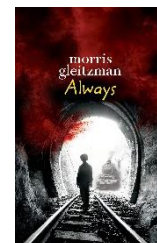


Best Children's Fiction of 2021

Chosen by StoryLinks Readers and Reviewers

Annaleise Byrd, Sarah Custance, Sandy Driessens, Dajo Finlayson, Margaret McKay-Lowndes, Mia Macrossan, Analucia Malta, Ramona Moor, Zewlan Moor, Tyrion Perkins, Sandhya Parappukaran, Jenny Stubbs, Inda Ahmad Zahri.

[Always](#) by Morris Gleitzman **12+** The seventh and final part of Felix's story, bringing to a powerful climax a series that countless young readers around the world will remember – always. **DF**



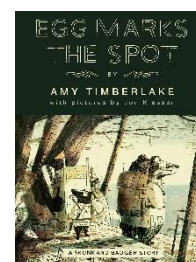
[Amira's Suitcase](#) by Vicki Conley & Nicky Johnston **PB** A story to be read out loud, shared often and discussed, this is a lovely journey for children about adversity, resilience, diversity, and friendship. **SD**

[Day Break](#) by Amy McQuire & Matt Chun **PB**- because stories such as this one which honour the past, albeit painful, will help us move forward with healing and hope. **SP**



[Dragon Skin](#) by Karen Foxlee **10+** A story about grief, bravery, friendship, and domestic abuse. It is beautifully written and evokes the landscape of Mt Isa and North Queensland so well. **DF, MML, JS, IAZ**

[Egg Marks the Spot: Skunk and Badger 2](#) by Amy Timberlake & Jon Klassen **7+** Join Badger and Skunk, the world's best worst roommates, as they embark on a new exciting adventure...with lots of chickens. **SC**



[Eliza Vanda's Button Box](#) by Emily Rodda **10+** - Fun, mysterious, full of action and adventure while still being whimsical and wonderfully written. **SC, MM, JS**

[Eyes That Kiss in the Corners](#) by Joanna Ho & Dung Ho **PB** This lushly illustrated, poetic book about a girl learning to love her Asian eyes is destined to be a classic. **ZM**



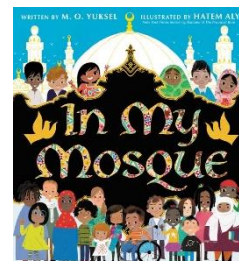
[Exit Through the Gift Shop](#) by Maryam Master & Astrid Hicks **10+** Ana is a funny 12-year-old girl who prefers to call herself Persian (because it sounds like Parisian) rather than Iranian (which sounds like you're a terrorist), who has one year to live. **RM**

[Henry Hamlet's Heart](#) by Rhiannon Wilde **13+** A love story with a charming protagonist that will make your stomach drop at the romance, no matter what your sexual orientation or identity. **ZM**

[Human Kind: Kindness](#) by Zanni Louise & Missy Turner **PB** - because the books (we love the whole series) contain kid-relatable anecdotes that are simple to understand, encouraging questions and discussions. **SP**

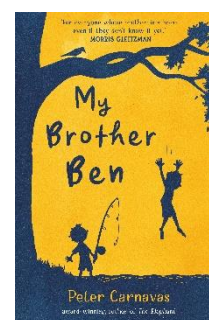
[If Not Us](#) by Mark Smith **YA** A great story with an engaging and relatable protagonist, as well as an impassioned plea for climate-change action that will inspire and empower readers of all ages. **DF**

[In My Mosque](#) by M O Yuksel & Hatem Aly **PB** A loving and enlightening tour of mosques as places of comfort, worship, and community. **IAZ**



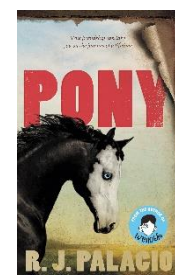
[Little Gem and the Mysterious Letters](#) by Anna Zobel **8+** Sweet and full of chaotic fun, Little Gem is faced with new challenges and powers in this story filled with friendship and acceptance. **SC**

[My Brother Ben](#) by Peter Carnavas **10+** Written in Peter's characteristic restrained and understated style this builds into a rich and satisfying story about brothers, boys, birds and growing up. **SD, MM**

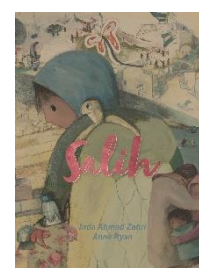


[Night Ride into Danger](#) by Jackie French **10+** An exciting historical mystery about six mysterious passengers on the Cobb & Co night mail coach. **TP**

[Pony](#) by R. J. Palacio **12+** It is spectacular! Beautifully written, meticulously researched, and full of adventure, mystery, and love. It made me cry several times! **AB + DF, MML**



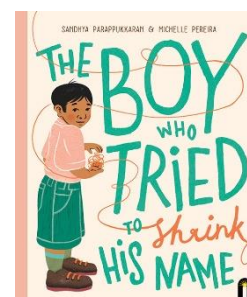
[Salih](#) by Inda Ahmad Zahri & Anne Ryan **PB** A beautifully executed book about refugees using the metaphor of a turtle carrying its home on its back. **ZM**



[The astonishing chronicles of Oscar from Elsewhere](#) by Jaclyn Moriarty **10+** The magical fourth book in the rich and whimsical world of the Kingdoms and Empires about a non-magical boy called Oscar who finds himself caught up in a surprisingly urgent quest in an even more surprising world. **AM, MM**

[The Boy and the Elephant](#) by Freya Blackwood **PB** - because wordless picture books have a way of stirring an awakening through silent observation. A delicately affirming and enchanting book. **SP**

[The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name](#) by Sandhya Parappukkaran & Michelle Pereira. **PB** A nuanced tale that holds the audience's attention as it unravels. How will Zimdalamashkermishkada deal with his long, difficult name? **ZM, JS, IAZ**



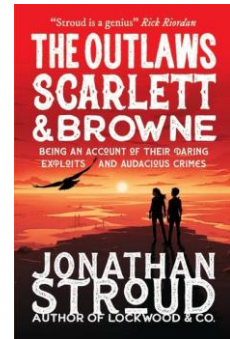
[The Christmas Pig](#) by J K Rowling **10+** A heartwarming, page-turning adventure about one child's love for his most treasured thing, and how far he will go to find it. **DF**

[The Detective's Guide to Ocean Travel](#) by Nicki Greenberg **8+** I adore cosy mysteries in general, but this one set on a real 1920s luxury cruise liner, which the author researched copiously, really won me over! **AB**

[The Last Bear](#) by Hannah Gold & Levi Pinfold **8+** A story that totally draws you in and shows that one person may be able to make a difference to global warming. **JS**



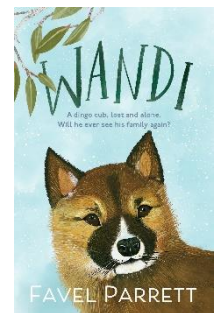
[The Outlaws Scarlett and Browne](#) by Jonathan Stroud **12+** Snappy dialogue, nonstop action, memorable characters and genuinely funny – adventure fantasy at its best. **MM**



[Utterly Dark and the Face of the Deep](#) by Philip Reeve **10+** A riveting and original fantasy about enchanted islands and the secrets they hold, from a master storyteller. **MM**

[Valley of Lost Secrets](#) by Lesley Parr **10+** An appealing story about Jimmy, an evacuee sent to Wales in 1939, who makes a gruesome discovery and has to find an ally to uncover its secrets. **JS**

[Wandi](#) by Favel Parrett & Zoe Ingram **7+** What a wonderful creation this book is! This story shows us that, apart from caring for our wildlife, like Wandi, we can face adversity, learn to adapt, and find where we belong. **SD**



[We Were Wolves](#) by Jason Cockcroft. **13+** A dark tale, illustrated by the author, of a neglected boy living in poverty with his mentally ill father, who has returned from military service in Afghanistan and from a stint in prison. **ZM**

[Wonderful Shoes](#) by Emma Bowd & Tania McCartney **PB** Features toddlers who love to wear adult shoes! A pitch-perfect rhythmic read-aloud for preschoolers. **ZM**

Happy Reading from

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