

Trees

Trees have inspired many creators of children's books. Here is a selection to explore that includes picturebooks, non-fiction, novels and folk tales.



Tree by Patricia Hegarty and Britta Teckentrup
Little Tiger 9781848691810

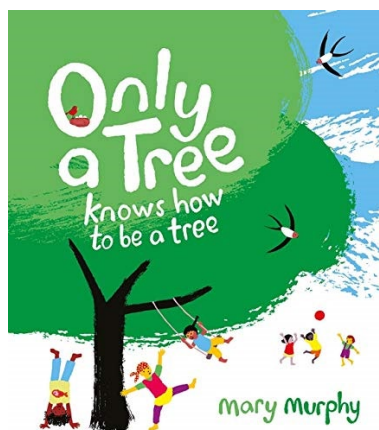
An owl peeks through a hole in the page and observes the changes the tree in which it lives undergoes during each season. The paper cut-out technique is used to show how the other wildlife in the tree expands and diminishes as the seasons change and the leaves come and go. The pictures are accompanied by a text in rhyming couplets.



Trees by Carme Lemniscates
Walker 9781406376746

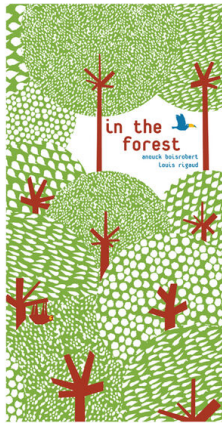
A brief poetic text gradually builds information about trees, beginning with seasonal changes and progressing to their important role in our world. The mixed media collage illustrations show how birds and people interact with them emphasising their essential nature.

A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/trees-0>



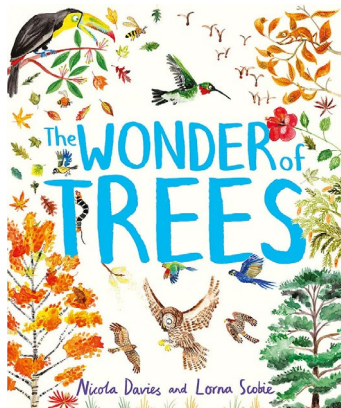
Only a Tree Knows How to Be a Tree by Mary Murphy
Otter-Barry Books 9781910959251

Beginning with a tree, this picturebook demonstrates in simple terms how all living things and phenomena have their own distinctiveness and individuality and yet all fit together as significant parts of life on Earth.



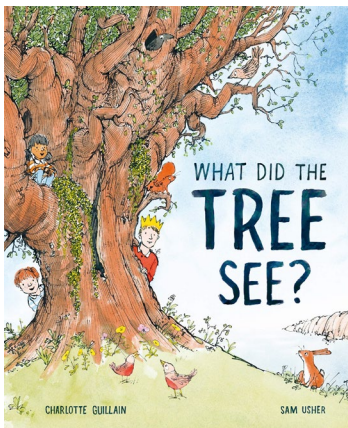
In the Forest by Anouck Boisrobert and Louis Rigaud, story by Sophie Strady
Tate Publishing 9781849760713

This ingeniously designed pop-up book tells the story of how a rainforest is brutally cut down by man-made machines so that all the living creatures must flee for their lives. This includes the sloth hidden in the trees who returns once a new forest is planted and begins to grow.



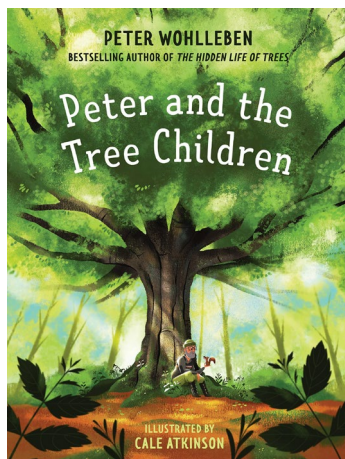
The Wonder Tree by Teresa Heapy and Izzy Burton
Egmont 9781405292887

As the leaves fall from the tree where Little Owl lives with his mummy, she tells him about how the tree lives and grows and how it has provided shelter for generations of owls before them. The illustrations display the colours of the shifting season and have a sepia tint when depicting past times.



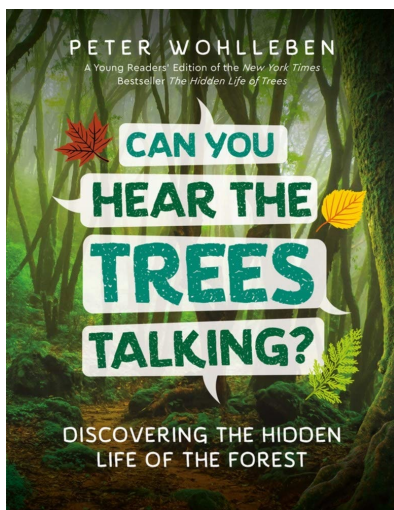
What Did the Tree See? by Charlotte Guillain and Sam Usher
Welbeck 9781913519018

A rhyming text describes the changes that occur as an oak tree grows from an acorn and concurrently what it sees over many centuries from the place where it grows overlooking a bay by the sea. A fascinating narrative about how the histories of humans and trees intertwine. Appendices include a timeline about historical events that have taken place during the tree's lifetime and a description of its life cycle.



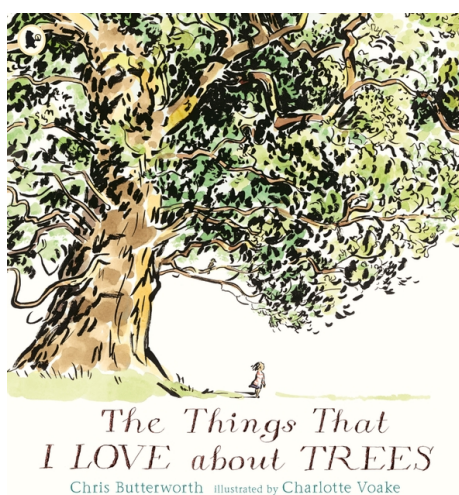
Peter and the Tree Children by Peter Wohlleben, illustrated by Cale Atkinson, translated from German by Jane Billinghurst
Greystone Kids 9781771644570

When Peter the forester tells lonely Piet the squirrel that trees have families, Piet is amazed. So Peter offers to take him on a tour of the forest so that he can see and understand for himself. This picturebook is a first introduction to the ideas and information in the author's *The Hidden Life of Trees*.



Can You Hear the Trees Talking? Discovering the Hidden Life of the Forest by Peter Wohlleben, translated from German by Shelley Tanaka, abridged by Jane Billinghamurst
Greystone Kids 9781771644341

An adaptation for children of *The Hidden Life of Trees* in which the author showed how trees communicate with each other. Here he approaches the subject through a series of enticing questions. They include: Is There a Forest Internet? What Are Trees Afraid of? Do Trees Sleep at Night? Do Trees Sweat in Summer? Although this anthropomorphises trees to some extent, it aids human conceptualisation considerably. Throughout the book there are quizzes and activities to try out.



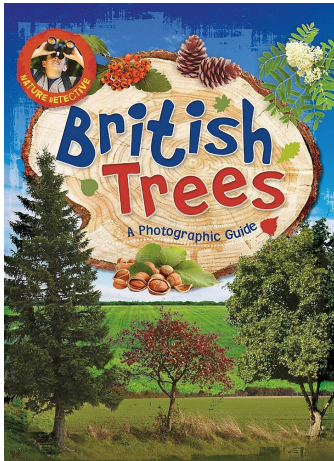
The Things That I LOVE about TREES by Chris Butterworth and Charlotte Voake
Walker 9781406382877

A small girl makes observations about the seasonal changes in the trees in her local environment, paying particular attention to a plum tree close to her home. Poetic language flourishes in the central narrative text – ‘Summer trees are shady, and so full of leaves, when the wind blows they swish like the sea’ and this is complemented by the illustrations that clearly demonstrate the child’s close connection to the nature that surrounds her. As with all the ‘Nature Storybooks’ there are facts on every spread distinguished by being in a smaller font.



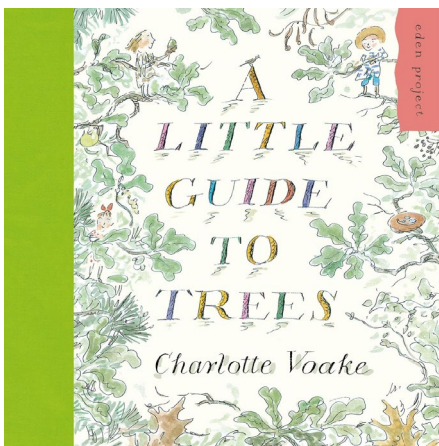
The Wonder of Trees by Nicola Davies and Lorna Scobie
Hodder 9781444938197

Using a luxuriously large format, the author and illustrator explore the world of trees. Beginning with a brief arboreal history and geography, they then go on to focus on the functions of trees’ constituent parts and their relationships with other living things. Readers encounter some of the types of environment in which they grow and the ways in which humans interact with them are described in a thought provoking way before the book ends with a helpful glossary. For other books by Nicola Davies see <https://clpe.org.uk/clpe/library/booklists/nicola-davies-booklist>



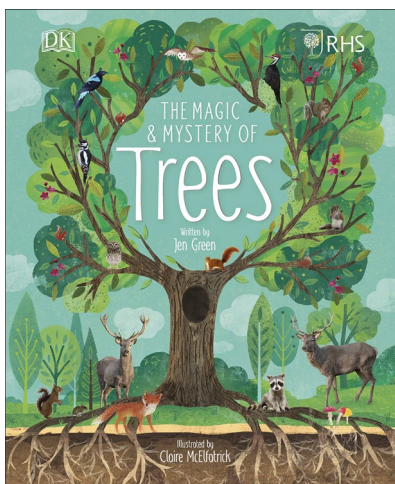
British Trees. A Photographic Guide by Victoria Munson
Wayland 9780750293259

Following a brief general introduction to tree identification, 48 of the most commonly found species is each given its own page. The same basic information about each is included: its Latin name (significant as it can then be identified around the world and groups it within its family of trees); the height to which it may grow; its possible life span. Several interesting facts about each are described and, as the title would suggest, there are clear photographs throughout.



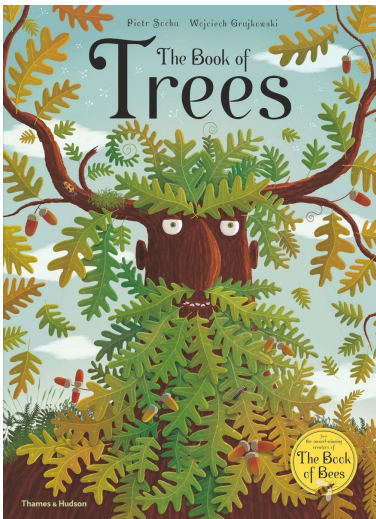
A Little Guide to Trees by Kate Petty and Jo Elworthy, illustrated by Charlotte Voake
Eden Project 9781903919828

Most of the spreads in this book are devoted to an individual kind of tree, delicately drawn in Charlotte Voake's distinctive style. The changes through the seasons of their leaves, fruits and flowers are described alongside facts about where they are commonly found and snippets of historical information. The last few pages are designed for children to make their own notes and drawings of the trees they observe. A companion volume *A Little Guide to Wild Flowers* is a CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/little-guide-wild-flowers>



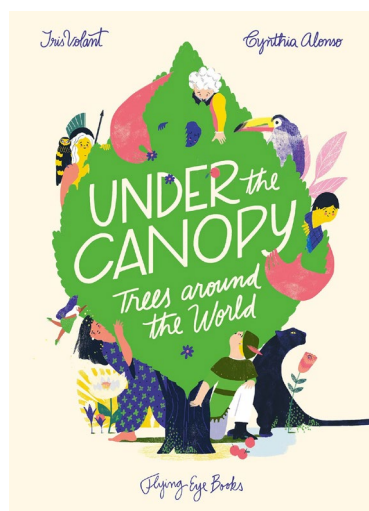
The Magic and Mystery of Trees by Jen Green, illustrated by Claire McElfrack
Dorling Kindersley 9780241355435

Produced in collaboration with the Royal Horticultural Society, this is an attractive and informative introduction to the world of trees. Beginning with a thorough description of all the constituent parts of a tree and its life cycle, it then moves on to the relatively recent discoveries about how trees communicate and work together to survive. Spreads that integrate artwork and photography show how trees and forests in different climates provide homes for a variety of wildlife. A final section demonstrates the interaction between trees and humans. Included in the appendices is an interesting list of trees associated with particular countries.



The Book of Trees by Piotr Socha and Wojciech Grajkowski,
translated from Polish by Anna Burgess
Thames & Hudson 9780500651698

This magnificently illustrated large format book is an eclectic guide to the world of trees. International in scope, some of the spreads cover aspects readers would expect such as leaves or roots. However, there are many surprises as the pages are turned with sections on topiary, clever camouflage, tree monsters, for example. How humans make use of wood is well covered – not only for constructing buildings or various forms of transport but also for making music and art, the latter illustrated with an array of masks, mainly originating in Africa and Central America.



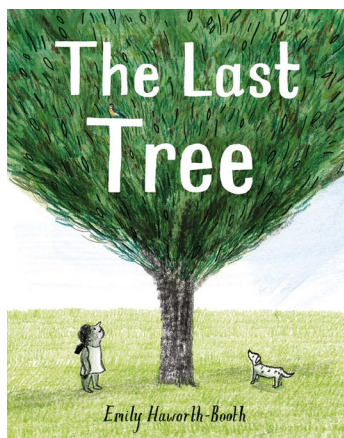
Under the Canopy: Trees Around the World by Iris Volant and
Cynthia Alonso
Flying Eye 9781911171423

Stories and facts about a variety of trees around the world are incorporated into exquisitely illustrated and designed spreads. The pictures suggest the use of mixed media materials and techniques, for example charcoal and stencilling and different styles of brushwork. The carefully chosen colours, with neon green threading through and uniting the whole, complement each tree being featured, from the pink petals of the Japanese cherry tree to the scorching sunshine shades that provide a background to the Australian eucalyptus tree.



The Song of the Tree by Coralie Bickford-Smith
Penguin 9780141989341

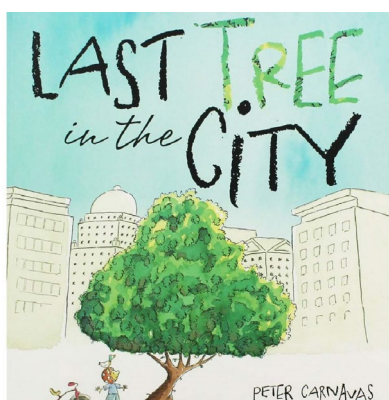
This picturebook by Coralie Bickford-Smith is as beautifully designed as her earlier volumes *The Fox and the Star* and *The Worm and the Bird*. She uses strong patterns and two distinct colour palettes to tell this story of a bird who is loath to leave the tree it loves.



The Last Tree by Emily Haworth-Booth
Pavilion 9781843654377

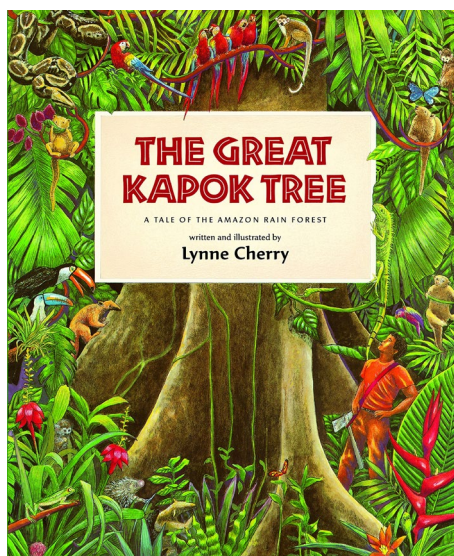
Human interaction with trees is at the heart of this picture book. This book has a strong message about the environment and the dangers of using up natural resources. Ultimately, it is children who source the solution and give hope for the future. The illustrations include some in comic strip format and the greys and greens of the limited colour palette used match the subject matter perfectly.

A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/last-tree>



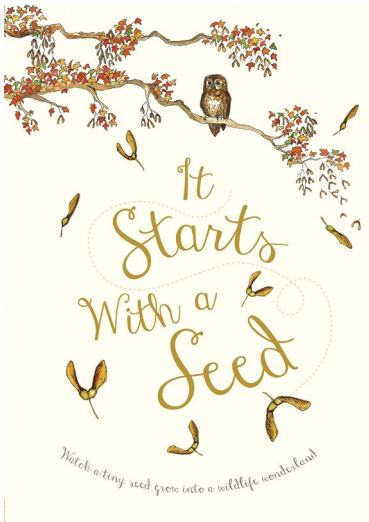
Last Tree in the City by Peter Carnavas
New Frontier Publishing 9781912076499

Edward lives in a colourless city where the only thing that makes him forget the concrete and the cars is the last remaining tree. When he discovers that this has gone, can he find a way to make his local environment green again for everyone to enjoy?



The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry
Harcourt Brace 9780152026141

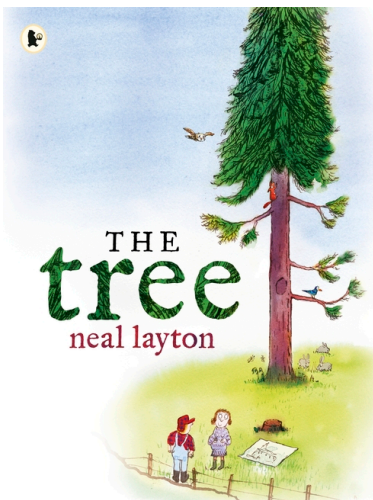
Subtitled 'A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest' this picture book expresses clearly by means of vibrant illustrations and a patterned and poetic story, the importance of humans preserving the rainforests and the ecosystems within it for the sake of all who live on this planet. A man is ordered to cut down a great Kapok tree. He begins the task and when he tires, falls asleep at its foot. Successive animals, birds, insects and finally a child of the Yanomamo tribe all whisper in his ear cogent reasons for why he should not continue. When he awakes, will they have influenced him and what choice will he make? The book begins and ends with a map showing whereabouts in the world there are tropical rainforests and a diagram demonstrating the layers of such a forest.



It Starts with a Seed by Laura Knowles and Jennie Webber
Words & Pictures 9780711244078

A rhyming text beautifully describes the growth and life of a sycamore tree from its start as a seed to its eventual emergence as a 'leaf-laden, bark-bound arboreal home' for many living creatures. The delicate illustrations on the opposite page echo the text as well as complementing and extending it with further detail. A final fold out spread demonstrates how the tree may multiply as new seeds dance off in the wind and this is backed up by some fascinating facts. A CLPE core book

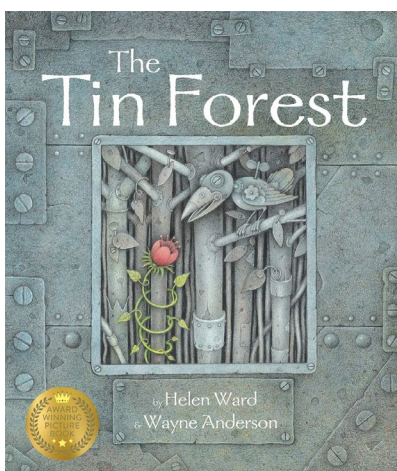
<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/it-starts-seed-0> For more books by Laura Knowles see <https://clpe.org.uk/library/booklists/laura-knowles-booklist>



The Tree by Neal Layton
Walker 9781406373202

The importance of inference in reading a picture book is superbly demonstrated here. The written text is minimal. It begins with a lone tree and then drills down to the names of animal homes within it, while the pictures portray their occupants. Then come some new arrivals – what changes might they bring and will they be for good or ill? There's a wonderful wordless central moment when the protagonists realise what they have done and before they are galvanised into affirmative action.

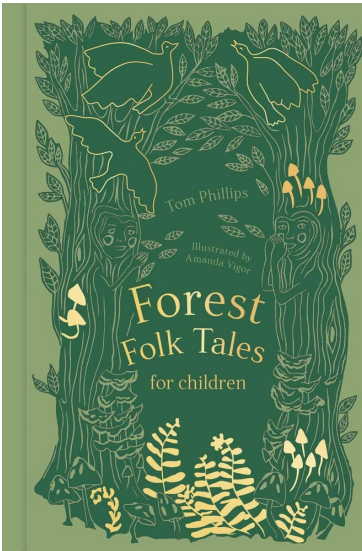
A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/tree>



The Tin Forest by Helen Ward & Wayne Anderson
Templar 9781848776678

A tale of transformation. An old man lives in a grey and forsaken place 'that looked out on other people's rubbish and bad weather'. He dreams of a wild and colourful place and uses the resources around him in such a creative way that change comes about and a natural forest becomes entwined with one of metal.

A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/tin-forest> A teaching sequence for this book is available to Power of Reading subscribers.



Forest Folk Tales for Children by Tom Phillips, illustrated by Amanda Vigor
The History Press 9780750991414

Storyteller Tom Phillips takes children on an arboreal tour of England, Wales and Scotland, introducing tales and folklore relating to the real and magical inhabitants of woods and forests as well as those about the trees themselves. They include hobs, faeries and dragons ending with the spirit of the forests, the Greenman. Other collections of folk tales about trees, plants, woods and forests that could be explored for retelling to children, both by Lisa Schneidau and published by The History Press: *Botanical Folk Tales of Britain and Ireland* 9780750981217 *Woodland Folk Tales of Britain and Ireland* by 9780750990110



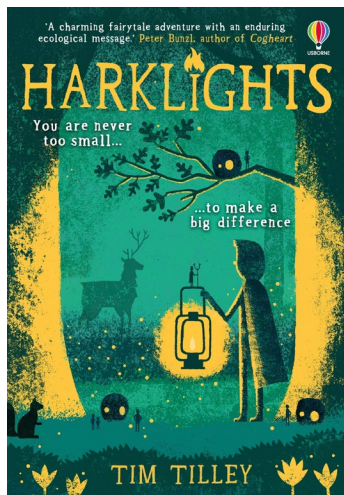
The Tree Keepers by Gemma Koomen
Frances Lincoln 9780711243910

Tree Keepers are communities of miniature people who 'nurture and mend, gather and tend' the tree that is their home. This picturebook is the story of solitary Sylvia who, thanks to a starling named Scruff, gets to see a wider world beyond the wood and return home ready to find friends among the other Tree Keepers. First published in hardback as *Flock* Frances Lincoln 9781786032041



By Oak, Ash and Thorn by Melissa Harrison, illustrated by Lauren O'Hara
Chicken House 9781913322120 (May 2021)

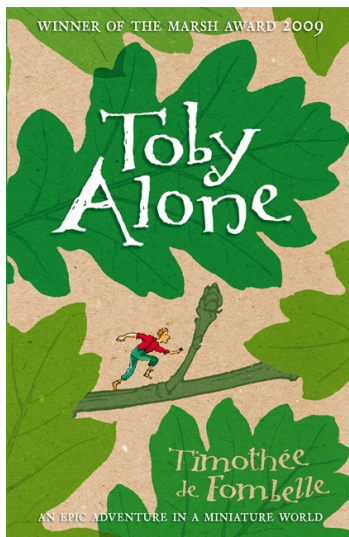
Moss, Burnet and Cumulus are Hidden Folk, tiny beings related to BB's 'Little Grey Men'. When the ash tree where they live crashes to the ground, they must leave the garden where they have long felt safe and venture into the Wild World to try and find their cousins who they believe live in an oak tree by a bend in a stream. Their search for more of the Hidden Folk takes them from there to a city. Threaded throughout the story are observations about the natural world for which the Hidden Folk were responsible before Mortals took charge and made many changes. A sequel *By Rowan and Yew* will be published later in 2021.



Harklights by Tim Tilley

Usborne 9781474966603 (May 2021)

When Wick rescues a tiny baby in an acorn-cradle, her family offer him the chance to escape from the orphanage where he lives and is ruled by the tyrannical Ma Bogey and live with them in the forest. These are the Hobs, miniature people who take care of the forest and they train Wick to be a Forest Keeper too, albeit reluctantly at first. He is determined to resolve the mystery of the Monster that is destroying the forest and the creatures who live there, including the Hobs.



Toby Alone by Timothée de Fombelle, illustrated by François Place, translated from French by Sarah Ardizzone

Walker 9781406307269

Toby Lolness is just one and a half millimetres tall and lives in the Great Oak Tree. When Toby's father makes a ground-breaking discovery, tapping into the very heart of the Tree's energy, he also realises that exploiting it could permanently damage their world. Refusing to reveal the secret of his invention to an enraged community, the family is exiled. But one man is determined to get hold of the forbidden knowledge ... and his plan is to destroy the Tree. Delicately detailed drawings take readers into Toby's miniature world. The sequel *Toby and the Secrets of the Tree* is currently only available as an e-book