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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss McGarr



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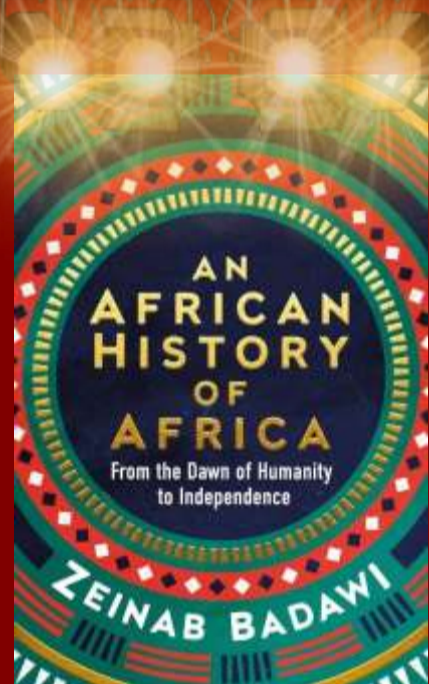
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Wish List Spotlight:



An African History of Africa: From the Dawn of Humanity to Independence by Zeinab Badawi

For too long, Africa's history has been dominated by western narratives of slavery and colonialism, or simply ignored. Now, Zeinab Badawi sets the record straight.

In this fascinating book, Badawi guides us through Africa's spectacular history – from the very origins of our species, through ancient civilisations and medieval empires with remarkable queens and kings, to the miseries of conquest and the elation of independence. Visiting more than thirty African countries to interview countless historians, anthropologists, archaeologists and local storytellers, she unearths buried histories from across the continent and gives Africa its rightful place in our global story. The result is a gripping new account of Africa: an epic, sweeping history of the oldest inhabited continent on the planet, told through the voices of Africans themselves.

Annual National Day of Celebration for Michael Rosen Announced



A national campaign for an annual day celebrating poet and author Michael Rosen was announced at this year's Hay Festival (see Books for a Better World box for more information). Children's music artist MC Grammar shared the news after joining Michael Rosen on stage for a surprise performance of his rap version of Rosen's *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. Rosen is one of the most popular authors for children writing today; he has published over 200 titles and was the Children's Laureate 2007-2009. He is also Professor of Children's Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London, and won the 2023 PEN Pinter prize for a "fearless body of work." 2024 marks the 50-year anniversary of the publication of Michael Rosen's first book, *Mind Your Own Business* and the 30-year anniversary of his beloved poem, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*.

The first national Michael Rosen Day will take place on Tuesday 12th November 2024. Led by Walker Books, the day will be a cross publisher celebration, encouraging settings to take part in various activities utilising special resources and will have a focus on reading for pleasure, fun and creativity. Michael Rosen said of the plan: "I hope this day can be a day when we can celebrate any way in which we can put books into children's hands!"

Michael Rosen's A to Z by Michael Rosen

From Agard to Zephaniah, the very best of children's poetry from the very best of children's poets appears in this wonderful and exciting anthology edited by Michael Rosen, the Children's Laureate. Coinciding with his laureateship and a very welcome public promotion of the need for children's poetry in our education system, this future classic for Puffin will delight readers young and old.



Michael Rosen's Sad Book by Michael Rosen and Quentin Blake

Sad things happen to everyone, and sometimes people feel sad for no reason at all. What makes Michael Rosen sad is thinking about his son, Eddie, who died suddenly at the age of eighteen. In this book the author writes about his sadness, how it affects him, and some of the things he does to cope with it – like telling himself that everyone has sad stuff (not just him) and trying every day to do something he can be proud of. Expressively illustrated by the extraordinary Quentin Blake, this is a very personal story that speaks to everyone, from children to parents to grandparents, teachers to grief counsellors. Whether or not you have known what it's like to feel deeply sad, the truth of this book will surely touch you.

Geek Girl Adapted for Netflix

Holly Smale's first *Geek Girl* book has been adapted into 10-part series by Netflix. The series centres around main character Harriet Manners, 'a high-flying secondary school student who is targeted by bullies, but by accident becomes a supermodel.' The series is based on the life of the author, who was recruited by a London modelling agency at the age of 15. There are six books in the series, though currently only the first has been adapted for television and it's not yet known whether the rest of the books will receive the same treatment. An important aspect of the show is its representation of neurodiversity: Smale wrote *Geek Girl* before she was diagnosed with autism and dyspraxia but has retroactively described Harriet as having both conditions too. The actor playing Harriet, Emily Carey, is also autistic and said that "although it was 'daunting' to confront that part of herself on screen, she "learned a lot" about herself through playing Harriet." Original BBC News article [here](#).



Geek Girl #1 by Holly Smale

Harriet Manners knows a lot of things. She knows that a cat has 32 muscles in each ear, a "jiffy" lasts 1/100th of a second, and the average person laughs 15 times per day. What she isn't quite so sure about is why nobody at school seems to like her very much. So when she's spotted by a top model agent, Harriet grabs the chance to reinvent herself. Even if it means stealing her Best Friend's dream, incurring the wrath of her arch enemy Alexa, and repeatedly humiliating herself in front of the impossibly handsome supermodel Nick. Even if it means lying to the people she loves. As Harriet veers from one couture disaster to the next with the help of her overly enthusiastic father and her uber-geeky stalker, Toby, she begins to realise that the world of fashion doesn't seem to like her any more than the real world did.



"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are." – E.E. Cummings

NEW



I, Ada: Ada Lovelace: Rebel. Genius. Visionary by Julia Gray
Ada Byron is rich and clever, but she longs to be free. Free to explore all the amazing ideas that came to her imagination, like flying mechanical horses and stories inspired by her travels. Free to find love and passion beyond the watchful gaze of her mother and governesses. And free to learn the full truth about her father, the notorious Lord Byron. Then Ada meets a man whose invention might just change the world – and he needs her visionary brilliance to bring it to life...

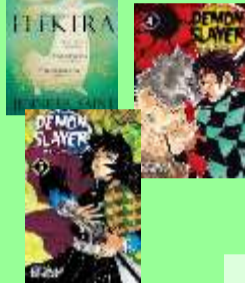
The Three-Body Problem by Cixin Liu (Recommended for Older Readers)
Set against the backdrop of China's Cultural Revolution, a secret military project sends signals into space to establish contact with aliens. An alien civilization on the brink of destruction captures the signal and plans to invade Earth. Meanwhile, on Earth, different camps start forming, planning to either welcome the superior beings and help them take over a world seen as corrupt, or to fight against the invasion.



King of Scars #2: Rule of Wolves by Leigh Bardugo
The Demon King. As Fjerda's massive army prepares to invade, Nikolai Lantsov will summon every bit of his ingenuity and charm – and even the monster within – to win this fight. But a dark threat looms that cannot be defeated by a young king's gift for the impossible. The Stormwitch. Zoya Nazyalensky has lost too much to war. She saw her mentor die and her worst enemy resurrected, and she refuses to bury another friend. Now duty demands she embrace her powers to become the weapon her country needs. No matter the cost. The Queen of Mourning. Deep undercover, Nina Zenik risks discovery and death as she wages war on Fjerda from inside its capital. But her desire for revenge may cost her country its chance at freedom and Nina the chance to heal her grieving heart. King. General. Spy. Together they must find a way to forge a future in the darkness. Or watch a nation fall.



The Magic Faraway Tree Collection by Enid Blyton
When Joe, Beth and Frannie move to a new home, an Enchanted Wood is on their doorstep. And when they discover the Faraway Tree, it proves to be the beginning of many magical adventures! Join them and their friends Moonface, Saucepan Man and Silky the fairy as they discover which new land is at the top of the Faraway Tree. Will it be the Land of Spells, the Land of Treats, or the Land of Do-As-You-Please? Come on an amazing adventure – there'll be adventures waiting whatever happens.



Elektra by Jennifer Saint
The House of Atreus is cursed. A bloodline tainted by a generational cycle of violence and vengeance. This is the story of three women, their fates inextricably tied to this curse, and the fickle nature of men and gods. Clytemnestra: The sister of Helen, wife of Agamemnon - her hopes of averting the curse are dashed when her sister is taken to Troy by the feckless Paris. Her husband raises a great army against them, and determines to win, whatever the cost. Cassandra: Princess of Troy, and cursed by Apollo to see the future but never to be believed when she speaks of it. She is powerless in her knowledge that the city will fall. Elektra: The youngest daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, Elektra is horrified by the bloodletting of her kin. But, can she escape the curse, or is her own destiny also bound by violence?

Demon Slayer: Volume 4 by Koyoharu Gotouge
In Taisho-era Japan, Tanjiro Kamado is a kindhearted boy who makes a living selling charcoal. But his peaceful life is shattered when a demon slaughters his entire family. His little sister Nezuko is the only survivor, but she has been transformed into a demon herself! Tanjiro sets out on a dangerous journey to find a way to return his sister to normal and destroy the demon who ruined his life. After a fierce battle with a demon inside a maddening house of ever-changing rooms, Tanjiro has a chance to find out about the fighter in the boar-head mask. Who is this passionate swordsman and what does he want? Later, a new mission has Tanjiro and his compatriots heading for Mt. Natagumo and a confrontation with a mysterious and horrifying threat...
Demon Slayer: Volume 5 by Koyoharu Gotouge
At Mt. Natagumo, Tanjiro, Zenitsu and Inosuke battle a terrible family of spider demons. Taking on such powerful enemies demands all the skill and luck Tanjiro has as he and his companions fight to rescue Nezuko from the spiders' web. The battle is drawing in other Demon Slayers but not all of them will leave Mt. Natagumo alive... or in one piece!



The 48 Laws of Power by Robert Greene (Recommended for Older Readers)
Amoral, cunning, ruthless, and instructive, this multi-million-copy New York Times bestseller is the definitive manual for anyone interested in gaining, observing, or defending against ultimate control – from the author of *The Laws of Human Nature*. Amoral, cunning, ruthless, and instructive, this piercing work distils three thousand years of the history of power into forty-eight well-explicated laws. As attention-grabbing in its design as it is in its content, this bold volume outlines the laws of power in their unvarnished essence, synthesizing the philosophies of Machiavelli, Sun-tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, and other great thinkers.

Books for a Better World

Celebrity speakers at this year's Hay Festival recommended books that they believe offer hope. Below are some of the recommended books that we have in the library, along with the celebrity who recommended them and the reason why. Hay Festival, also known as the Hay Festival of Literature and Arts, is an annual literature festival held in Hay-on-Wye, Wales, every June. Hay-on-Wye is known as the 'Town of Books' due to its large number of bookshops. Original *Guardian* article [here](#).

Chosen by Lenny Henry: Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman
Two young people are forced to make a stand in this thought-provoking look at racism and prejudice in an alternate society. Sephy is a Cross – a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a Nought – a "colourless" member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. The two have been friends since early childhood, but that's as far as it can go. In their world, Noughts and Crosses simply don't mix. Against a background of prejudice and distrust, intensely highlighted by violent terrorist activity, a romance builds between Sephy and Callum – a romance that is to lead both of them into terrible danger. Can they possibly find a way to be together?



Chosen Because:
"The book makes us face our own prejudices, to think about empathy, racial inequality and its impact on us all. [Blackman's] storytelling is utterly compelling, and she challenges the power dynamics between races. Why should the colour of your skin determine where you sit in society?"

Chosen by David Runciman: Erewhon by Samuel Butler
In this novel, Butler satirically describes a utopian society, using the civilization of 'Erewhon' ('nowhere', 'scrambled') to satirize beliefs popular in the England of his day.



Chosen Because:
"Butler had read Darwin and he believed that natural evolution applied to machines as well – soon they would start communicating with each other, marrying and having children. Eventually humanity would be obsolete. Butler wants his readers to remember that they still have a choice – we built this technology and we can unbuild it. But it's a war to the death: if we don't destroy the machines, they will destroy us."

Chosen by Stephen Mangan: David Copperfield by Charles Dickens
David Copperfield is the story of a young man's adventures on his journey from an unhappy and impoverished childhood to the discovery of his vocation as a successful novelist.



Chosen Because:
It's an ode to human goodness. It reminds us that we live in a society, not just an economy; reminds us to resist the best efforts of politicians, newspapers and social media to turn us against one another; and reminds us of the importance of friendship, home, loyalty and love.

Chosen by Tom Holland: The Histories by Herodotus
Here is the historian, investigating and judging what he has seen, heard, and read, and seeking out the true causes and consequences of the great deeds of the past. In his History, the war between the Greeks and Persians, the origins of their enmity, and all the more general features of the civilizations of the world of his day are seen as a unity and expressed as the vision of one man who as a child lived through the last of the great acts in this universal drama.



Chosen Because:
"[Herodotus'] abiding quality is curiosity: curiosity about the infinite ways in which it is possible to be human. That people from different cultures are likely to have a whole variety of perspectives on the same episode, let alone on how best to order their lives, appeared to Herodotus so significant a truth that he chose always to rely on it."

Chosen by Chigozie Obioma: All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque
In 1914 a room full of German schoolboys, fresh-faced and idealistic, are goaded by their schoolmaster to troop off to the 'glorious war'. With the fire and patriotism of youth they sign up. What follows is the moving story of a young 'unknown soldier' experiencing the horror and disillusionment of life in the trenches.



Chosen Because:
"All Quiet on the Western Front, published in 1928, shaped how we look at those who suffer through the grind of war, and what it means to survive. During research for my novel about the Biafran war of independence (1967-70), I was moved when a veteran told me he carried a dog-eared copy for much of the war, until he lost it during an ambush. That a work of fiction about a German soldier's experience could give courage to a Biafran soldier half a century later is testament to the world-changing power of this novel."

LGBT+ Pride Month

LGBT+ Pride Month, frequently shortened to just Pride Month, is observed annually in June. The concept of Pride Month was introduced following the [Stonewall riots](#) in 1969. In the year after the riots, the first pride marches were held in several US cities. The number of LGBT+ groups subsequently rapidly increased and pride celebrations spread across the United States, eventually becoming a global movement. As of 2020, it became the consensus that most pride celebrations in major urban areas around the world would be held in June, as this is the month during which the Stonewall riots took place. Pride Month is dedicated to the commemoration and celebration of those in the LGBT+ community. As well as being a month-long celebration, Pride can also be used as an opportunity to peacefully protest and raise political awareness of current issues facing those who identify as LGBT+. Below are some suggestions of books to read in celebration of the month.

Click here to visit the Pride in London website

Can't Spell Treason Without Tea by Rebecca Thorne
All Reyna and Kianthe want is to open a bookshop that serves tea. Warm wooden floors, plants on every table, firelight drifting between the rafters... all complemented by love and good company. Thing is, Reyna works as one of the Queen's private guards, and Kianthe is the most powerful mage in existence. Leaving their lives isn't so easy. What follows is a cosy tale of mishaps, mysteries, and a murderous queen throwing the realm's biggest temper tantrum. In a story brimming with hurt/comfort and quiet fireside conversations, these two women will discover just what they mean to each other... and the world.



Gwen and Art are Not in Love by Lex Croucher
Gwen, the quick-witted Princess of England, and Arthur, future lord and general gadabout, have been betrothed since birth. Unfortunately, the only thing they can agree on is that they hate each other. When Gwen catches Art kissing a boy and Art discovers where Gwen hides her diary (complete with racy entries about Bridget Leclair, the kingdom's only female knight), they become reluctant allies. By pretending to fall for each other, their mutual protection will be assured. But how long can they keep up the ruse? With Gwen growing closer to Bridget, and Art becoming unaccountably fond of Gabriel, Gwen's infuriatingly serious, bookish brother, the path to true love is looking far from straight.



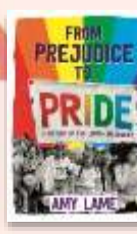
Between Perfect and Real by Ray Stoeve
Dean Foster knows he's a trans guy. He's watched enough YouTube videos and done enough questioning to be sure. But everyone at his high school thinks he's a lesbian – including his girlfriend, Zoe, and his theater director, who just cast him as a "nontraditional" Romeo. He wonders if maybe it would be easier to wait until college to come out. But as he plays Romeo every day in rehearsals, Dean realizes he wants everyone to see him as he really is now – not just on the stage, but everywhere in his life. Dean knows what he needs to do. Can playing a role help Dean be his true self?



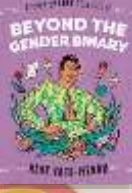
Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Malinda Lo
Seventeen-year-old Lily Hu can't remember exactly when the question took root, but the answer was in full bloom the moment she and Kathleen Miller walked under the flashing neon sign of a lesbian bar called the Telegraph Club. America in 1954 is not a safe place for two girls to fall in love, especially not in Chinatown. Red-Scare paranoia threatens everyone, including Chinese Americans like Lily. With deportation looming over her father – despite his hard-won citizenship – Lily and Kath risk everything to let their love see the light of day.



From Prejudice to Pride: A History of the LGBTQ+ Movement by Amy Lamé
From Prejudice to Pride looks at the rise and achievements of the LGBTQ+ movement and the different communities, pioneers and stories of heartbreak and courage that have marched alongside it. Follow LGBTQ+ history from ancient civilisations to the present-day and learn about key events including the trial of Oscar Wilde, the Stonewall riots, the AIDS crisis, same-sex marriage and changing laws that have impacted on LGBTQ+ life. Gain insight into the shifting attitudes that have challenged lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and the experiences that help us understand what it means to be LGBTQ+ today.



Beyond the Gender Binary by Alok Vaid-Menon
Beyond the Gender Binary, spoken word poet Alok Vaid-Menon challenges the world to see gender not in black and white, but in full colour. Taking from their own experiences as a gender-nonconforming artist, they show us that gender is a malleable and creative form of expression. The only limit is your imagination.



Proud by Juno Dawson
A stirring, bold and moving anthology of stories and poetry by top LGBTQ+ YA authors and new talent, giving their unique responses to the broad theme of pride. Each story has an illustration by an artist identifying as part of the LGBTQ+ community. A celebration of LGBTQ+ talent, PROUD is a thought-provoking, funny, emotional read. Contributors: Steve Antony, Dean Atta, Kip Alizadeh, Fox Benwell, Alex Bertie, Caroline Bird, Kathi Burke, Tanya Byrne, Moira Fowley, Frank Duffy, Simon James Green, Leo Greenfield, Saffa Khan, Karen Lawler, David Levithan, Priyanka Meenakshi, Alice Oseman, Michael Lee Richardson, David Roberts, Cynthia So, Kay Staples, Jessica Vallance, K Valentin and Kameron White.

