

KINGSHILL READS



CIRENCESTER
KINGSHILL
SCHOOL

Welcome to the first edition of **KINGSHILL READS** for the new school year. This is our termly newsletter of reading recommendations to make sure you're never stuck for a book! As always, any member of staff at school would love to hear about what you are reading at the moment, and if you have any suggestions for books to feature in future editions, just let a member of the English Department know!

BOOK OF THE TERM

***Red Sky in the Morning, Poet's Warning* by Alex Wharton**

Suitable for: Years 7 - 9

We were incredibly fortunate to welcome the Children's Laureate for Wales, Alex Wharton, into school this term for some brilliant sessions with students in Years 7 and 8. His most recent collection of poems was released earlier this year.

Red Sky in the Morning, Poet's Warning is a lively, thoughtful poetry collection that balances wonder, mystery, and emotion. Wharton invites readers to explore nature, time, imagination and even darker feelings — but always in an accessible and engaging way.

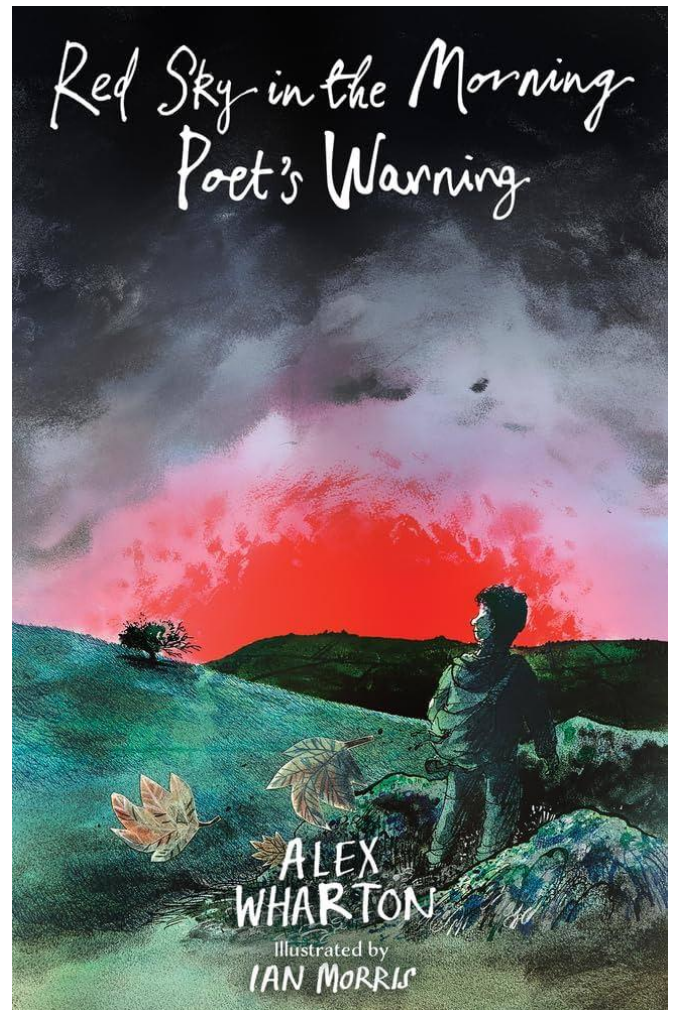
From poems about "Wild Boys" who roam hidden woods, to reflections on meeting an astronaut, Wharton stretches the reader's mind without ever feeling too heavy.

The black-and-white illustrations by Ian Morris add energy and humour, helping each poem to jump off the page.

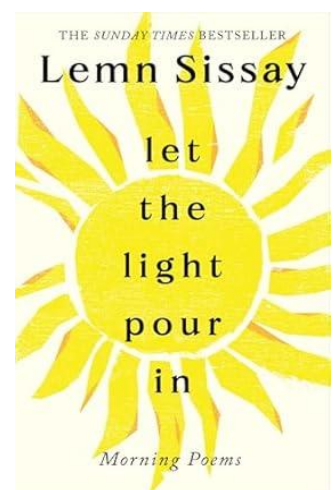
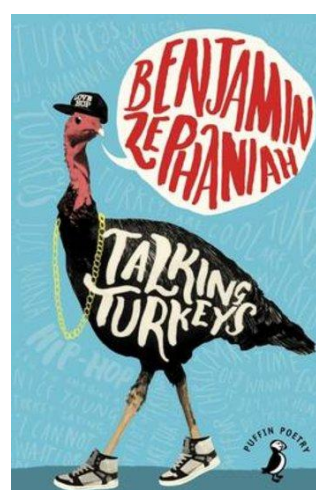
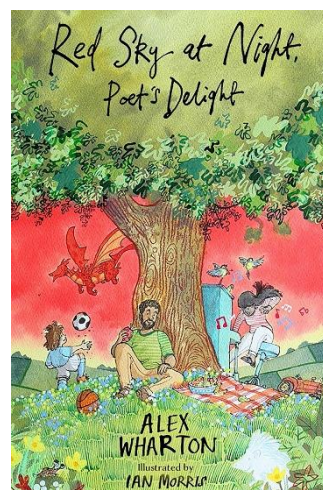
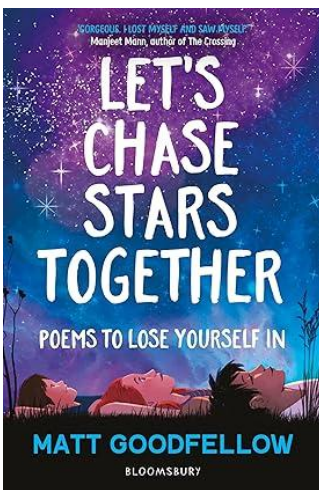
One real strength of the book is its ability to switch tone: some poems feel a bit mysterious or even eerie, while others are playful or full of wonder.

This variety keeps you guessing and turns reading it into a discovery. Some poems include little notes at the end explaining background or inspiration, helping the reader to connect more deeply with Wharton's ideas.

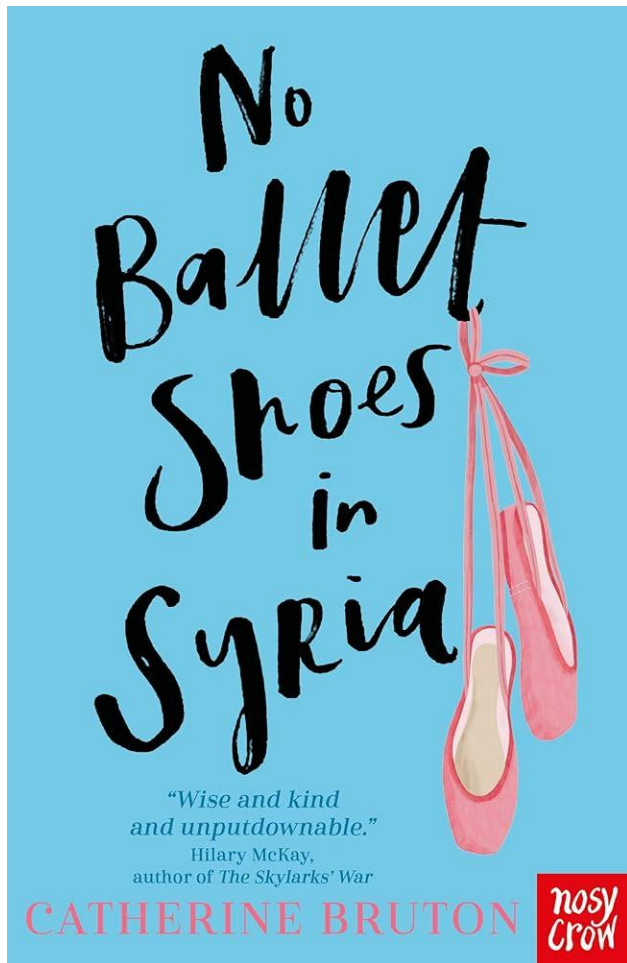
Mr Smith, Head of English



IF YOU LIKE RED SKY IN THE MORNING, TRY THESE...



STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS



***No Ballet Shoes in Syria* by Catherine Bruton**

Suitable for Years 7 - 8

I would recommend the book *No Ballet Shoes in Syria* by Catherine Bruton because the story draws you in and makes you ask yourself questions. It also made me realise how hard it can be for asylum seekers who have had to leave their home and country and have to start fresh somewhere they don't know. It's got to be very scary, especially for those who have lost family members or don't know where they are.

This book is mainly aimed at younger readers, but all ages would find it interesting and the genre category I would say is modern fiction about real world issues.

To summarise, the book is about a family in Manchester. An 11-year-old girl Aya and her mum and baby brother came to Manchester from Aleppo.

When the story starts, they have already arrived in Manchester and been there a few months, but Aya has flashbacks about her life and what happened in Syria. You don't find out about Aya's dad until later on in the book.

The mixed timeline of this story and where it jumps back to the past then present keeps you wanting more and not being able to put the book down.

Amelia, Year 7

***Midwinter Burning* by Tanya Landman**

Suitable for Years 7 - 10

Tanya Landman is an award-winning and best-selling author who writes for children and young adults.

One of my personal favourites is *Midwinter Burning*, a great book set in Devon during World War 2.

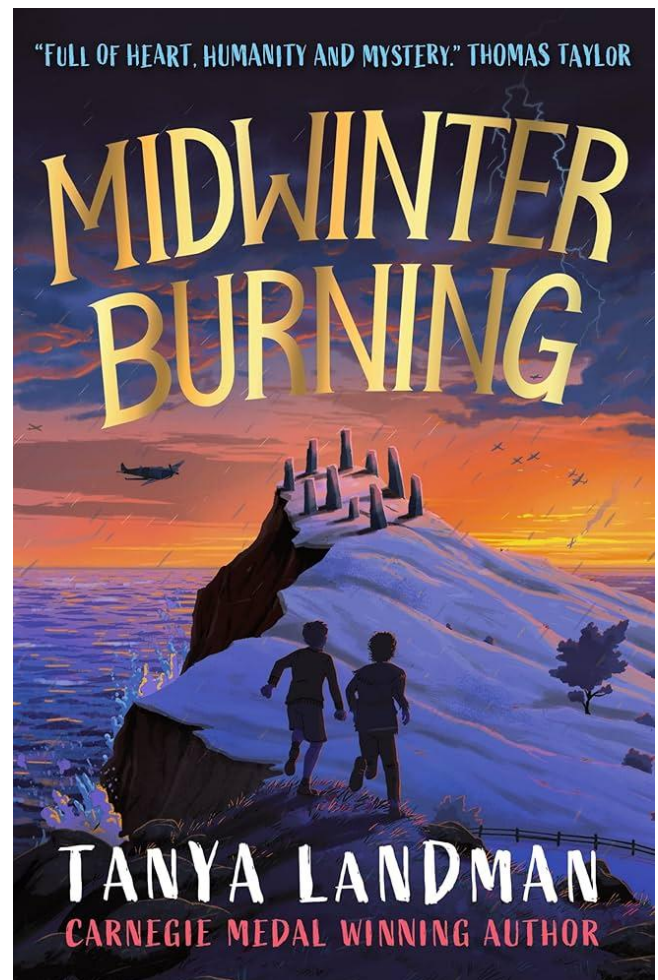
This is a tale where a young boy, Alfie, is evacuated to Devon. Alfie is taken in by a jolly farmer. As Alfie begins to settle in and even begin school, he meets a boy named Smidge while out in the fields.

Smidge does not seem to talk much, and can't always understand what Alfie is saying, yet they get close. Smidge seems to be mysteriously connected to the ritual of Midwinter Burning and the ancient clifftop stones.

Later on, Smidge goes missing; this leads to secret darker than anything Alfie could have imagined.

This is a historical adventure with strange twists that I would very much recommend.

Evie, Year 8



FROM THE LIBRARY

Glasgow Boys by Margaret McDonald

Suitable for Years 9 – 11

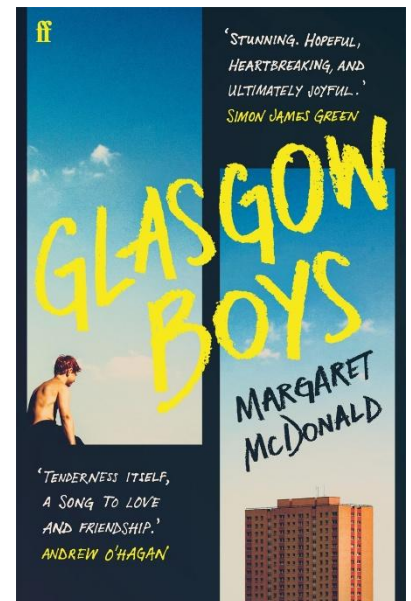
This is an award-winning beautifully written debut novel book about two teenage boys' journey to discovering their true self against the odds.

Meet 18-year-old Finlay studying in Glasgow for a nursing degree, but isolated and disconnected. Meet 17-year-old Banjo, who is trying to settle into Glasgow with his new foster family, new school and new job all whilst keeping his anger in check. The two met once in foster care: why did they stop speaking to one another three years ago?

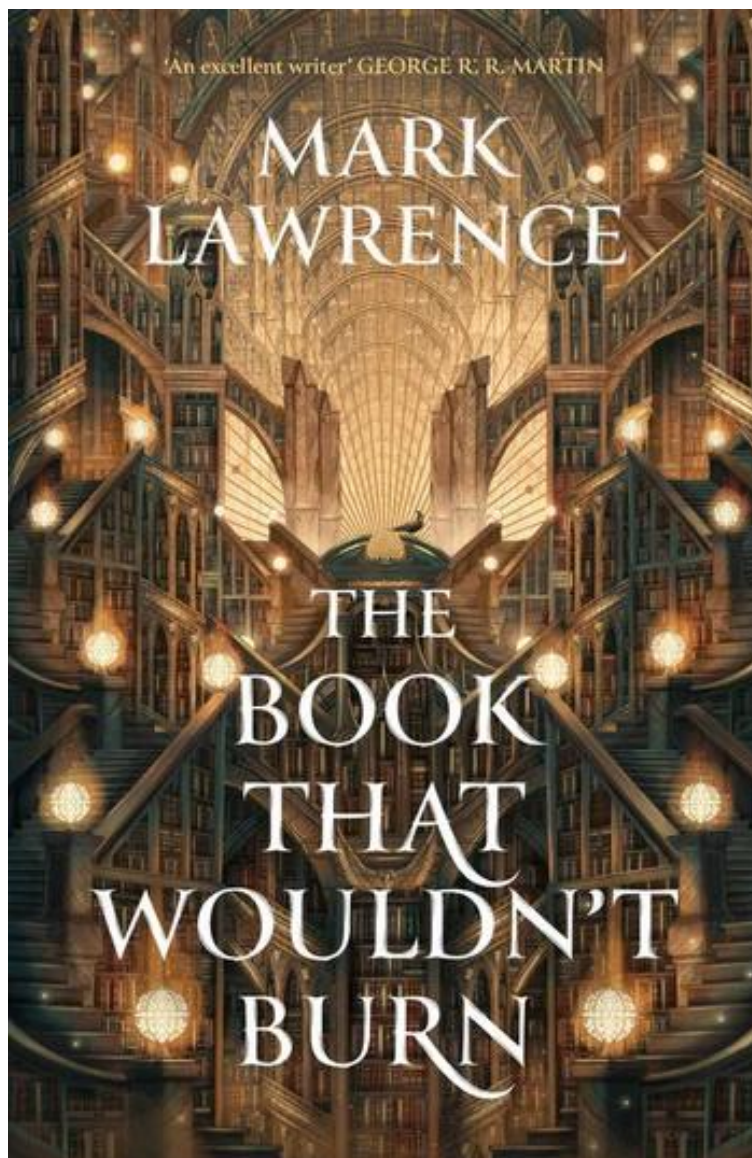
If you like a story that is fast paced, gripping, mysterious and heartfelt - this is the book for you!

Similar books with modern day, realistic settings include: *Love Letters to the Dead*, *Handle with Care*, *Gloves Off* and books by John Green and Alice Oseman.

Mrs Evans, Librarian



GUEST RECOMMENDATION



Each term we ask someone from outside our immediate school community, but with a passion for children's literature, to recommend a book they feel you might enjoy.

In our very first edition of Kingshill Reads we had a great recommendation from Octavia, of Octavia's Bookshop in Cirencester, and we've returned to the bookshop again with a great review from Emily.

***The Book That Wouldn't Burn* by Mark Lawrence**

Suitable for Years 9 - 11

Mark Lawrence's book immediately sweeps readers away into a fantastical world full of enthralling destinations that Evar and Livra will travel to.

Both long to escape their 'prisons', both feel insignificant, but when the sabbers come and the library reveals mysteries, both are given the opportunity to prove together that they can take the world by storm. Livra was never content with staying in her isolated settlement, always longing for the city.

Evar was swallowed by the mechanism and released unchanged decades later, always knowing that he had someone to save. These characters will capture your heart and imagination - not giving them back until long after you have finished this book.

It is definitely well worth the read and will leave you longing for the release of the next in the series.

Emily

Octavia's Bookshop, Cirencester

SUBJECT SPOTLIGHT

At Kingshill, reading is not just for English lessons, so each term a member of staff from a different department will recommend a book they think you might enjoy and that will enhance your understanding of their subject. Our seventh SUBJECT SPOTLIGHT recommendation comes from one of our Teachers of Humanities, Mrs Whitehouse.

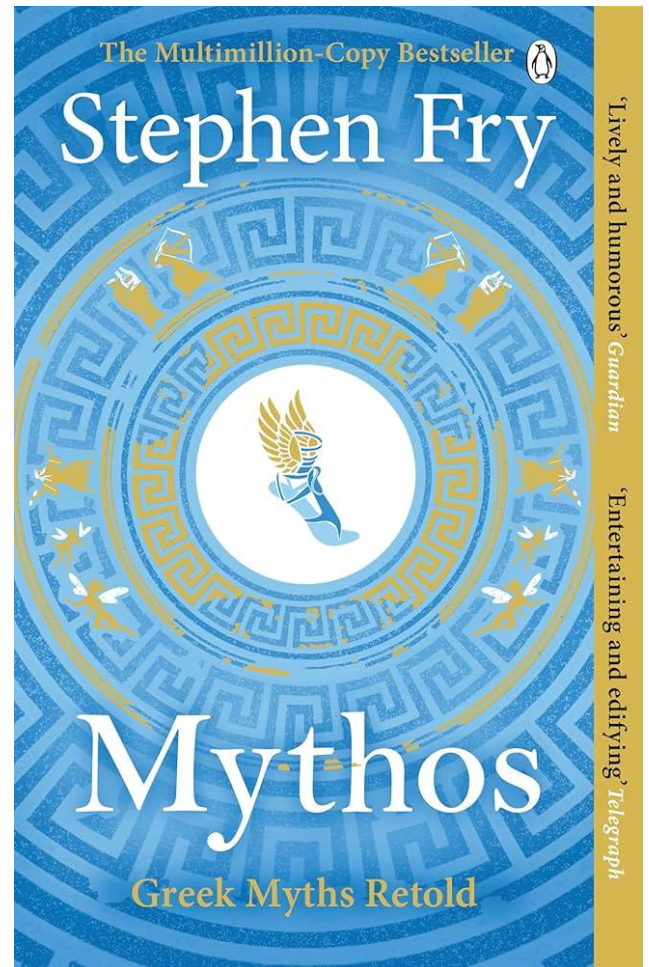
Mythos by Stephen Fry

Suitable for Years 7 - 11

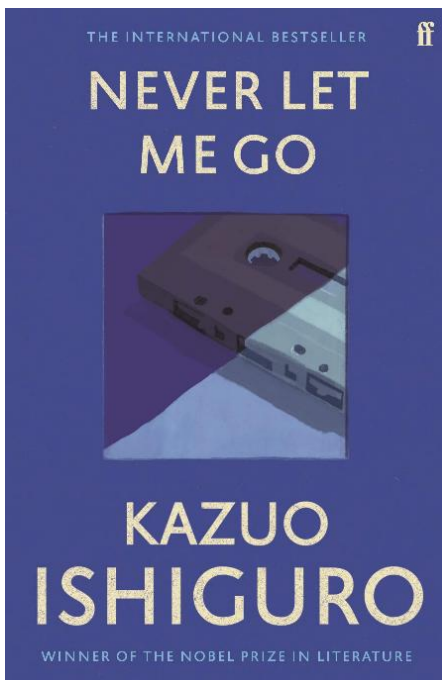
This book is a great introduction to Greek mythology. Greek and Roman gods overlap almost entirely so you can find out more about the god your House is named after! Told by Stephen Fry in a brilliantly entertaining, funny and highly relatable way, Mythos introduces you to an ancient culture completely different from our own.

The Gods origins are explained, from their creations and personalities to their “best bits” in Greek myth and their vengeful natures which highlight their flawed personalities. This book is really a series of short stories but you notice themes and ideas that flow through several stories and some of the key takeaways may stick with you after you put down the book: like the Greek idea of *xenia*, which means being hospitable and kind to visitors in your home and of particular importance to Gods like Zeus (or Jupiter to the Romans)!

Mrs Whitehouse, Teacher of Humanities



NEW CHAPTERS



Each edition of KINGSHILL READS will showcase some of the books you are enjoying with your tutors twice a week as part of our NEW CHAPTERS reading programme.

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro (Year 11 New Chapters book)

Suitable for Years 9 - 11

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro is a quietly powerful, thought-provoking novel that's suitable for 14-year olds as long as they are comfortable with serious themes. It follows Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy, who grow up at a special boarding school called Hailsham. At first everything seems ordinary—friendships, art, rules—but gradually readers learn the truth about the students.

The story builds slowly, revealing its more difficult truths with subtlety. It asks big questions: What makes us human? What is the value of art and memories? How would you live if you knew your fate was different?

Although melancholy, it's also beautiful, because it explores friendship, hope and what it means to accept things we cannot change. Overall, it's a memorable read—one that stays with you.

BOOKISH THOUGHT FOR THE TERM...

“No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally – and often far more – worth reading at the age of fifty and beyond.” C.S. Lewis