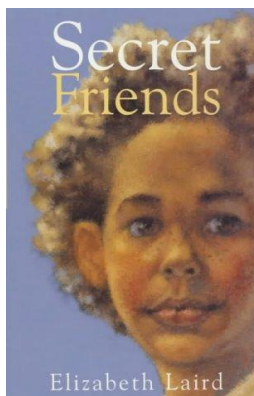


Author Focus

Elizabeth Laird

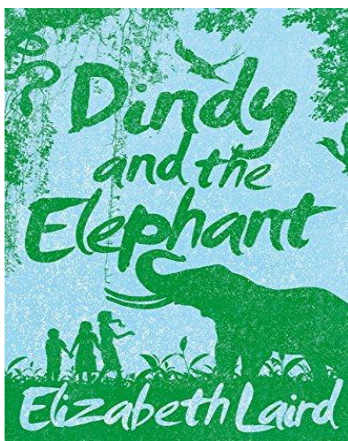
Many of Elizabeth Laird's books have been shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal and she was the IBBY UK author nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 2016. Elizabeth Laird portrays life in a number of countries where she has lived and with which she is very familiar. Find out more about her and her books at www.elizabethlaird.co.uk

A selected list of her books appears below:



Secret Friends, illustrated by Jason Cockcroft
Hodder 9780340664735

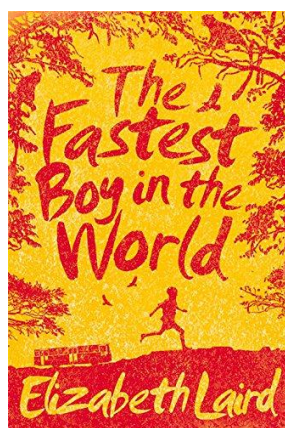
Tragedy strikes unexpectedly in this short novel that deals sensitively with the serious subject of bullying amongst girls. The themes of loyalty and the sometimes negative influences of peer pressure could provoke much fruitful discussion.



Dindy and the Elephant, illustrated by Peter Bailey
Macmillan 9781447272403

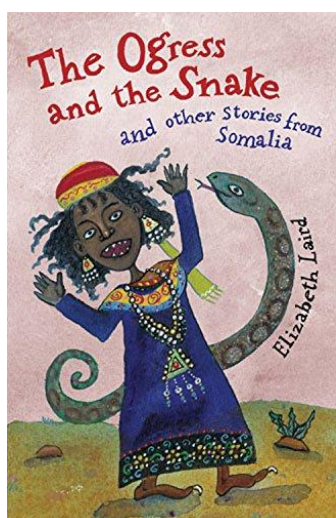
Set just before the independence of India, where her father manages a tea plantation, Dindy's family is about to move to Britain, leaving the home she has always known. As they prepare for departure, she and her brother get into some serious scrapes, including a close encounter with a rampaging elephant. Dindy also has to come to terms with the realisation of her mother's racist attitudes. Cultural and geographical information is skillfully woven into this short novel.





The Fastest Boy in the World, illustrated by Peter Bailey
Macmillan 9781447267171

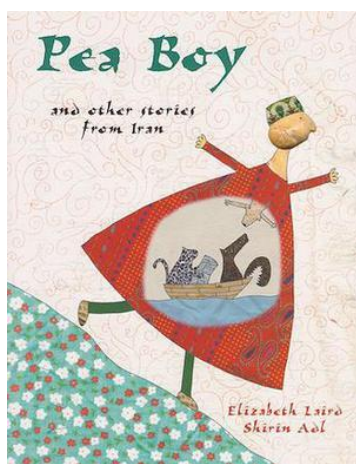
Eleven year old Solomon lives in an Ethiopian village. One day his grandfather decides, to the family's consternation, that the boy will accompany him on a visit to the capital city, Addis Ababa, as there is someone he needs to see. Solomon, a keen runner, is excited by the timing of the visit once he realises that it coincides with the return of the country's Olympic athletic team. Surprises are in store for him when he finds out about his grandfather's past and Solomon has to rise to responsibility and exercise his running abilities.



The Ogress and the Snake, illustrated by Shelley Fowles
Frances Lincoln 9781845078706

A lively collection of folk tales told to the author by people living in the Somali region of Ethiopia. They include stories of interaction between humans and animals, children abandoned by their parents, a prince who must hide himself so well that a princess cannot see him or his life will be forfeit, and two wily merchants who aim to outdo each other. Illustrated in black and white in a childlike style.





Pea Boy and other tales from Iran, illustrated by Shirin Adl
Frances Lincoln 9781847802637

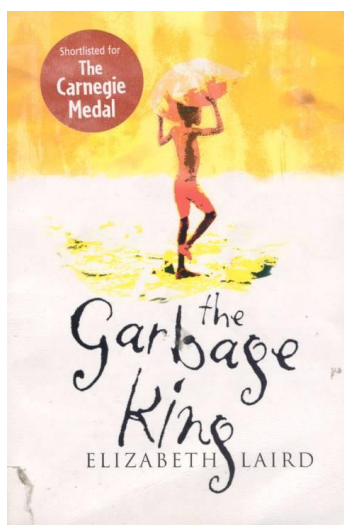
The dialogues in these seven surreal tales from Iranian folklore make them fun to read aloud. A chickpea becomes the son of a shopkeeper and brings home a fortune. A cockroach marries a mouse but her demands lead to his demise. The spreads are carefully designed using mixed media collage illustrations against a backdrop of papers of varying types and textures.

Sadly this book is no longer in print but if you are fortunate enough to have a copy in your school, there is a teaching sequence to accompany it on our Power of Reading website (subscription only).



Oranges in No Man's Land
Macmillan 9780330445580

In war torn Beirut, Ayesha must make a perilous journey across the city to get essential medicine for her sick grandmother from a doctor whose family are on the opposing side in the conflict. A short novel set in a specific time and place – Lebanon in the 1970s, there are sadly many parallels for children around the world with the situation in which young Ayesha finds herself.

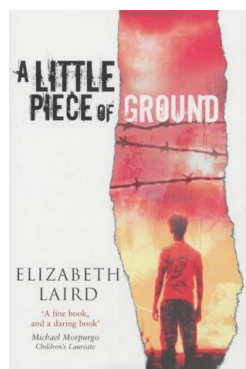


The Garbage King

Macmillan 9780330415026

Two boys in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, lead very different lives. Dani is from a rich family, but is a disappointment to his father. Mamo and his sister Tiggist are orphans, struggling to make ends meet. Both boys run away. When they meet, they help each other to survive on the city streets. This well-constructed novel gives insight into the lives of street children in Ethiopia.

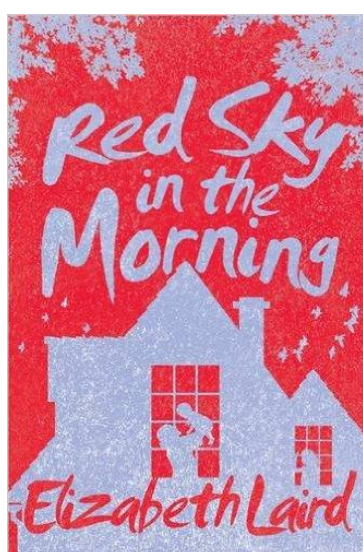
There is a teaching sequence to accompany this book on our Power of Reading website (subscription only).



A Little Piece of Ground

Macmillan 9780330437431

Co-written with Palestinian author Sonia Nimr, this novel is set in occupied Palestine. Daily life is seen through the eyes of twelve-year-old Karim as he and his friends try to lead a normal life by claiming a piece of ground where they can play football in peace.

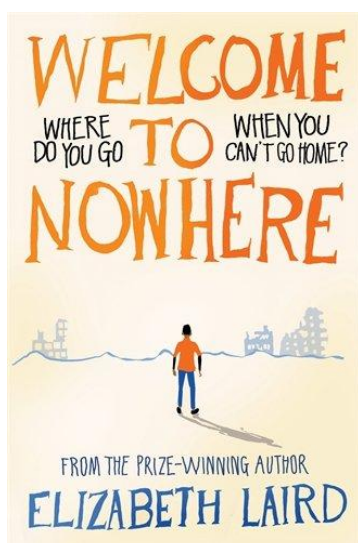


Red Sky in the Morning

Macmillan 9781509802937

Anna's brother Ben born with a disability which means that he needs lots of care throughout his short life. The story shows how having him at the centre of their lives, loving him and ultimately grieving for him, affects the family dynamics. This is set alongside the ordinary preoccupations of an adolescent girl – especially as far as relationships are concerned – with other girls, boys and her parents.



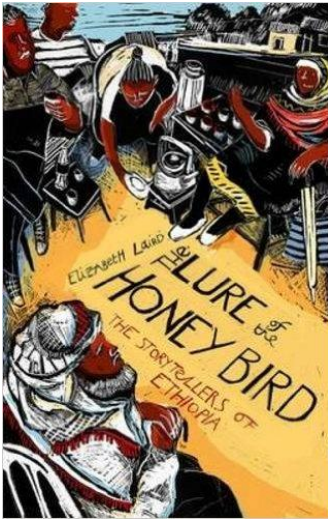


Welcome to Nowhere

Macmillan 9781509840472

Elizabeth Laird has drawn on her experience of volunteering in refugee camps in Jordan to write this novel which highlights the tragic situation that has developed in Syria. The story is seen through the eyes of Omar and opens with an introduction to his daily life, going to school and working at two jobs, and to his family. A combination of factors lead to their having to leave their home and flee their country. Elizabeth Laird demonstrates that whatever line people pursue, whether it's Omar's brother Musa's clandestine political activity or their father's compromising attitude which he believes will protect his job and family, all are potentially in danger. This novel covers important concerns regarding the treatment of refugees, the role of women and girls and the situation in the Middle East. However, it's not purely an 'issues' book – these matters are raised within the context of an involving and fast-paced narrative with a central character with whom readers can empathise.





The Lure of the Honeybird: The Storytellers of Ethiopia,
illustrated by Yosef Kebede and Eric Robinson
Polygon 9781846972461

This book is for adults rather than children but is of great interest to anyone interested in oral storytelling, how stories can be preserved and how they vary and stay similar from place to place. Elizabeth Laird travelled around all the regions of Ethiopia, collecting stories from local people and in this book she describes her journeys and retells many of the tales she heard. The stories she collected can be found on these two websites:

www.ethiopianfolktales.com

www.ethiopianenglishreaders.com

