> Catherine Rayner was born in Harrogate and now lives in Edinburgh. She won the Booktrust Early Years Award for Best New Illustrator in 2006 for *Augustus and His Smile*. Visit www.bigpicture.org.uk to see more of her illustrations.

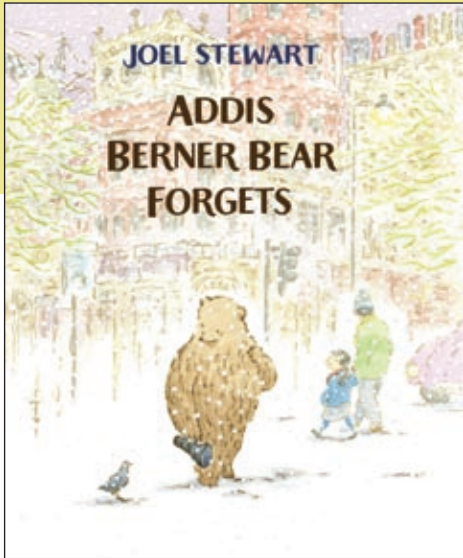
Harris Finds His Feet

Written and illustrated
by Catherine Rayner

Harris is a small hare, who asks his grandfather one day why he has such big feet. His grandfather teaches him how to use them to hop, spring and climb mountains.

They explore the world together, until his grandfather gently explains that the time has come for Harris to discover the world by himself. And that is what the newly big, strong hare does, using the skills his loving grandparent has taught him.

Each spread in this skilfully illustrated picture book is a delight. Harris leaps joyfully across the pages, against vibrant washes of colour, as he learns to be independent for the first time.



Reading Age: 6+

Interest Level: 5+

Keywords: being different,
bears, music, moving home

Publisher: Doubleday

> Joel Stewart grew up in Sheffield and studied at Falmouth College of Art. His other books include *Dexter Bexley and the Big Blue Beastie* and the *Stanley Wells Mysteries* for mid-range readers. Read an interview with Joel at www.bigpicture.org.uk

Addis Berner Bear Forgets

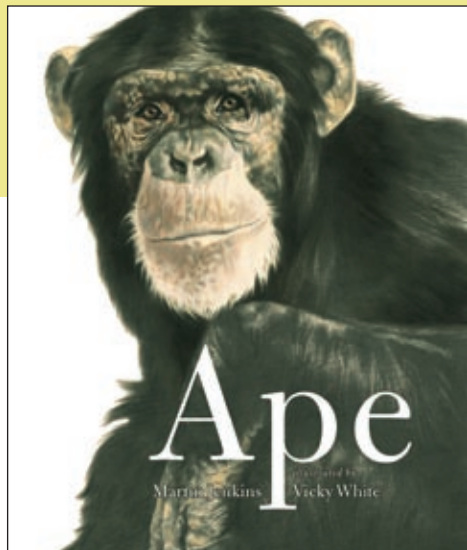
**Written and illustrated
by Joel Stewart**

Addis Berner Bear has moved to the city. With his trumpet by his side he wanders the snowy streets, taking in the noise, hustle and bustle of city life.

But so absorbed is the bear in his new surroundings that he forgets what has brought him there in the first place. One awful day Addis Berner Bear's trumpet is stolen. However, an act of kindness by a stranger turns his fortunes around and he finally remembers the reason for his trip. The people of the city hear his beautiful music and the bear is happy once more.

The loneliness and the joys of moving to a new city are all depicted in these exquisitely detailed, emotive illustrations. The colourful final pages will lift the spirits of all who look at them.

best new illustrators



Reading Age: 7+

Interest Level: 4+

Keywords: animal welfare,
monkeys, animals

Publisher: Walker Books

> Vicky White worked as a zookeeper for six years before studying illustration at Blackpool and the Fylde School of Art. *Ape* is her first children's book.

Ape

**Written by Martin Jenkins and
illustrated by Vicky White**

Each of the five kinds of great ape that exist in the world are depicted in this book. Orang-utans, chimps, bonobos and gorillas and their habits are all explored using a combination of accessible language and detailed illustration.

We see how they swing, stomp, chatter and play in many ways just like the fifth kind of ape – the human! There is a thought-provoking note at the end of the book, which points out that, despite our similarities, we have hunted our fellow apes and need to conserve their land in the future.

The intricate, almost photographic illustrations in this book really bring each of the apes portrayed to life – their eyes are particularly beguiling. For younger readers there is much to discover in the illustrations alone, while older readers will enjoy the facts revealed on each page.

Here are some of the illustrated books we have enjoyed reading over the last few months; visit www.booktrust.org.uk to see the full reviews.

> 5 years and under

Banana by Ed Vere (Puffin)

This book has only two words: 'banana' and 'please', so the plot has to be deduced from the lively monkey illustrations.

Butterfly, Butterfly by Petr

Horáček (Walker Books) A colourful introduction to the world of a little girl's back garden, with a delightful pop-up ending.

Tucking In by Jess Stockham (Child's Play International)

Winner of a Booktrust Early Years Award, this animal-filled board book is perfect for the very young.

Leonardo the Terrible Monster by Mo Willems (Walker Books)

Leonardo the monster can't scare anyone. So he finds the most scaredy-cat kid in the world and tries to scare the tuna salad out of him.

> 5-8 years

Tiddler by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Axel Scheffler (Alison Green Books)

The creators of *The Gruffalo* introduce *Tiddler*, a small fish who loves to tell tall tales.

When a Monster is Born by Sean Taylor, illustrated by Nick Sharratt (Orchard Books)

'When a monster is born there are two possibilities'; this award-winning book looks at the different ways a young monster's life could turn out.

The Boy in the Biscuit Tin by Heather Dyer, illustrated by Peter Bailey (Chicken House)

An appealing holiday adventure, which will leave children begging for their own magic set.

Princess Grace by Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Caroline Binch (Frances Lincoln)

In this multicultural tale, Grace learns that there's more to being a princess than being pretty.

> 9 years and over

The Thousand Nights and One Night by David Walser, illustrated by Jan Pienkowski (Puffin)

Ancient, magical tales enhanced by glorious silhouette illustrations.

Artemis Fowl: The Graphic Novel by Eoin Colfer, adapted by Andrew Donkin, art by Giovanni Rigano, colour by Paolo Lamanna (Puffin)

Artemis Fowl, criminal genius and mastermind, plots to restore his family's fortune in this graphic version of the best-selling novel.

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick (Scholastic)

A prize-winning, visually stunning mystery set in a Parisian train station.

The Snow Goose by Paul Gallico, illustrated by Angela Barrett (Hutchinson)

Hauntingly atmospheric illustrations accompany this inspiring tale of doomed love and bravery.

The Arrival by Shaun Tan (Hodder)

A man leaves his family for a new life in a strange, futuristic country in this moving, wordless book about being a refugee.



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