



## *Footpath Flowers* By Jon Arno Lawson & Sydney Smith Walker Books

### About the book

A curious girl in a red coat walks through town with her dad, who seems a little distracted. It's a grey day but her eyes are wide open and she notices things that her dad may not see – especially colourful flowers poking out of unexpected corners to brighten up the street. She quickly gathers them up – what will she do with them? And what impact will it have on the people she sees?





### Why we have chosen it

A beautiful addition to Seven Stories' ever-growing list of favourite wordless picture books! We love books that allow space for reader interpretation and discussion, and *Footpath Flowers* definitely falls into that category. We love how colour gradually creeps into the little girl's worlds with every flower that she shares, and that she's able to make this happen with such ordinary pickings. Use it to encourage your class to pay attention to the little things around them, or to open up debate about helping others and passing on good feelings.

### Did you know?

The definition of a weed is a plant that is growing 'in the wrong place' – i.e. in a flowerpot, where the gardener doesn't want it, or between the cracks in the pavement. The actual species of the flower isn't important. The flowers that the girl picks would all be considered weeds, but they're very pretty!

### If you like this you might like...

-  *Belonging* by Jeannie Baker
-  *The Girl and the Bicycle* by Mark Pett
-  *Because Amelia Smiled* by David Ezra Stein
-  *Float* by Daniel Miyares

## Changing other People

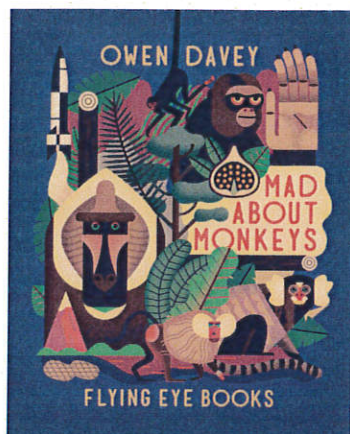
The little girl offers her flowers to a number of people and animals, and, even if they don't notice at the time, they are bound to have an impact. Look at the pictures of the man sleeping on the bench, and use them as a starting point for a piece of creative writing. Who do you think the man is, and how did he arrive on the bench? What will he think and say when he wakes and finds the mysteriously appeared flowers? How will it change his day? Do you think he might do anything for someone else as a result? Write his diary entry or a story about his day.

If you didn't have flowers or gifts to give, what else could you give to someone that might make them happy? Can your class pass the happiness round to a new person each week, with thoughtful words or deeds?

## A Splash of Colour

Look at the early pictures in the books. The illustrator has made some of these mostly in black and white, but has picked out a small number of elements in red. As the book goes on, more colours appear. The girl and the flowers are always coloured in, and when the girl gives away her flowers that whole picture becomes colourful. Why do you think that the author made those choices?

Share some black and white photocopies of photographs or book illustrations. Ask your class to choose a colour and fill in certain elements of the picture to highlight anything that they like or find interesting. Does their colour choice change the feel of the picture? Take another copy of the same picture and try picking out different elements in a different colour. How does it change the picture? You can also do this on certain digital cameras – many have settings that allow you to pick out one colour in a photograph before printing it.



## *Mad About Monkeys* by Owen Davey Flying Eye Books

### About the book

This beautifully illustrated book is all about monkeys, from their diets, their habitats and the way they communicate to their evolution and social hierarchies. It also describes some of the more unusual species— did you know that Japanese Macaques relax in thermal spas and season their sweet potatoes with sea water? The illustrations are striking, capturing features and expressions of monkeys wonderfully – an eye-catching and informative read!

### Why we have chosen it

Owen Davey's fabulous illustrations really bring the fascinating facts to life, with life-sized illustrations, charts and pictograms. The language is accessible but not oversimplified and often written in a humorous manner. The factual information is also complimented with some mythology and symbolism. We love non-fiction that is presented in a beautiful and accessible manner.

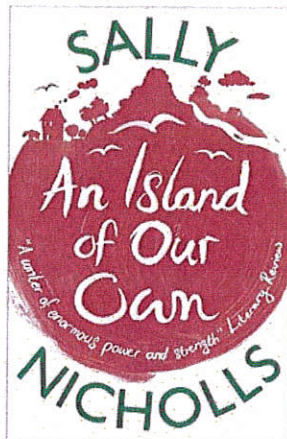
### Did you know?

Owen Davey is the illustrator for puzzle game TwoDots!

His work has been published in every continent except Antarctica!

### If you like this you might like...

- 📖 *Professor Astro Cat's Frontiers of Space* by Dr. Dominic Walliman and Ben Newman
- 📖 *Shackleton's Journey* by William Grill
- 📖 *Animalium* by Katie Scott & Jenny Broom



## *An Island of Our Own* by Sally Nicholls Scholastic

### About the book

A family of siblings who have been struggling to cope since the death of their mother visit their great aunt after she has a stroke. She can no longer speak but passes on an album of photographs—clues to her inheritance which she has hidden away over the years. It could be the answer to all of their problems, but finding it could prove a great challenge—particularly as they are not the only people looking for it.




### Why we have chosen it

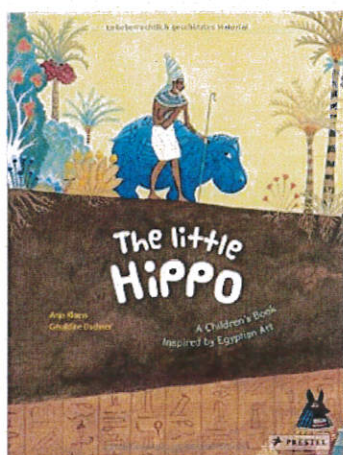
A simply told story of family, loss, coping and adventure, this is a great portrayal of real issues and family dynamics. The mystery is solved practically in a modern manner, with support from the local makerspace and an array of interesting characters there. The plot kept us reading—many of us doing so in one sitting! A great reading for pleasure book, a modern mystery grounded in difficult circumstances meaning the reader is invested in the outcome even more so than usual!

### Did you know?

Makerspaces are community run, collaborative spaces for people to share ideas, resources and expertise, often for technological projects. There is one in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne!

### If you like this you might like...

-  *Liar and Spy* by Rebecca Stead
-  *The Pasta Detectives* by Andreas Stienhofelfel
-  *Not as We Know It* by Tom Avery



## *The Little Hippo* by Anja Klaus and Géraldine Elschner Prestel

### About the book

Little Hippo lives in Ancient Egypt, in the marshes with his large family of blue hippos. He befriends Antef, going with him on his journey to sleep beneath the great pyramids for thousands of years. He awakens when discovered by archaeologists, and goes on his own journey in this strange new landscape, hoping to find his family and friends again.

### Why we have chosen it

This is a delightful and imaginative tale, inspired by unusual ancient objects. It unfurls and presents to the reader in beautiful and evocative full colour illustrations a story inspired by of all things, a small ceramic statue from the Louvre. It takes the reader through a fantastic re-imagining of Ancient Egypt, showcasing elements of historical fact, but in a new and engaging style. This isn't a book of facts on Egypt, but the beginning of an exploration of the concept of ancient civilisations, and a unique way to explore objects in museums. The large and bright format and uncomplicated text structure would make this a brilliant class reader.

### Did you know?

The blue hippo is famous in America! The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has one of these wandering hippos nick named William, and is one of the most popular exhibitions in the museum.

### If you like this you might like...

-  *Willy's Pictures* by Anthony Browne
-  *Pharaoh's Egypt* by Mick Manning and Brita Granström
-  *Journey on a Cloud* by Veronique Massenot and Elise Mansot

Introduce your class to international folk tales and creation myths so that they have a bank of imaginative material and inspiration.

## Artefacts and Historical Objects

The Little Hippo is linked to a real museum artefact. Share a range of artefacts with your class, either by bringing in photographs from the internet or ideally by taking them to a real museum. The Great North Museum: Hancock, in central Newcastle is free entry and has some wonderful displays of Egyptian objects, so the book could be linked to a class visit. If you're not based in the North East, most local museums have some Egyptian collections too

Ask them to choose an object and start to invent a story about it– how was it created and how did it get to the museum?

Ask them to

- Write the story
- Illustrate a moment in the story (use the book for style inspiration if you like)
- Write the shelf label for the museum, explaining what the object is
- Write from the object's perspective in the museum, what can it see, hear and smell? How does it feel, and what does it think about? If it could speak. What would it say?
- Bring moments from the objects' stories to life using drama– perhaps you could make a class assembly about life in a museum cabinet!



## *The Mystery of the Clockwork Sparrow*

by Katherine Woodfine  
Egmont Books

### About the book

The grand and highly anticipated opening of Sinclair's Department Store is here! As well as a fabulous selection of clothing and goods, it is home to an Exhibition Hall, displaying an array of exquisite jewels and treasures, including the rare and precious Clockwork Sparrow. When the Sparrow goes missing the night before the big opening, can Sophie solve the mystery with the help of her friends in the store, even when under suspicion herself?

### Why we have chosen it




Guest reviewer Alexander (aged 11) says "... I loved the code cracking and the techniques used to escape and discover. It's a book for girls and boys, because there's things that both girls and boys like. I really liked the description as well. I just couldn't stop reading. I read it in two very long reads!"

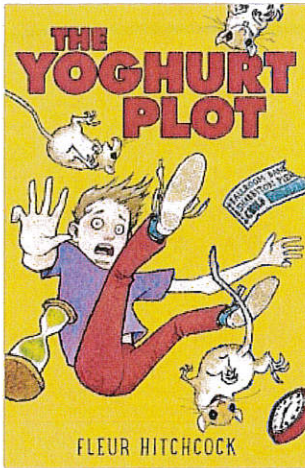
A great mystery story with some good characters to appeal to both genders, with plenty of intrigue and adventure!

### Did you know?

Author Katherine Woodfine works for the reading and writing charity Booktrust, working on the Children's Laureateship amongst other things!

### If you like this you might like...

-  Knightley and Son by Rohan Gavin
-  *Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens
-  *Mysteries of Ravenstorm Island* by Gillian Philip



## *The Yoghurt Plot* By Fleur Hitchcock Hot Key Books

### About the book

*"Hello. My Name is Bugg. Jitterbugg. Don't laugh; it's not supposed to be a joke. It's a dance."*

Bugg and his brother Dilan have just moved into a new house. It seems ordinary enough, as new houses go, until Bugg notices that the fridge is a bit...um...weird. It works brilliantly – but it isn't plugged in! And what are those strange yoghurts doing inside? When the brothers get a little bit peckish, they and the irritating new girl Lorna hurtle headfirst into more strange-ness – of the time-travelling variety! Can they work out why? What does the yoghurt mean? Can they change history just enough? And what does this have to do with Granddad?

### Why we have chosen it

Relentlessly fast-paced, funny and complex, *The Yoghurt Plot* is a challenging and satisfying class read that will keep your class hooked with every twist and turn. The book is a great introduction to the theme of time travel, and opens up huge theoretical questions about the moral implications of meddling with history. It's also a lovely look at inter-generational relationships and the things that we don't know about our older relatives. *The Yoghurt Plot* is packed full of information, and you'll have to work hard to keep up with our clue-hunting central characters, but it's worth it. After all – how often do you get the chance to hook your children into reading by introducing them to a time-travelling gerbil?

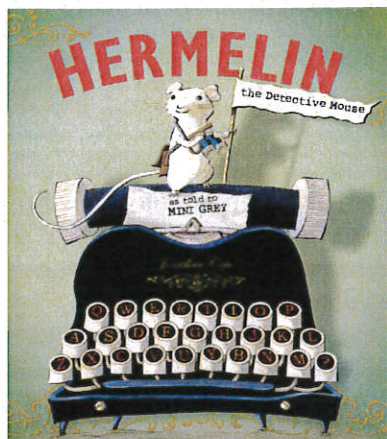


## Did you know?

There are two commonly used British spellings of the dairy product in the title – 'yogurt' and 'yoghurt'. There is also a third accepted spelling, but it's much less common – 'yoghourt'.

## If you like this you might like...

- 📖 *Fortunately, the Milk* by Neil Gaiman
- 📖 *No True Echo* by Gareth P Jones
- 📖 *The Accidental Time Traveller* by Janis Mackay



## *Hermelin the Detective Mouse*

By Mini Grey  
Jonathan Cape

### About the book

The residents of Offley Street have a very busy notice board – everything keeps going missing! But who's this character watching proceedings through his binoculars? And can he solve the mysteries abounding in the neighborhood? Introducing... Hermelin the Detective! Named after cheese, and with extraordinary typing skills, Hermelin may just be the humble hero the street has been waiting for. The anonymous crime-fighter is soon headline news. But will anyone believe that a mouse is responsible for piecing together the puzzle?





### Why we have chosen it

Mini Grey's style is always accessible, with imaginatively laid out text, but we particularly love how well this approach works with Hermelin's notes, clues and newspaper cuttings! This is a brilliantly created and told tale that will grab your class's attention and feed their imaginations as well as being the perfect starter for a host of activities. The loveable & clever central character and unexpected twist at the end contribute to make Hermelin the Detective Mouse a sure-fire winner with your class!

### Did you know?

Hermelin really is a type of cheese! It is made in the Czech Republic, is a bit like camembert and is often served marinated in oil that has been spiced with things like garlic, peppers, herbs, onions or juniper berries.

### If you like this you might like...

-  *Flora and Ulysses* by Kate DiCamillo
-  *William and the Missing Masterpiece* by Helen Hancocks
-  *Small Change for Stuart* by Lissa Evans
-  *Jim: A Cautionary Tale* by Mini Grey

## Way In

Before you introduce the book to your class, gather a handkerchief full of objects belonging to Hermelin – e.g. a sweet, a piece of cheese, a matchstick, a small notebook and the stub of a pencil. Use the illustrations and story for inspiration and you might be able to think of more ideas – maybe even a pair of tiny binoculars! Leave the folded hanky somewhere in the classroom for your children to find. Reveal the objects together and guess who they could belong to before starting to read.

## Offley Street & Your Own Places

Look at the first picture in the book, showing all the residents going about their business on Offley Street. Create a similar picture of your school, showing what all the different teachers are up to in their classrooms! You could also create a notice board, to show what each teacher has lost.

## Pests

Hermelin is shocked to discover that while he thinks of himself as a crime-solving detective the human world regards him as a pest! Choose some other creatures that are considered pests – and imagine they have different jobs. Write a CV describing what the animal thinks of itself, then a contrasting dictionary definition to show what humans think of that animal.

## Playing Detective

Hermelin is named after a cheese! Make a list of other funny cheese names (you could extend this to all different kinds of food products), and ask your class to choose a detective name each. Create detective identities, and spend a week 'being' those detectives. If you're feeling creative, you could set up your classroom as a detective agency, and ask the class to report in to you (the Head Detective) for their cases each morning. Build up a 'fact file' notice board of suspicious items and sightings around school. Examples of tasks you could set are:

Bring in a fictional letter from a client, with a mystery to solve. Secretly plant strange objects around school in places that they don't belong. Can your class work out/create their own notes about how they got there and what the relevance is to the mystery? Bring other teachers in on the act and book ten minutes for your class to interview them. If this is the first case you try, you could ask your class to solve the client's quandary together and see if they can piece together the mystery using team work. There doesn't have to be a 'correct' answer! See how creative they can be.

For an individual task, go on a photo-gathering journey and use cameras to record any unusual or suspicious-looking things that could lead to an interesting mystery. This time you don't need to plant anything because they can build ideas from anything – a door left ajar, a sweet wrapper dropped in the corridor, a paintbrush in the pencil drawer. Challenge your class to create their own mysteries and write detective stories based on what they find.