

Winter Booklist

Picture books and fiction to bring some winter warmth and Christmas cheer.

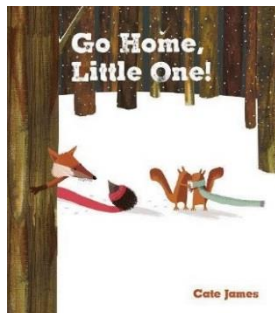
Picture Books



***Robin's Winter Song* by Suzanne Barton**

Bloomsbury 9781408859155

It's Autumn and all the birds and animals tell Robin that they are getting ready for Winter. From what they tell him, Winter is a fearsome individual and, rather than meet him, Robin snuggles up close to Bear in his cosy cave. However, robins aren't meant to hibernate, and when he looks outside, he sees a white wonderland which he loves and encourages other creatures to appreciate too. Collage illustrations depict the changing colours of the leaves and landscape as the seasons shift from Autumn to Winter to Spring.



***Go Home, Little One!* by Cate James**

Words & Pictures 9781910277218

This attractive picture book also features the period prior to hibernation. Florence the hedgehog and the squirrel twins Harry and Barry go out to play just as snow is starting to fall. They delve deeper into the darkening forest, and have fun making an enormous snow-squirrel. Their progress is slyly observed by a fox who is not mentioned in the text until he approaches them with a reminder that it's 'time to eat'. Suddenly they feel the fear but fortunately an owl, a badger and a rabbit are on hand to help them find their way home.

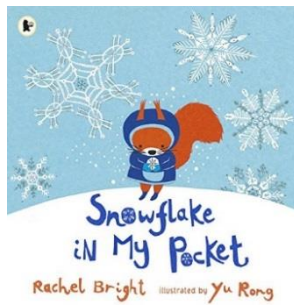


***First Snow* by Bomi Park**

Chronicle 9781452154725

This debut picture book by Korean illustrator Bomi Park was shortlisted for the [Klaus Flugge Prize](#). She uses a limited palette in a range of media, including pencils, acrylic paint, oil pastel and ink sticks, on a textured background, and accompanied by minimal text, to evoke a child's night time adventure as she delights in the first fall of snow. As the child rolls her snowball until it becomes bigger than she is, she moves into a magical world where polar bears appear among the trees and a multitude of children fill the landscape and sky, all enjoying first snow.

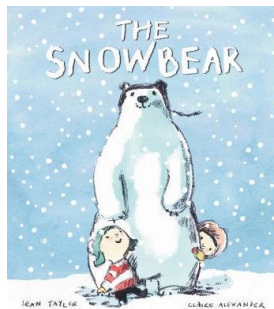
Bomi Park describes the evolution of her book in this [interview](#)



***Snowflake in My Pocket* by Rachel Bright & Yu Rong**

Walker 9781406371819

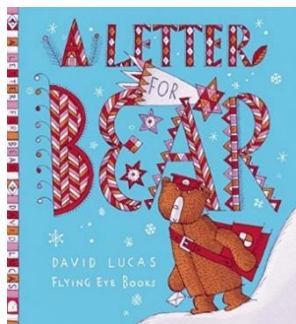
Bear has seen the seasons change many times but for his young friend Squirrel, everything is fresh and new and, with Squirrel by his side, the world seems so to Bear too. When snow falls, Bear gets the sniffles and Squirrel promises to have fun for both of them. The beauty of the individual snowflakes gives him the idea for a perfect present he can take home for Bear. Yu Rong's original style of artwork incorporating papercuts and the careful design of each spread ensures that there is delight in store at each turn of the page.



***The Snowbear* by Sean Taylor & Claire Alexander**

Words & Pictures 9781910277393

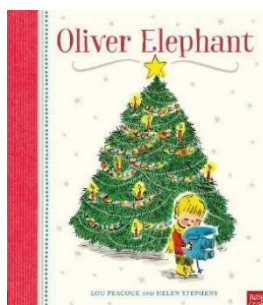
Iggy and Martina are excited to play in the snow which has fallen overnight and they make a snowman which looks more like a snowbear. Sledging down into the woods they encounter a sinister shape lurking amongst the trees but an unexpected rescuer is at hand. Claire Alexander's illustrations depict two young children with big imaginations to complement Sean Taylor's story inspired by his own childhood reading of *The Fox and the Tomten* by Astrid Lindgren and Harold Wiberg.



***A Letter for Bear* by David Lucas**

Flying Eye 9781909263130

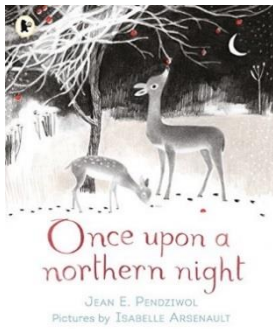
Bear is a very conscientious postman, trudging through the winter snow but sadly he never receives any letters himself. His progress is depicted in illustrations made up of strong shapes and patterns. The use of white, mauve and blue gives an icy effect in the early stages of the story. Later the colours of bear's orange fur combined with background blocks of red and touches of pink give the climax a more festive air as the other animals rally round to ensure his helpfulness is recognised. Find out more about David Lucas and his work on [Power of Pictures](#).



***Oliver Elephant* by Lou Peacock and Helen Stephens**

Nosy Crow 9780857639776

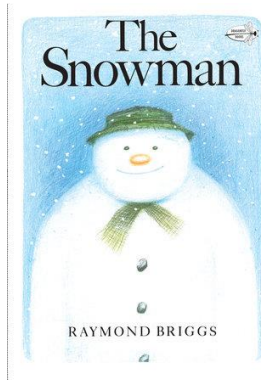
A variation on the theme of the lost toy crops up in this story set during a Christmas shopping trip. Helen Stephens' illustrations charmingly convey the atmosphere of the shops decked out for the season as Mummy sets out to buy gifts for all the family accompanied by baby Evie-May, Noah and his toy elephant Oliver. The rhyming text is reminiscent of A. A. Milne's poem 'Disobedience' (in *When We Were Very Young*). A picture book that has an old-fashioned feel – in a good way!



***Once Upon a Northern Night* by Jean E. Pendziwol & Isabelle Arsenault**

Walker 9781406366006

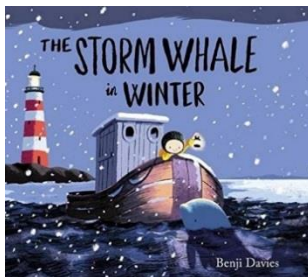
While a child lies sleeping, the narrator of this lyrical text paints a poetic picture of a Canadian country landscape in which animals move silently through a snowy night where ‘falling flakes’ are ‘gathered into puffs of creamy white, settling like balls of cotton, waiting.’ Isabelle Arsenault’s peaceful palette of grey/blue combined with black and white enhances the soothing mood.



***The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs**

Puffin 9780723275534

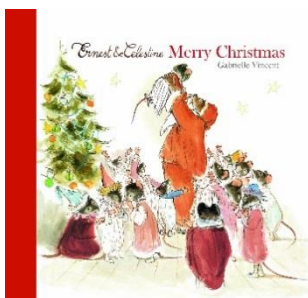
The classic wordless book about a boy who makes a snowman which comes to life at night. Their adventure together culminates in a flight through a snow-filled sky and the dénouement is full of feeling. The film with its accompanying music has become a perennial Christmas favourite. [A CLPE core book](#)



***The Storm Whale in Winter* by Benji Davies**

Simon & Schuster 9781471119989

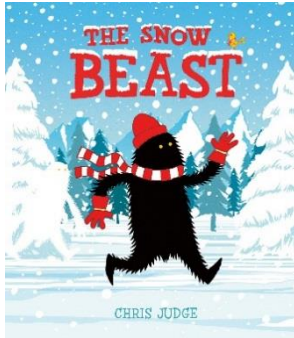
A follow up to the award winning [The Storm Whale](#) which shows the close relationship between Noi and his dad and their life by the sea. This time the winter has set in and Noi’s dad has gone on a fishing trip but fails to return. Noi sets out to rescue his dad but soon finds it is he who needs rescuing. This is a touching story about the power of friendship and love which reveals more each time you read it and revisit the illustrations. Find out more about Benji Davies and his work on [Power of Pictures](#).



***Ernest and Celestine: Merry Christmas* by Gabrielle Vincent**

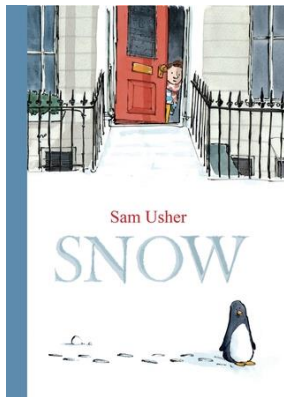
Catnip 9781846471735

Celestine is sulky because Ernest says they cannot afford a Christmas party. As always, the insistent little mouse manages to persuade the avuncular bear that where there’s a will there’s a way. The delicately detailed pictures show them gathering together and making everything they need to make it a joyous occasion for all concerned.



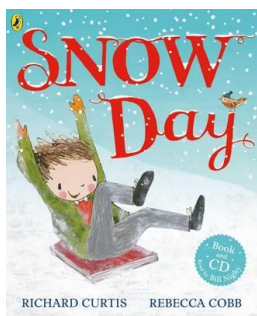
The Snow Beast by Chris Judge
Andersen Press 9781783443222

A third outing for the Lonely Beast. Lonely no longer, the Beast is often called in as a problem solver. When the people of the mountain village find all their tools have been stolen preventing them from building their winter festival, our Beast sets off in pursuit of the Snow Beast who is believed to be the thief. Cue for a journey set out in a comic strip style followed by a maze like chase as in previous books, this time on skis. When he finally encounters the Snow Beast and discovers the reason for his borrowing the tools, a solution is found that suits all. [The Lonely Beast](#) is a CLPE Power of Reading text.



Snow by Sam Usher
Templar 9781783700738

Sam Usher is not afraid of white space. He presents a picture of pristine white snow which gradually gets covered with more and more footprints and tracks as a boy urges his Grandad to get out there with him and enjoy it. Grandad takes his time, to the boy's frustration, but the eventual fun they have proves well worth the wait. The relationship between child and grandparent is delightfully drawn.



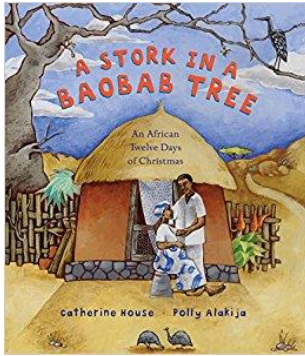
Snow Day by Richard Curtis & Rebecca Cobb
Puffin 9780723292609

A deluge of snow means that school is closed. It's a 'snow day' but two people haven't got the message and, as luck would have it, they are the strictest teacher and the worst student. At first, Mr Trapper tries to continue with lessons as usual but then these two lonely characters bond over the mechanics of making a snowman and, barriers overcome, they turn into the Snow Day Boys with a secret they can share.



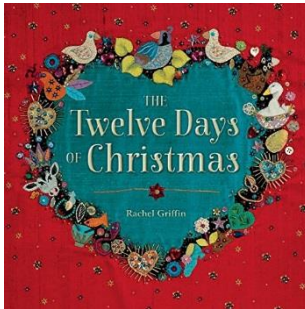
Walking in a Winter Wonderland illustrated by Tim Hopgood, as sung by Peggy Lee, based on the song by Felix Bernard and Richard B. Smith
Oxford University Press 9780192743770

Visual and audio representation of this well-known song come together in this picture book depicting a family taking pleasurable winter outings. They go sledging, build a snowman, closely observed by foxes, owls and a robin. Musical notes dance across the pages, signalling the text's origins in the song which can be heard sung by Peggy Lee on an accompanying CD. Find out more about Tim Hopgood and his work on [Power of Pictures](#).



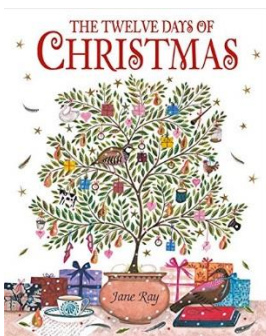
A Stork in a Baobab Tree by Catherine House & Polly Alakija
Frances Lincoln 9781847806055

Subtitled 'An African Twelve Days of Christmas' the people and objects counted in the traditional carol are replaced by those specific to Africa and linked to a brief explanatory note. So five bright khangas, traditional cloths worn by women, are substituted for five gold rings. The choices are very much linked to traditional aspects of African life and there is a list of the specific countries to which each relates at the back.



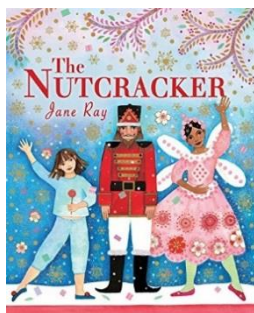
The Twelve Days of Christmas illustrated by Rachel Griffin
Barefoot 9781782852216

This version of the carol uses the time-honoured words but the illustrations are far from conventional. They are hand-sewn collages incorporating beads, buttons, threads, laces and stamps, using inspiration from Rachel Griffin's world travels. The nine drummers drumming are from Africa while the ten pipers piping are from India.



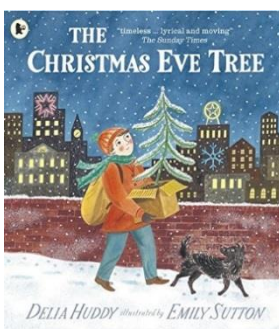
The Twelve Days of Christmas by Jane Ray
Orchard 9781408307045

Jane Ray's illustrations for the traditional cumulative Christmas song emanate a rosy red glow. The five gold rings are playfully portrayed. The nine ladies dancing are 1920s flapper girls. The eleven pipers piping and the twelve drummers drumming and their musical instruments are from a variety of cultures. And look out for the inquisitive cat who is very interested in all those birds!



The Nutcracker by Jane Ray
Orchard 9781408336441

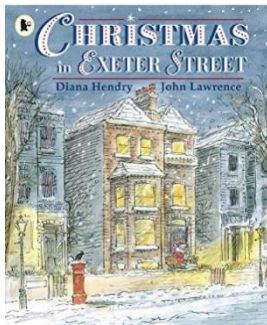
A picture book portraying the story of Tchaikovsky's famous ballet is here given a modern day setting. Guests are arriving for the Ernst family's Christmas party and Clara is anticipating what her toymaker godfather, noted for his wonderful gifts, might bring. The present he gives her provokes a strange night time adventure allowing plenty of scope for fantastical illustrations. For more Jane Ray books see our [Author Focus list](#)



The Christmas Eve Tree by Delia Huddy & Emily Sutton
Walker 9781406365955

Will anyone want the little fir tree that 'felt fearful of what its fate might be' once it has been uprooted and taken to the town with larger more luxuriant trees? This heartwarming story of how the tree helps to bring light to many and is given its own new life is illustrated by the versatile Emily Sutton, whose work is influenced by Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious. In the mini edition (Walker 9781406378542), two of the spreads are cleverly combined to create

a pop-up of the cityscape with a climactic moment in the story in the foreground.



Christmas in Exeter Street by Diana Hendry & John Lawrence

Walker 9781406343038

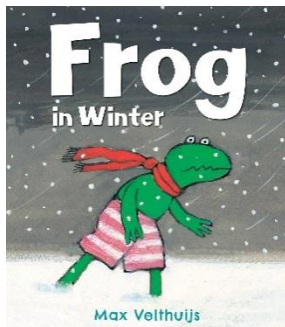
It's the day before Christmas Eve and Ben and Jane's relatives start arriving to celebrate the season. Then lots of other people appear who need somewhere to stay. All are welcomed but where will they all sleep and will Father Christmas keep count of all the children? The joy of this book is John Lawrence's detailed drawings which really bring out the warmth and humour of the story. Especially enjoyable is the cutaway illustration of the inside of the house, revealed like a dolls' house, with five aunts from Abingdon lying on the shelves of the kitchen dresser and baby Lili-lou in the sink.



Snow by Walter de la Mare, illustrated by Carolina Rabei

Faber & Faber 9780571305575

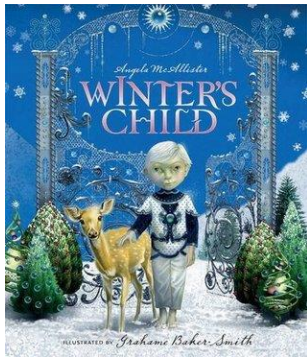
The endpapers of this striking picture book show the robin that 'shrills his lonely tune' at the end of Walter de la Mare's poem in solo flight amid a maelstrom of whirling snow. The pictures, in which Carolina Rabei uses a very effective limited colour palette of wintery grey, white and brown with strong splashes of festive red, tell a seasonal story additional to the words of the poem, of a family preparing for and enjoying Christmas.



Frog in Winter by Max Velthuis

Andersen Press 9781783441471

Frog is not enjoying the snow, unlike his friends Duck, Pig and Hare who are finding ways to keep warm and make the best of the weather. Poor Frog doesn't have feathers, fat or fur like them and, searching in the frozen landscape for wood to burn, collapses exhausted. His friends find him and return him home where they share the warmth of soup and stories. The humour in this picture book is highlighted in Frog's facial expressions, from his jagged mouth as he lies prostrate in the snow to the joy in his eyes when he sees that Spring has returned. The Frog books use animal characters to explore human emotions and traits, [Joanna Carey](#) has described this book as 'a beautifully orchestrated piece, full of energy and contrast'. [Frog and the Stranger](#) is a CLPE core book

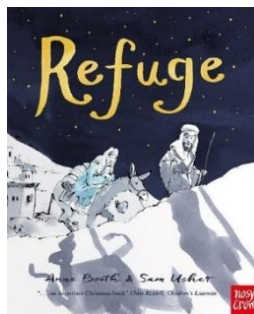


Winter's Child by Angela McAllister & Grahame Baker-Smith

Templar 9781783701629

Tom wishes that winter would last forever. He inhabits a winter wonderland full of sparkling snowflakes and iridescent icicles, magically portrayed by Grahame Baker-Smith. He uses a variety of media, including paint, dip-pens, pencil sketches and Photoshop, which he feels has opened up new possibilities in the careful creation of his illustrations. Tom shares his snowy playground with another boy who appears mysteriously. The winter goes on and on and Tom's Nana cannot keep warm. Can she stay alive if spring never comes? A picture book that celebrates the beauty of winter landscapes while showing why survival depends on the seasons shifting and changing.

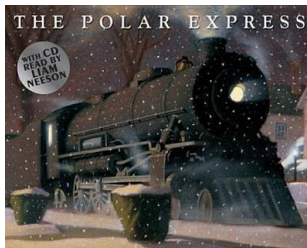
[A CLPE core book](#)



Refuge by Anne Booth & Sam Usher

Nosy Crow 9780857637710

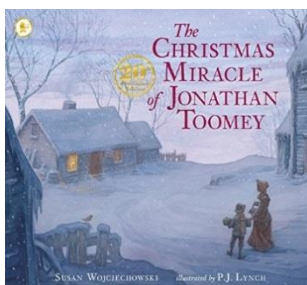
A donkey tells the story of how, led by a man, he carried a woman to Bethlehem where their baby was born and visited by shepherds and kings. A dream of danger sends them on their way until they reach another country where they find refuge. The people in this family are not named, enabling readers to find even more resonance between this simply and touchingly told version of the Christmas story and what is happening to many refugees in the world today.



The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg

Andersen Press 9781783445684

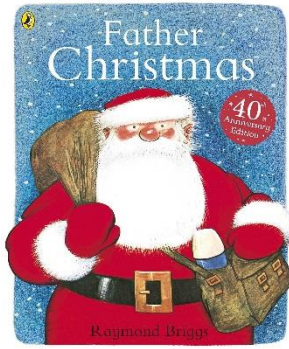
A classic picture book about believing in magic. The first person narrative is told from the viewpoint of a boy who finds the Polar Express outside his window on Christmas Eve and climbs aboard to travel to where Santa Claus is about to present the first gift of Christmas to a child before an large assembly of elves. What gift will be chosen? The story accompanies Chris Van Allsburg's stunning paintings. With an audio CD read by Liam Neeson.



The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey by Susan Wojciechowski & P J Lynch

Walker 9781406360387

When the widow McDowell and her son knock on the door of morose wood-carver Jonathan Toomey to ask him to recreate the set of Christmas figures they have lost, a journey back to life and love for a bereaved man begins. P J Lynch's detailed paintings of the characters' faces, especially of Jonathan Toomey himself, show the deep emotions within. He won the Kate Greenaway Medal more than twenty years ago for this moving picture book and he created a new cover for this anniversary edition. Author and illustrator write about their own feelings about the book in an afterword.



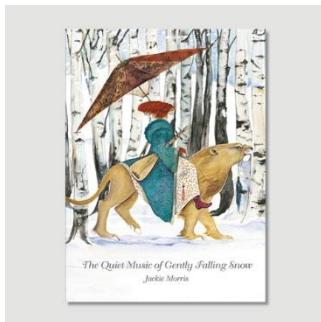
***Father Christmas* by Raymond Briggs**

Puffin 9780723277972

The truth about Father Christmas is revealed in this classic comic strip showing a rather resentful red-nosed and red-clad old man who has to spend one cold winter night of the year delivering presents to the world's children. What a relief when, job done, he can settle down to his own dinner, washed down with a drop of ale and some red wine. However, he gets to take a break (of sorts!) in the sequel *Father Christmas Goes on Holiday* (Puffin 9780140501872).

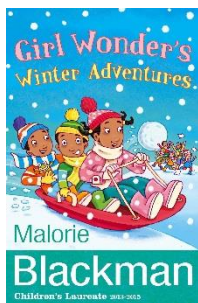
***The Quiet Music of Gently Falling Snow* by Jackie Morris**

Graffeg 9781910862650



This lovely large format book began with the paintings the illustrator created for Christmas cards to support the charity Help Musicians UK. She has woven interlinked narratives around the pictures using the themes and language of fairy tales. Long haired damsels sit astride wild animals and birds – polar bears, tigers, swans – creatures that find favour in other books by Jackie Morris and move through snow-filled landscapes. And – as would be expected given the origins of the book – a wide range of musical instruments is depicted. For more books by Jackie Morris see our [booklist](#).

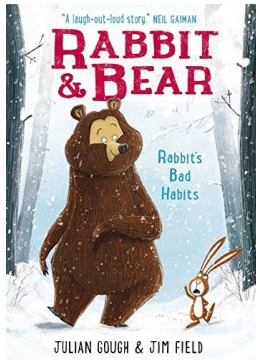
Fiction



***Girl Wonder's Winter Adventures* by Malorie Blackman, illustrated by Jamie Smith**

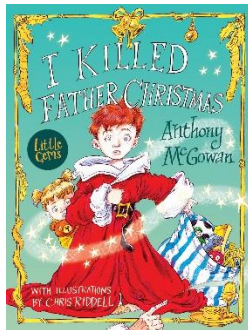
Tamarind 9781848531352

Short stories about mischievous Maxine aka Girl Wonder and her twin brothers. The children are desperate for it to snow and they find an inventive alternative but it's one that doesn't please their mum! When real snow eventually falls, they aim to build the biggest snowball in the universe but it all ends in calamity for the carol singers. Other stories involve tobogganing with show-off cousin Jayne and sneaky peeking at Christmas presents.



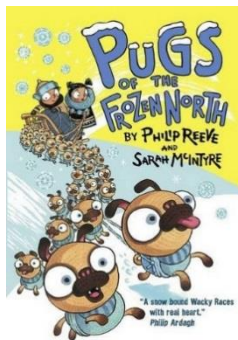
***Rabbit & Bear: Rabbit's Bad Habits* by Julian Gough & Jim Field**
Hodder 9781444921687

Bear wakes up from her hibernation early to find snow on the ground and meets the grumpy and rather self-important although apparently very knowledgeable Rabbit. Bear soon starts to learn about gravity, avalanches, why rabbits eat their own poo... Rabbit has surreptitiously stolen Bear's winter food hoard but his survival instincts don't extend to easy escape when a wolf appears. Bear's intervention and generous nature lead to a lasting friendship between the pair as they contemplate the snowy landscape from the mouth of a cave and consider creating a companion for their Snow Man. [A CLPE core book.](#) Sequels: *Rabbit & Bear: The Pest in the Nest* (Hodder 9781444921717) and coming in January 2018 *Rabbit & Bear: Attack of the Snack* (Hodder 9781444938173).



***I Killed Father Christmas* by Anthony McGowan and Chris Riddell**
(Little Gems)
Barrington Stoke 9781781127100

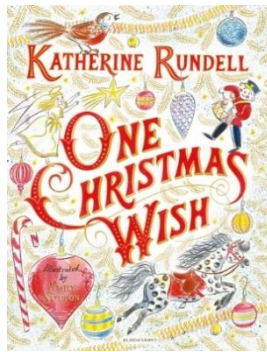
Ever wondered how Father Christmas manages to carry presents for all the world's children on his sleigh? Jo-Jo finds out after he misunderstands something he overhears when his parents are arguing and thinks he will have to take Santa's place! A short chapter book which is touching, humorous and thought-provoking.



***Pugs of the Frozen North* by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre**
Oxford University Press 9780192734921

When True Winter comes, once in a lifetime, teams on sledges pulled by animals take part in the Great Northern Race across the snow, of which there are fifty kinds, to the Snowfather's palace at the top of the world. Cabin boy Shen, cast adrift from his ship with 66 pug dogs, meets Sika who is desperate to take part in the race. They join forces and exhilarating adventures ensue involving the Kraken, yetis and trolls, not to mention the other participants in the race. This is Sarah McIntyre and Philip Reeve's third collaboration and is the most powerful yet for its combination of excitement, humour and emotion.

[A CLPE core book](#)



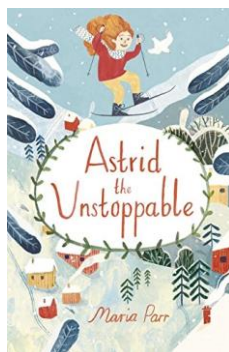
***One Christmas Wish* by Katherine Rundell & Emily Sutton**
Bloomsbury 9781408885734

Theo is lonely on Christmas Eve. His parents are out, his usual babysitter can't come and her replacement has fallen asleep, so he attempts to trim the tree on his own. Among the decorations he finds an angel with moulting wings, a tin soldier with a rusted drum, a robin with a bald patch and a rocking horse infested with woodworm. How these four accompany Theo on a festive adventure is expressed through an attractive combination of words and pictures in this handsomely produced volume.



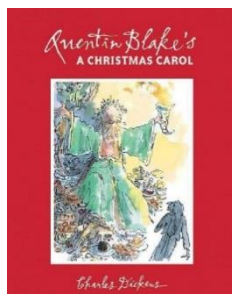
***The Snow Sister* by Emma Carroll, illustrated by Julian de Narvaez**
Faber & Faber 9780571317639

A Dickensian feel pervades this short novel set in Victorian times. It opens with Pearl building a snow sculpture in memory of her late sister Agnes. When Pearl's uncle dies it looks as though this will raise her family out of poverty as her father is named the main beneficiary of his will. Snowbound in the home of a rich family on Christmas Eve following a street accident, Pearl learns that the circumstances are not as she believed but the truth turns out to be better than her expectations.



***Astrid the Unstoppable* by Maria Parr, illustrated by Katie Harnett, translated from Norwegian by Guy Puzey**
Walker 9781406366853

Astrid is the only child in Glimmerdal, a mountain village in Norway. The novel opens in snowy February and she is helping her elderly friend Gunnvald to design 'the perfect steerable sledge'. Astrid is a very engaging character who brings people together. Her independent personality leads her into situations which are often humorous and there is a strong and satisfactory emotional thread throughout the story about friendship and family relationships.



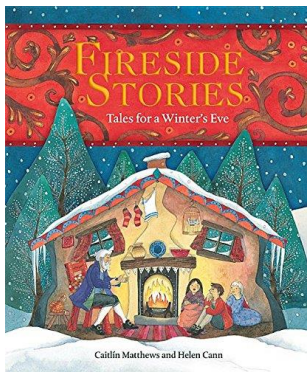
***A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, illustrated by Quentin Blake**
Pavilion 9781843653516

A handsomely produced edition of this enduring Christmas favourite with Quentin Blake's inimitable interpretations of the people and places within it. In his foreword, Quentin Blake says that what is 'extraordinary – especially for the illustrator – is the variety and unexpectedness of the scenes it contains', describing the story as 'this unexpected, funny, ghostly journey'.



Winter's Tales by Lari Don, illustrated by Francesca Greenwood
A & C Black 9781472900166

A collection of fifteen traditional tales with a seasonal flavour from around the world to which Lari Don adds her own colloquial touch in her retellings, such as the stirring Scottish myth of 'The Hag of Winter'. She begins with the Greek myth about Persephone and ends with a Norse legend about a kitchen boy who creates an armour of ice so that he can defeat a dragon. The varied stories in between include a Lapp legend about a bear, a tale about Ukrainian spiders who decorate a Christmas tree and a Maori myth explaining why Aotearoa is a land of fire and ice.



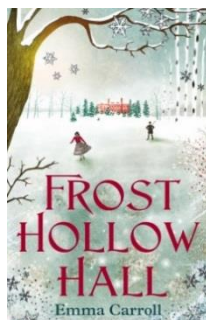
Fireside Stories. Tales for a Winter's Eve by Caitlin Matthews & Helen Cann
Barefoot 9781782852513

These eight stories are presented in chronological order from Hallowe'en to the coming of Spring, beginning and ending in Scotland and taking in tales from Russia, Canada, the Czech Republic and Austria on the way. The stories are set within patterned borders that complement their content. Snowflakes surround the Russian story 'The Winter Cabin' to mark the first snowfall of the season while wild flowers encase the Czech story 'The Twelve Brothers' in which Marushka is commanded to find violets in midwinter.



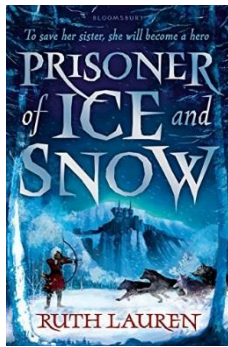
Winter Magic edited by Abi Elphinstone
Simon & Schuster 9781471159824

Eleven stories from some top contemporary writers. They include an extension of the Pied Piper tale by Jamila Gavin and a story by Katherine Woodfine about a girl who longs to play Clara in the very first production of the *Nutcracker* ballet. Other writers included are Piers Torday, Lauren St John, Geraldine McCaughrean and Berlie Doherty.



Frost Hollow Hall by Emma Carroll
Faber & Faber 9780571295449

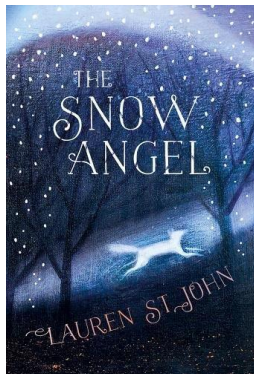
A story set in 1881, ten years after a boy has drowned after falling through broken ice on a lake. Tilly tells how she almost met the same fate and how this leads to the uncovering and solving of a mystery. A ghost story which is both chilling and heartwarming by turns in which the frost is caused by lies and unhappiness as much as by the winter weather.



***Prisoner of Ice and Snow* by Ruth Lauren**

Bloomsbury 9781408886748

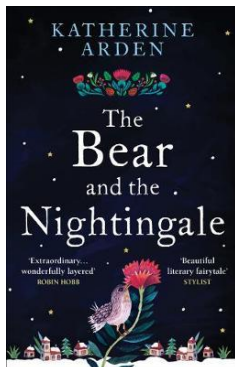
Valor is determined to rescue her twin sister Sasha, imprisoned for theft, even though it means she must first be convicted of a crime herself. An exciting adventure story with a strong heroine at its heart, set in a frozen land where only queens can rule. First in a projected series.



***The Snow Angel* by Lauren St John, illustrated by Catherine Hyde**

Zephyr 9781786695895

Makena is growing up happily in Nairobi with caring parents. Her father, a guide on Mount Kenya, has instilled in her a love of the mountains and natural environment of her country. When tragedy strikes, this independent minded and imaginative girl has to find ways to survive emotionally and physically. Snow plays a part in her story in several ways and its presence is felt subtly during the novel as it drifts in gentle wisps at the edges of the pages due to Catherine Hyde's delicate artwork which comes to the fore as full page black and white illustrations at significant moments. A beautifully produced volume which tackles some tough issues within the framework of an engaging story.



***The Bear and the Nightingale* by Katherine Arden**

Del Rey 9781785031052

A treat for grownups and young adults, this first book in the Winternight trilogy is set in a harsh snowy landscape in northern Russia. It is a story that incorporates strong elements of folklore and fairy tales. As she grows from childhood to young womanhood, Vasilisa must struggle against dark magic and the life limiting expectations of her family and the society around her. The second volume *The Girl in the Tower* is published in January 2018.