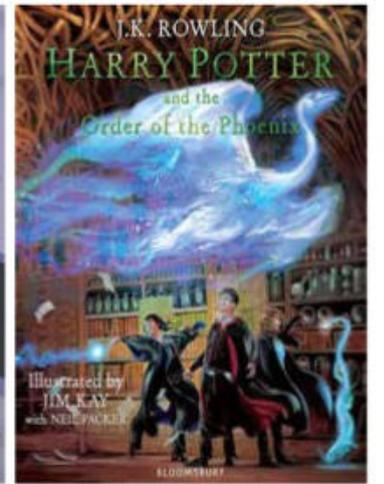
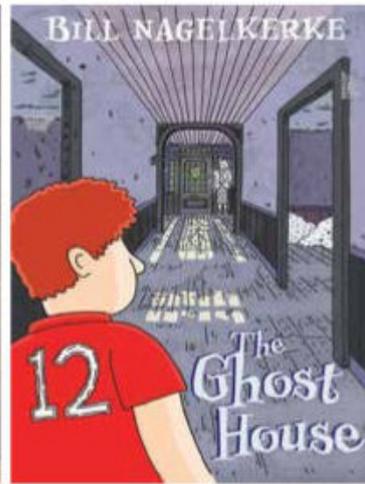
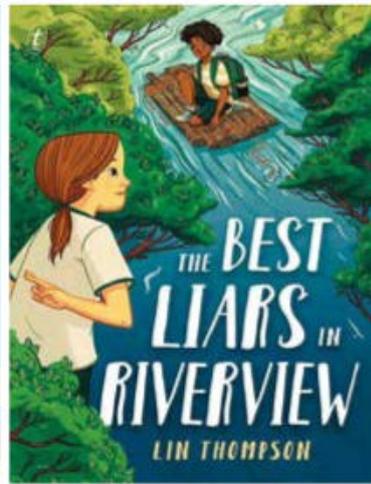
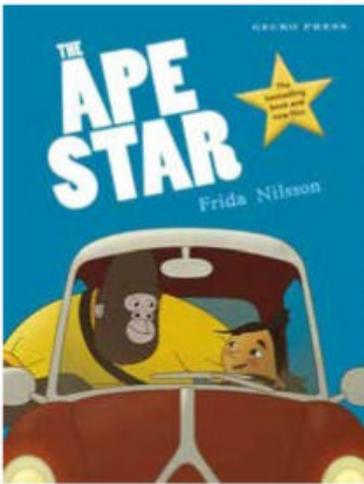


TOP CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF 2022



50 Best Kids' Books



◀ **TREACLE WALKER**, by Alan Garner (*4th Estate*) A poem, a puzzle, a paean to the power of words. The only way to read this handsome little Booker-shortlisted hardback from science fiction supremo Alan Garner is to surrender yourself to the language – Cheshire dialect and all. For all ages.

JUNIOR FICTION

THE APE STAR, by Frida Nilsson (*Gecko*) Girl gets adopted by Gorilla – who owns a scrap yard. This explosion of the classic orphan adoption trope is laugh-out-loud funny while making plenty of points about outsiders and standing up for yourself.

THE BEST LIARS IN RIVERVIEW, by Lin Thompson (*Text Publishing*) An early 2022 story

that touched our hearts. You'll barely notice the plural pronoun in this tale of truth, lies and friendship involving a missing child in a rural town.

THE CRATE, by James Norcliffe (*Quentin Wilson*) A crate arrives at the family bach – dead heavy, yet, when opened, it contains only a string of fresh seaweed. As the mystery unfolds, a complex web of relationships spins out. Spookily convincing.

THE GHOST HOUSE, by Bill Nagelkerke (*Ahoy!*) In the wilderness on the edge of the Red Zone, newcomer David, recovering from an unnamed illness, comes across a villa and the old woman who once lived there – or does he? A

gentle ghost story that's as much about the resilience of children as the regenerating landscape.

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX, by JK Rowling, Jim Kay & Neil Packer (*Bloomsbury*) His cutaway Ministry of Magic is breathtaking, and cameos, including the Sorting Hat, elegant. Illustrating the largest HP book was always going to be challenging, so veteran Jim Kay called on friend Neil Packer to help out. He is, as Kay himself says, "perfect for Potter".

JOURNEY THROUGH THE CAT DOOR, by Belinda O'Keefe & Monica Koster (*Bateman*) Cats are easily fooled by cat doors, even their own, so why shouldn't they be portals to unknown lands? A

plot by an evil chef to capture exotic species for culinary purposes is foiled by Enzo the Russian Blue, who tells this story.

LEILA AND THE BLUE FOX, by Kiran Millwood Hargrave (*Orion*) Polar science, climate change and broken families come together in the story of Leila, who's seeking her scientist mother, and a young arctic fox in search of a mate. From the creators of *Julia and the Shark*, it's based on a true story.

THE LIGHT IN EVERYTHING, by Katya Balen (*Bloomsbury*) Stranded on the English seashore after their parents fall in love, Zofia and Tom take turns to document their upended lives. Sublime writing from the Carnegie Medal-winning

author of *October*, *October*.

LITTLE TALES OF HEDGEHOG AND GOAT, by Paula Green (*Puffin*) It might be "the most boring place in the world" but it's home to Goat, Hedgehog and a girl called Aroha. Sweetly simple stories by poet Paula Green, whimsically realised by illustrator Kimberly Andrews. Perfect for what the late John McIntyre, of *The Children's Bookshop* in Wellington, called "L-plate readers".

MASHER, by Fifi Colston (*Puffin*) Imagine if a dead dog's ashes got mixed up in a glove puppet's papier-mâché head. The multi-talented Colston (author/illustrator/teacher/*World of Wearable Art* runner-up)

