

Welcome to Catch the Reading Bug: I hope that you all had a relaxing half term and enjoyed the beautiful sunshine with a good book.

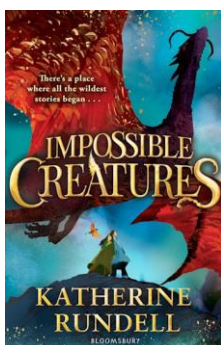
My Heart Was a Tree: Inspired by the woods around his home, the mighty forests that support our life on Earth, and the Ted Hughes poem which gives this book its title, *My Heart Was a Tree* is a celebration of trees - and Sir Michael Morpurgo's love letter to them. There are stories from an ancient olive remembering Odysseus and Penelope, and from a eucalyptus that gave shelter to a koala; from a piece of driftwood that was made into a chair, and from a tiny sapling carried by a refugee as a reminder of home – these are poems and stories that will amuse, move and energise families and readers of all ages to appreciate the beauty and wonder of trees.

Yuval Zommer's beautiful, detailed illustrations bring the natural world to life, and make *My Heart Was a Tree* a book to pore over for hours and hours, discovering something new each time.

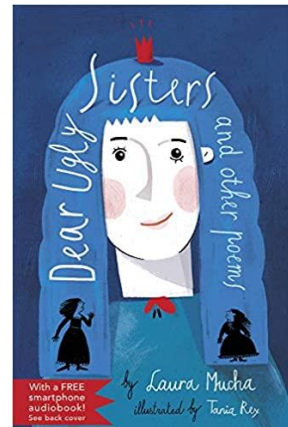
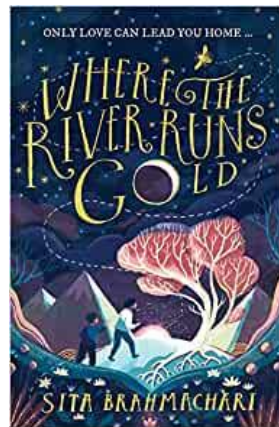
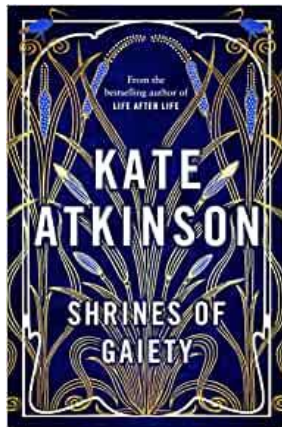
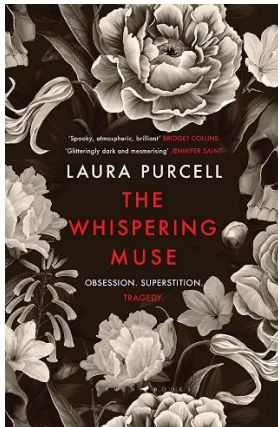
Empathy Day 2023: Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world. This Thursday (8th June) is Empathy Day. From Empathy Lab's website:

Young people are growing up in a society with a major empathy deficit; hate crimes are at their highest level since records began and there are increasing concerns about the negative effects of social media. Empathy Lab is the first organisation to build children's empathy, literacy and social activism through a systematic use of high-quality literature.

Our strategy builds on new scientific evidence showing the power of reading to build real-life empathy skills. Please visit Empathy Lab's website – www.empathylab.uk – for free resources and details of lots of online author events that will take place on Thursday. The website also has information about the 2023 Read for Empathy collection – 65 books for 3 to 16-year olds that have been chosen for their empathy-building power. The books explore timely, powerful themes: food poverty and homelessness; handling and sharing emotions; identity; understanding different cultures and changing society for the better.

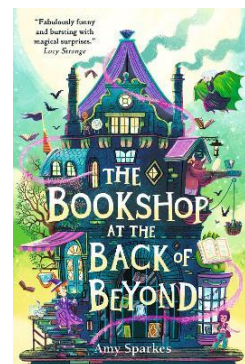


Exciting News: Katherine Rundell's new book- *Impossible Creatures* - will be published on September 14th. Here's a taster: *A boy called Christopher is visiting his reclusive grandfather when he witnesses an avalanche of mythical creatures come tearing down the hill. This is how Christopher learns that his grandfather is the guardian of one of the ways between the non-magical world and a place called the Archipelago, a cluster of magical islands where all the creatures we tell of in myth live and breed and thrive alongside humans.* More in future weeks. Katherine Rundell is one of my favourite authors – and her amazing 'Rooftoppers' is just the best children's book ever ! In my opinion, it is an absolute must read !



Recommendations: Over half term, I finished reading Sita Brahmachari's fantastic **'Where the River Runs Gold'** - *Two children must risk everything to escape their fate and find the impossible . . . A brave, thought-provoking adventure by (an) award-winning author* (LoveReading4Kids). Laura Mucha's **'Dear Ugly Sisters and Other Poems'** is really good - *Take off on a night flight, have a monster's lunch, listen to birdsong, shout out the Apatosaurus rap and check out Alexander Fleming's petri dish. Then read the note Cinderella left for her Ugly Sisters! A spectacular debut collection from an exciting new poet who is also a brilliant performer of her work in schools and festivals.* (LoveReading4Kids). I've read lots of Kate Atkinson's novels ('A God in Ruins' is stunning.) and thoroughly enjoyed **'Shrines of Gaiety'** - *1926, and in a country still recovering from the Great War, London has become the focus for a delirious new nightlife. In the clubs of Soho, peers of the realm rub shoulders with starlets, foreign dignitaries with gangsters..... At the heart of this glittering world is notorious Nellie Coker, ruthless but also ambitious to advance her six children, including the enigmatic eldest, Niven - whose character has been forged in the crucible of the Somme. But success breeds enemies, and Nellie's empire faces threats from without and within. For beneath the dazzle of Soho's gaiety, there is a dark underbelly, a world in which it is all too easy to become lost.* (Amazon) **'The Whispering Muse'** by Laura Purcell is set in London's West End at The Mercury Theatre, where rumours are circulating of a curse - *From the author of The Silent Companions and The Shape of Darkness comes a thrilling gothic tale of dangerous bargains and vaulting ambition, as an actress makes a pact with an ancient Greek muse to become the greatest performer of all time.* (Waterstone's)

The Bookshop at the Back of Beyond: From LoveReading4Kids: *Nine and her friends have cured the house's hiccups and are off to the strange and utterly unpredictable Back of Beyond in search of Professor Dish - Spoon's best friend and partner in all things alchemy. When they find Dish trapped by the greedy witch Ophidia in the basement of a particularly marvellous shop, it soon becomes clear they're going to need something more than Flabberghast's dicey magic and Nine's quick thinking to triumph this time. What they really need is a rather clever witch - one particularly good at curses...* Written by Amy Sparkes, this is a new instalment in the brilliantly funny and magical series for readers age 8+.



Visit: The website www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk is an excellent resource. Covering children's fiction and non-fiction, the site contains countless reviews, recommendations and features.

'Books crowbar the world open for you.' (From **'Rooftoppers'** by Katherine Rundell)

Paul Kynaston : Assistant Head Teacher : Reading Advocate : Malvern Primary School : Liverpool : June '23

At home I'm reading **The Dance Tree** by Kiran Millwood Hargrave.

The children's book that I'm reading is **The Bookshop at the Back of Beyond** by Amy Sparkes.

The Malvern Community Book Club's current book is **An Unkindness of Ravens** by Ruth Rendell.