Bringing our rebel reading community together

29th October 2026 Issue #9

Rebel Round Up!

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HALLOWEEN EDITION!

Greetings from Rebel HQ

Hi Rebel Readers,

It's a double author spotlight for a Halloween special! Are you excited for Halloween? We have included some spook-tastic stories for a range of ages, from interactive laugh-out-loud fun to gripping middle-grade thrilling reads that will keep you on the edge of your seat. What will *you* choose?

We also celebrate two authors in this issue. Agnes Monod-Gayraud whose new non-fiction book, *'Brilliant Sun, Luminous Moon'* which combines science, mythology and folklore and is an increidble read! Sally Doherty's new Halloween book, *'Toby and the Hair-Raising Halloween'* was recently published on 8th October. It is filled with Halloween creatures, magic, mayhem and a runaway flying dog!

October is a month of celebration, awareness and understanding as we recognise Dyslexia Awareness, Black British History and Down Syndrome Awareness Month, celebrating diversity, sharing stories and making sure every reader feels seen, valued and inspired!

We hope you enjoy this issue and send us photos of you reading in your Halloween costumes! We would love to feature you in the next issue.

Happy reading Rebels!

Be Rebellious, Read with Us!

Author Spotlight: **Agnes Monod-Gayraud**

TURNING SCIENCE INTO STORIES



One thing people might not know about authors is that we often have a 'day' job in addition to our writing work. Sometimes that can make it tricky to plan our days or even to carve out enough time for writing and visiting schools. In my case, my day job as a language editor at an astronomy journal (a newspaper that only writes about the latest information about space discoveries) does leave me a bit less time for writing, but it also inspires me to think more broadly about our Universe. The knowledge I've gained from reading and editing the papers published in the journal have spilled over into my writing. This is especially true for my latest book, *Brilliant Sun, Luminous Moon*, where I was able to take this knowledge and transform it into a beautiful book, illustrated by Welsh artist *Elin Manon*.

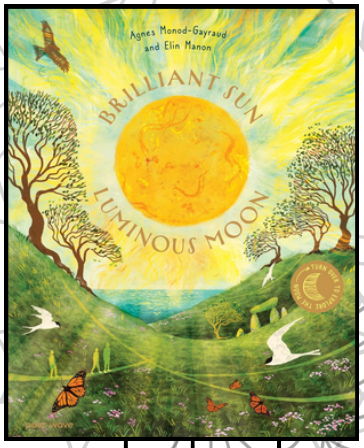
Not only is the book filled with facts and figures about the Sun and Moon, but it's also full of the stories we've built around these incredible objects in the sky. Before we had telescopes, we created folklore to reveal the important role that the Sun and the Moon play in our lives. After all, the Sun's rays provide the fuel that plants need to grow, while the Moon keeps our planet's orbit in check and keeps the tides flowing like clockwork. Since humans first appeared on our planet, we've looked to the Sun and Moon to help us tell time and to light up the sky above us.

There are so many stories about the heroes of these cosmic objects rooted in cultures all around the world. I've tried to fit as many of these stories as I could manage into my book. It's also true that many fiction authors draw from nature to create magic systems that draw on the elements around us to create their fantastic worlds. Reading into science facts is a great way to start world-building and getting ideas for stories, whether they are non-fiction or fiction.

SCAN ME







Author Spotlight: **Sally Doherty**





THE UNEXPECTED ESCAPISM OF WRITING AND READING

I never planned to be an author. In fact, a lot of the things that have happened to me in life weren't part of the plan. And although the unexpected can throw obstacles in your path, I've discovered that surprising things can happen too.

I'd graduated from university and been working in London for a year when I fell ill with an illness called M.E. In one day, I went from being a working professional with ambition to someone who was housebound. My new (unwelcome) life required rest. Lots of it. And that's when inspiration hit out of the blue. Without the chaos of modern day, a space opened up in my brain for creativity, and the idea for my first book – *Toby and the Silver Blood Witches* – crash-landed in my head.

I don't know if there's anything that makes you feel driven? A hobby, perhaps? Scoring footy goals? Winning a dance competition? The desire to bake the most scrumptious cookies ever? Well, that happened to me. I HAD to write this book. I had no choice. The plot was pretty much writing itself in my mind.

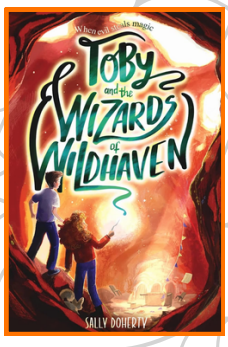
It took me a long time. I was only well enough to write for five minutes a day to start with. But I kept going, and slowly, many (many) moons later, somehow I finished. And now my fifth book – *Toby and the Hair-Raising Halloween* – just published!

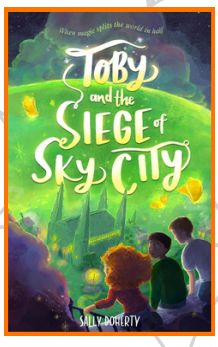
Why do I kept going when it takes me so long to create each book? I LOVE writing. When I'm writing, I'm not thinking about if my body is feeling poorly. Instead, I'm living my story. I'm right there, flying broomsticks, facing fire-breathing gargoyles to enter the witches' secret city in the sky or chasing a runaway skeleton down the street.

Reading is the same. Physically, I can't leave my house. But mentally, I'm living whole lives, visiting whole new worlds and going on fantastic adventures all from my chair (or bed). Writing and reading provide escapism – a chance to see and experience life through somebody else's eyes. Now that's truly magic. So where do you think you'll travel today through the pages of a book?

www.sallydohertyauthor.com









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Book Recommendations

Jekyll Vs Hyde: The Potion of Doom *by Jack Meggitt-Phillips (Author), Holly Swain (Illustrator)*



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Fear Files: Hide and Seek *by Christopher Edge*

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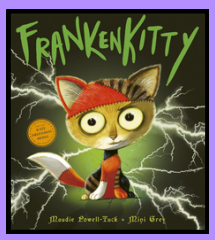
Magster and the Auriaku Koi *by Kit Butler*



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Frankenkitty *by Maudie Powell-Tuck (Author), Mini Grey (Illustrator)*

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The Notwitches *by Gary Panton (Author), Dotty Sutton (Illustrator)*



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Book Recommendations

Witchy Boo: Casts Her First Spell *by Arden Jones (Author), Saoirse Lou (Illustrator)*



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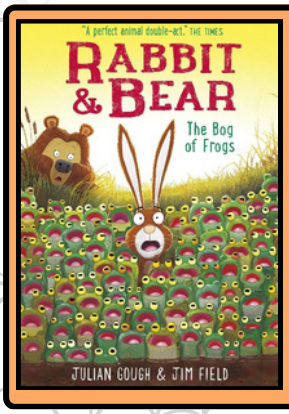
The Pumpkin Thief *by Alice Hemming (Author), Nicola Slater (Illustrator)*

How to Survive an Apocalypse *by Coby Coonradt (Author), Cameron Hardy (Author), Neon Squid (Author), Victoria Stebleva (Illustrator)*



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Books we are excited about... (new releases)



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Rabbit & Bear: The Bog of Frogs

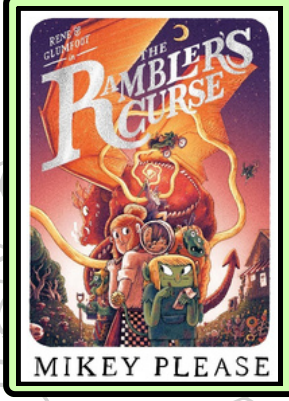
Out now: Hardback 8th October

by Julian Gough (Author), Jim Field (Illustrator)

Rabbit has questions. LOTS of questions! Why do the stars shine? Where do they go during the day? And what on earth is hiding in the mysterious Bog of Frogs?

Join Rabbit and Bear on a **hilarious, muddy and magical adventure** as they set off to uncover the answers. Expect friendship, funny moments, surprising discoveries and plenty of frogs along the way!

A brilliant new adventure for curious readers who love to laugh, explore and ask BIG questions!



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The Rambler's Curse

Out now: 8th October

by Mikey Please (Author, Illustrator)

Something very strange has arrived at the Café at the Edge of the Woods... **a HUMAN!** Rene and Glumfoot are used to all kinds of magical creatures, but humans are a whole different story. When they discover that humans have been venturing into the enchanted Wandthorn Woods, they set off on a daring mission to discover what they want – and stop them from putting their magical world in danger!

Packed with **magic, mystery, humour and adventure**, this is the exciting first book in a brand-new trilogy from **Mikey Please**. Perfect for readers who love getting lost in a wild and wonderfully weird world!



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Corpse Talk: Dead, Famous and Very Chatty

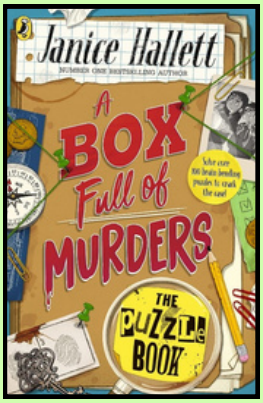
Out now: 8th October

by Adam & Lisa Murphy

Think history is DEAD boring? Think again!
Join Adam Murphy as he brings some of history's most famous figures back to life – literally! Meet characters including **Aristotle, Marie Antoinette, Frida Kahlo and Nero** and discover their incredible stories through hilarious interviews from beyond the grave.

Packed with **funny facts, fascinating history and brilliant comic illustrations**, this is history like you've never read it before!

Perfect for curious readers who love comics, laughs and discovering amazing things about the past!



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A Box Full of Murders

Out now: 1st October

by Janice Hallett (Author), Marta Kissi (Cover Art)

Calling all budding detectives! Ava and Luke are back with a brand-new mystery – and **this time, YOU are on the case!**

A famous puzzle setter has been murdered, their successor has been kidnapped and a criminal plot is unfolding. Can you follow the clues, crack the codes and solve the puzzles before it's too late?

Packed with **100+ puzzles, secret messages, mazes, ciphers and brain-teasing challenges**, this is a brilliant book for young detectives who love mysteries and solving clues!

Spotlight: Teacher Q&A



Name: Esther Brown

@mrsbrownsbookbox

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TRICK OR Treat

What was your favourite childhood book?

I can't choose between *Matilda* (I read it on repeat and tried so hard to move things with my eyes!) and *Winnie the Pooh* which is still a bit of an obsession of mine. We had the tapes in the car narrated by Alan Bennett and I still read the books in his voice to this day. I've even visited *The Hundred Acre Wood.*

If there was one book you could go back and read again for the first time, what would it be?

Oooh that's hard. I'm going to cheat again - *Fledgling* by Lucy Hope, *Tyger* by SF Said, *The Final Year* by Matt Goodfellow, *When Life Gives you Mangoes* by Kereen Getten or T*he Soup Movement* by Ben Davis. They were all unexpected in some way and gave me a 'feeling' that has meant they stayed with me.

What book are you currently reading?

At the time of writing my Middle Grade read is *Impossible Creatures - The Neverfear* by Katherine Rundell and my Grown up book *The Art of a Lie* by Laura Shepherd - Robinson.

Which character from a book is most like you and why?

I relate to lots of picture book Mums if I'm honest - a little fraught!!! I'd like to think I'm a bit like Flo in *Skandar* - sensitive and empathetic to others (but I'm no were near as courageous) and I definitely aspire to be like my teacher book heroes Mrs Flotsam in *My Beautiful Voice* by Joseph Coelho or Mr Joshua in *The Final Year!*

Which genres do you enjoy reading the most?

I love historical fiction - children's and adult - but I'm open to most things. I like being part of my local book club as it pushes you to try new things.

Can you share a reading Top Tip?

Choice and voice! Having these two simple words at the heart of all you do can really empower children as readers.

Listen to them - their opinions, interests, views on reading. This enables you to give personalised recommendations.

Give them as much choice as possible - poetry, graphic novels, magazines, recipe books, car manuals - validate it all.



Thank you Rebel!

Activity time! Invent Your Own Monster!

Create a monster who could star in a children's book.

Answer the following:

- Name: .....
- Where does it live? .....
- What does it look like? .....
- What does it eat? .....
- What is it afraid of? .....
- What is its secret? .....

Writing challenge: Write the opening sentence of your monster's story.

.....

Activity time! Halloween Book Hunt

Can you find a book that...



- Has a witch on the cover?
- Has a spooky setting?
- Has a character who is a monster?
- Has a black cat?
- Has a mysterious object on the cover?
- Has a character who is brave?

Challenge: How many can you find in 5 minutes?

Have you read this?

Middle-grade age 9+

Gloom *by Jack Mackay (Author), Ben Joel Price (Illustrator)*



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Middle-grade age 9+



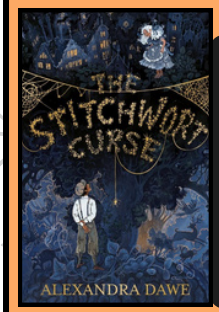
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Spooksmiths Investigate: Circus of Shadows *by Alex Atkinson*

Middle-grade age 9+

**Winner of the week junior breakthrough award 2026!*

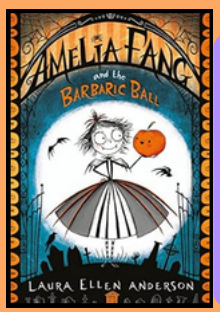
Middle-grade age 9+



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The Stitchwort Curse *by Alexandra Dawe*

Ages 7+



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Amelia Fang and the Barbaric Ball *by Laura Ellen Anderson*

There's a Ghost That Lives at My Gran's House

There's a ghost that lives at my gran's house,
Now, you think I'd be scared to death.
But the only thing that's frightening
Is the ghoulish smell of his breath.

He believes he's utterly terrifying,
And he really does try his best.
I haven't the heart to tell him he's not—
I'm worried it would make him depressed.

If I'm honest, I think he's more scared of us,
Yet he's trying so hard to be brave.
The thing is, I can see right through him!
In fact, I've started calling him Dave.



He popped out of the sink whilst I was brushing my teeth,
But I kinda knew he was there.
I could hear him down the plughole,
Building up courage to give me a scare.

He was taking deep breaths and counting to ten,
Chanting 'I'm at my best when I'm haunting'.
I felt really bad for poor little Dave,
As I honestly don't find him that daunting.



So, when he found the nerve to jump out,
I did what I knew I must do.
I threw up my brush and ran out of the room,
Screaming 'Gran, there's a ghost in the loo!'

And now Dave seems really happy,
Living in my gran's bathroom sink.
It's just a shame that the toothpaste we spit
Doesn't help with his breath and the stink!

So, if you ever pop round to my gran's,
And you nip to the loo and hear humming—
That'll be Dave, so get ready to scream,
'Cause he might just shout 'Boo' from the plumbing!

- Liz Carney-Marsh





The Illustrations for Liz's poem above were created by the talented Angela Hewitt!

Her new picture book is called ***'Ursa and the Search for Big Bear'*** *by Gemma Seeley and Angela Hewitt. Check it out!*



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Have you read this?

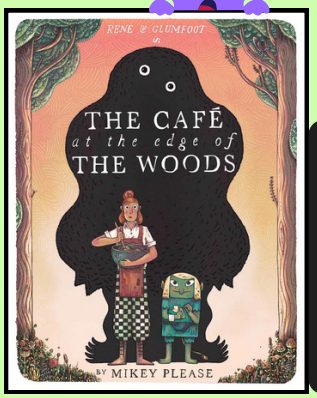
All ages *Letters to actually open!*



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Monster Post *by Emma Yarlett (Author, Illustrator)*

All ages



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The Café at the Edge of the Woods *by Mikey Please (Author, Illustrator)*

Activity time!
Would You Rather?

Would you rather...

Read a book about vampires OR witches?

Read a story set in a haunted house OR a spooky forest?

Have a ghost as your best friend OR a talking monster?

Explore a mysterious cave OR an abandoned house?

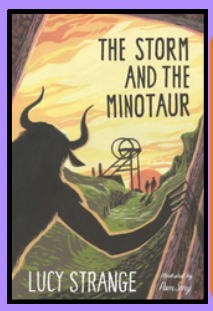
Read a really funny book OR a really scary book?

Reading challenge:
Explain **why** you chose your answers.

Dyslexia friendly books – Barrington Stokes!

Age 9+

The Storm and the Minotaur
by Lucy Strange (Author),
Pam Smy (Illustrator)



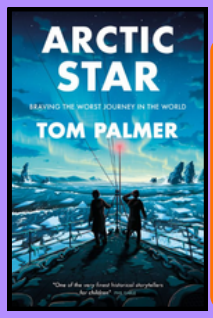
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The Dog That Saved the World (Cup)
by Phil Earle (Author),
Elisa Paganelli (Illustrator)

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Arctic Star
by Tom Palmer (Author),
Tom Clohosy Cole (Illustrator)



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Interest 11+ reading age 6+

Stay Too Long
by Steve Cole (Author),
Berat Pekmezci (Illustrator)



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Age 7+

When I was a Wolf
by Liz Flanagan (Author),
Nikola Aronova (Illustrator)

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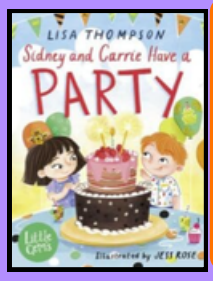
Age 5+

Lottie the Little Wonder
by Katherine Woodfine (Author),
Ella Okstad (Illustrator)

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Sidney and Carrie Have a Party
by Lisa Thompson (Author),
Jess Rose (Illustrator)



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The Missing Bunny
by Holly Webb (Author),
Antonia Woodward (Illustrator)

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