

The Top 100 Children's Books



1 The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle (Puffin,)

Not many children's books achieve worldwide sales that would humble a U2 album, but Eric Carle's classic picture book about a caterpillar munching his way to becoming a beautiful butterfly has sold 22 million copies.

Carle had only just started out as a children's author when he wrote *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in 1969. Before that, he was a graphic designer. He had been experimenting with a hole-punch in his efforts to find a different kind of children's book and had suggested a story to his publisher about a worm eating through the pages. In the story, the newly hatched caterpillar starts to look for food. On day one he eats one piece of fruit, the next two, the next three and so on, until he reaches the end of the week, when he eats a fabulous feast of muffins, pizza and pickle. The following day he has a stomach ache! By now he is too fat to move and we wonder what is next for our hero. There's a moment of triumph as we turn the final page and discover he has been transformed into a beautiful butterfly.



2 The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 1999)

It's remarkable that this classic children's story is less than ten years old. In it, a wily woodland mouse manages to escape being eaten by predators by telling them that an imaginary monster is going to appear at any minute. Of course, the mouse doesn't really expect the monster to put in an appearance, and when it does, he has to use his wits to make the Gruffalo believe that he is so scary himself that the warty beast would be making a really, really big mistake if he tried to eat him!

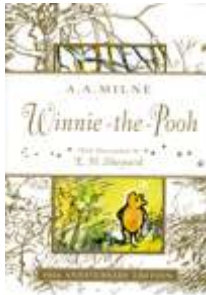
Donaldson's use of repeated narrative and smart rhymes soon has little readers chanting the story, while Axel Scheffler's distinctive, crazy-eyed creatures stylishly underline the humour. "All the Gruffalo's attributes were really just adjectives that sounded good in the flow of the rhyme," says playwright/performer Donaldson. It's a ploy that has been hugely successful.



3 Where The Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak Red Fox, (first published 1963)

Max dons his wolf suit in pursuit of some mischief and gets sent to bed without supper. Fortuitously, a forest grows in his room, allowing his wild rampage to continue unimpaired. Sendak's color illustrations are beautiful, and each turn of the page brings the discovery of a new wonder. The wild things manage to be scary-looking without ever really being scary; at times they're downright hilarious. Sendak's trademark run-on sentences lend the perfect touch of stream of consciousness to the tale, which floats between the land of dreams and a child's imagination. This Sendak classic

reaffirms the notion that there's no place like home.



4 Winnie-The-Pooh

by AA Milne and EH Shepard Egmont, (first published 1926)
Although the language and turns of phrase are from a bygone era, the Winnie-The-Pooh books continue to be hugely popular (the later Disney creations have only helped to widen the honey-munching bear's appeal).

The tales were inspired by Milne's own son (immortalised as Christopher Robin) and his cuddly toys. However, the image of Pooh that we have come to know and love was based on the favoured toy bear of illustrator Ernest Shepard's son.

In the tales about life with Edward Bear (Winnie to you and I), the first collection of stories establishes Pooh's world with Christopher Robin, Piglet, Eeyore, Rabbit and Kanga, and their many life-learning adventures in 100 Acre Wood.

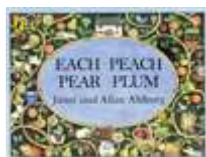


5 We're Going On A Bear Hunt

by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury Walker, (first published 1993)

A much-loved spoken-word game for small children evolved into Michael Rosen's poetic book. A father, his four children of various sizes and the family dog are off in search of adventure... and a bear. On a rainy day, this story is a wonderful way of escaping the confines of the sofa, by suggesting the squelching of muddy fields, the crackle of wild woods, and the swirl and bluster of a snowstorm. Children of all ages enjoy miming their struggle on the journey that finally brings them to the cave where dwells the elusive bear.

However, when they get there, the bear's just a little bit too scary and back they have to rush, retracing their steps in double-quick time. In Rosen's reinterpretation, the drama is in the pace of the words, and Helen Oxenbury's playful illustrations bring the armchair expedition to life.



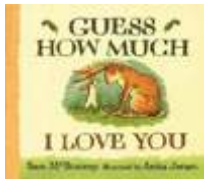
6 Each Peach Pear Plum

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg Puffin, (first published 1978)

The husband-and-wife team who created so many wonderful children's books appear several times in this Top 100. It's not at all surprising: the lilting rhymes, playful sense of humour and Janet Ahlberg's warm, cartoony illustrative style are all effortlessly appealing to young readers and their parents. Each Peach Pear Plum is a picture book for the very young with simple sentences on each page and an I-spy challenge to the reader to find Tom Thumb, Cinderella, The Three Bears, and so on. The repetitive nature of the text becomes a playful mantra as one clue leads to the next page's tableau.

"I found a little bit of Each Peach Pear Plum in a wonderful little book called The Lore And Language Of Schoolchildren by Iona and Peter Opie," recalls Allan Ahlberg. "It's a collection of playground rhymes from the 1930s into the 1950s. It was the idea that you could hide things in the pictures and then reveal them. It's a very simple

text but it runs round in a circle.” Janet died in 1994, but Allan continues to write.



7 Guess How Much I Love You

by Sam McBratney and Anita Jeram Walker, (first published 1994)
Some of the most enduring children’s books are seemingly the most simple in design. In Sam McBratney’s modern classic, a big cuddly hare and a little cuddly hare exchange expressions of love in a warm and reassuring way that any child at bedtime could enjoy. Coupled with Anita Jeram’s gentle illustrative style, it’s not hard to see why this book has sold 18 million copies worldwide.

Yet there is a deeper appeal to this picture book: it touches on how strange an abstract concept like ‘love’ can be for a small child. With an economy of words and a restrained humour, McBratney achieves this. “I wrote it to say something meaningful and humorous, using as few words as possible,” he explains.

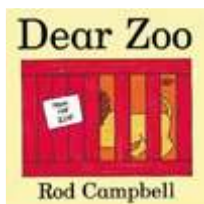


8 Room On The Broom

by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 2001)

Julia Donaldson’s partnership with illustrator Axel Scheffler has produced several modern classics, including Room On The Broom, which blends detailed images with simple, poetic narrative. The flame-haired witch and her familiar broom get into all kinds of scrapes. Lists, repetition and being pursued as a dragon’s dinner all add to the pure pleasure in storytelling that young children respond to so well.

“My starting point,” explains Donaldson, “was that a witch on her broom always has a cat. Well, what if she had other animals on there as well?”



9 Dear Zoo

by Rod Campbell Campbell, (first published 1982)

When he came up with the idea of “lift-the-flaps” to reveal surprises in Dear Zoo, the pace and humour introduced a whole new way to enjoy books with preschoolers. “Children enjoy the idea and the logic, and join in easily, owing to the repetitive text and the physical act of lifting the flaps,” says Campbell.

In the story, a narrator asks the zoo to send him a pet. However, the zoo keep sending animals which are completely inappropriate – a monkey who is too naughty, a camel who is too grumpy – and each one has to be sent back. As the story progresses, children love the different shaped flaps which represent animal crates or a snake’s basket, until finally the zoo get it right and send our narrator the perfect pet – a loveable puppy!

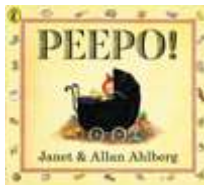


10 The Tiger Who Came To Tea

by Judith Kerr HarperCollins, (first published 1968)

Now nearly 40 years old, this book feels even older. There is something strangely stylised about this domestic scene of mother and daughter at teatime that has a real Fifties-feel (despite Sophie's funky spotty tights).

Children love the fun involved when mixing reality with fantasy. They all know what tea-time is, they know what a tiger is, but tea with a tiger is the silliest thing. And because Kerr is a wonderful storyteller, she doesn't get caught up in the small details, such as why the tiger didn't bother eating Sophie and mummy. And, the coolest thing is that when daddy comes home, he doesn't just freak out: he suggests the family eat out instead!



11 Peepo!

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg Puffin, (first published 1981)

This wonderful boardbook appeals rather like The Very Hungry Caterpillar – you simply can't beat a hole in the page for toddler enjoyment. In Peepo!, a baby glimpses his small domestic world through a little circular cut-out on the page, before the full scene – a cosy kitchen, a visit to the park, the soft light of bedtime – is revealed overleaf. Set in the early Forties, it's an unpretentious vision of a baby's contented life based on Allan Ahlberg's own working-class childhood.



12 Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone

by JK Rowling Bloomsbury (first published 1997)

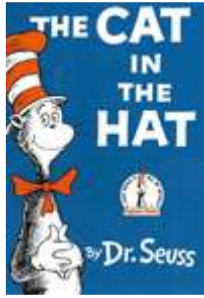
In ten years, the first Harry Potter novel has become one of the biggest selling books of all time. Not bad for a 'sci-fi' novel. This book introduces us to Harry – from his magical beginnings as a baby and his discovery, aged 11, of his strange potential as his life at Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry begins. Rowling's ability to write a compelling narrative that appeals to young readers and adults alike has been key to the Potter legend. The darker later volumes make Potter daunting for some under-tens, but there are plenty of seven-year-old readers.



13 Hairy Maclary From Donaldson's Dairy

by Lynley Dodd Puffin, (first published 1983)

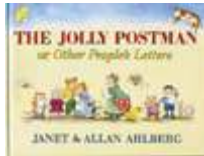
Lynley Dodd's scruffy black mutt Hairy Maclary doesn't get up to much most of the time – except chewing bones, chasing things and hanging out with his friends. Yet this first, simple rhymer, which introduced small children to Hairy's array of doggy pals ("Bottomley Potts covered in spots"; "Schintzel von Krumm with a very low tum", and so on) is a rhythmic delight. Dodd's illustrative style is gentle and almost old-fashioned, but it's the narrative, where the native New Zealander uses the richest language ("cacophony", "caterwaul" and "howdedoo" are prime examples) that makes her many follow-up books featuring animals with catchy names such a roaring global success.



14 The Cat In The Hat

by Dr Seuss HarperCollins, (first published 1957)

Theodor Seuss Geisel wrote this vibrant linguistic romp as a primer to help children with the 225 words that were vital to 'new reader' vocabulary. The cheeky Cat arrives and causes mayhem with his suggested rainy day games in the home of two young children, while their mother is out. Dr Seuss' poetic pace heaps excitement upon chaos in a story that's fun as well as educational.

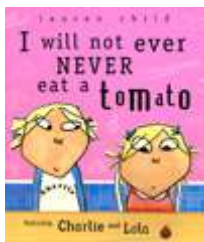


15 The Jolly Postman

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg Puffin, (first published 1986)

By Allan Ahlberg's own admission, he and his late wife always liked to make a book very different from the one before.

In The Jolly Postman, our eponymous hero makes his deliveries around a storyland populated by famous fairy tale and nursery rhyme characters. Adventures abound as each communication offers more intrigue. The envelopes are ingeniously built into the pages and each letter is cleverly designed to delight young readers. So beloved is this book, you'll rarely find a well-thumbed edition where any of the letters have been lost.

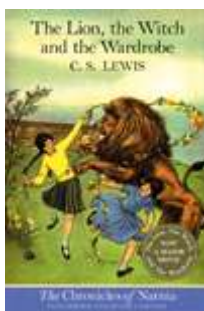


16 I Will Not Ever Never Eat A Tomato

by Lauren Child Puffin, (first published 2001)

Child's phenomenally successful Charlie and Lola creations had a vibrant life in print long before they were turned into a funky television series.

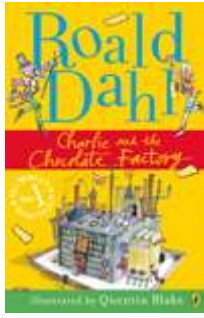
Lola is a cheeky preschool madam who always has a smart excuse to justify getting her own way. However, older brother Charlie appeals to her sense of fantasy to overcome common childhood issues – such as fussy eating. Great fun, and useful if you know a fussy eater who doesn't like tomatoes, or eggs, or peas...



17 The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe

by CS Lewis Collins, (first published 1950)

The first of The Chronicles Of Narnia series, this magical children's book tells the story of a family of children who have been evacuated from London during the war. Exploring the country house they have moved to, the youngest daughter, Lucy, discovers a secret world inside a disused wardrobe and soon all the children are launched into the world of Narnia. Belief, betrayal and salvation are the strong biblical themes, but the appeal of this enduring fantasy reaches far beyond that.



18 Charlie And The Chocolate Factory
by Roald Dahl Puffin, (first published 1964)

The enduring appeal of Dahl lies not only in his expert storytelling, but in the gruesome, gory and silly nature of his books. What child hasn't dreamt of rivers of chocolate? Yet Dahl was never sentimental, and here the hero is the only son of the almost comically poor Bucket family, who wins the final place on a one-off tour of the top-secret sweet factory owned by Willy Wonka. While Dahl allows us to wallow in confectionery, the other children in the book – greedy, lazy and spoilt – come to sweetly sticky ends. A wonderful novel for young readers which fires their imaginations and offers a cautionary tale.



19 The Tale of Peter Rabbit
by Beatrix Potter Warne, (first published 1902)

Originally written as a picture-letter to a sickly five-year-old, Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit paved the way for Potter's series of wildlife stories of naughty bunnies, ill-fated toads and other well-dressed creatures with human traits. Illustrating her work with a delicate style, Potter brought the wonders of her beloved English countryside to an Edwardian audience who instantly fell in love with her books. One day, while mother rabbit is out, Peter strays into his neighbour's garden and proceeds to eat his vegetables, only to be chased away by an angry Mr McGregor. Potter's writing style has the quaint, mannered charm of its period.



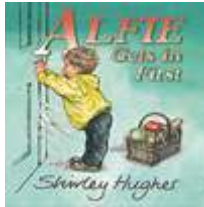
20 The Magic Faraway Tree
by Enid Blyton Egmont, (first published 1943)

Three children discover an enchanted wood where a gigantic magic tree grows. At the top of the tree is a ladder which leads the children to a magic land that is constantly changing – they are sometimes extremely unpleasant (the Land of Dame Slap) or sometimes fantastically enjoyable (the Land of Birthdays, the Land of Take-What-You-Want). The children are free to come and go, but they have to leave before the land "moves on" or they will be stuck there until the magic hole returns through which they can get down the ladder at the top of the tree. The Faraway Tree is inhabited by wonderful characters including Moonface, the fairy Silky, The Saucepan Man, Dame Washalot, Mr. Watzisname and the Angry Pixie.



21 Owl Babies
by Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson Walker, (first published 1992)

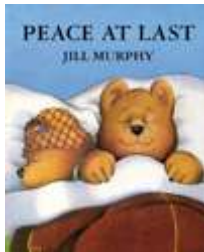
Sarah, Percy and Bill wake up one night to find their mother isn't there. Their loneliness makes them anxious and the fluffy white owls begin to fret, but are overcome with relief and joy when mummy owl comes back. A great bedtime read for two-year-olds.



22 Alfie Gets In First

by Shirley Hughes Red Fox, (first published 1981)

Once again Hughes's down-to-earth approach to storytelling stands out. Little boy Alfie accidentally locks his mother and his baby sister outside. Getting the door open again is a convoluted process involving neighbours and all sorts. A warm and wonderful exploration for preschoolers.



23 Peace At Last

by Jill Murphy Macmillan, (first published 1980)

Mr and Mrs Bear and Baby Bear are going to bed, but Mr Bear can't sleep because Mrs Bear snores. He tries to get to sleep in Baby Bear's room and every other room in the house, even the car, but each place is too noisy. Eventually, he notices that all is quiet and he gets back into his own bed to enjoy peace at last... Murphy's soft illustrations and the comedy found in the domestic scene make this an appealing bedtime read.



24 The Snail And The Whale

by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 2003)

Donaldson and Scheffler unite for a beautiful story that encourages children to see how important we all are, big or small. A small snail longs to sail the seas and by hitching a ride with his massive friend the whale, he can explore icebergs, volcanoes and other wonders across the earth. However, when the whale is stranded on a beach, it is snail who can come to his rescue by writing an SOS message. Richly colourful and charming, with memorable rhyming.



25 No Matter What

by Debi Gliori Bloomsbury, (first published 1999)

When Gliori got divorced, the experience she saw her own daughter go through inspired No Matter What. A parent fox called Large promises Small, her cub, that whatever happens, she will always be there filling their life with love and cuddles. Small asks lots of questions, but Large is consistent in her reassuring replies. The fluffy illustrative style is appealing to young readers, whether the separation is only temporary at bedtime, or for a more prolonged period of a parent being away.



26 Green Eggs And Ham

by Dr Seuss HarperCollins, (first published 1960)

Not only is this book one of Dr Seuss's finest adventures into the joy of language, with its nonsense poetry and chugging rhythms, but it's also a great way to persuade young children that they may actually like a new food! Sam-I-Am is desperate to get his chum to try green eggs and ham and suggests all kinds of scenarios that might make the dish appeal – eating them with a fox, in a box, in the dark, in the rain, and so on.



27 I Love You Blue Kangaroo!

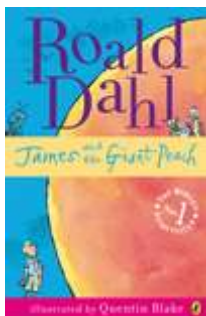
by Emma Chichester Clark Andersen, (first published 1999)
Lily Brown and her cuddly toy, Blue Kangaroo, are inseparable. However, a procession of new toys oust Blue Kangaroo from pride of place in Lily's bed and eventually he hops off to her baby brother's cot. When Lily sees her beloved cuddly in the arms of someone else she realises that he is too special to lose. A lovely bedtime read.



28 Pants

by Giles Andreae and Nick Sharratt David Fickling, (first published 2003)

Given that poo and potties can even dominate the conversation of adults, in a child's first few years, it's no surprise that young readers delight when their parents read them a book about pants. Beyond that, Andreae's flowing rhymes and Sharratt's comic illustrative style raise the silliness stakes as the book explores various pants and how they might suit different incongruous settings. Great fun.



29 James And The Giant Peach

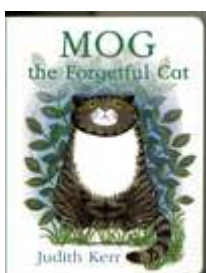
by Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake Puffin, (first published 1961)
In true Dahl style, this adventure is rather strange, but wry and compassionate. Before the first page is out poor James Henry Trotter is orphaned and condemned to a life of cruelty with his Aunts Spiker and Sponge. However, one day he meets a strange man who offers him a bag of magic grains, only James drops the bag in the garden and a mighty peach appears. James is befriended by a clutch of insects who were also affected by the magic and they all fly away on an incredible adventure.



30 Dogger

by Shirley Hughes Red Fox, (first published 1977)
Hughes's ability to capture something precious and important to young children from their own lives, makes her works enduring favourites decades after they were written.

Dogger is a toy dog whose owner Dave takes him everywhere. Dave and his family's life of school, treats and bathtime provide a comforting backdrop to a story in which Dave actually loses Dogger. Both must go through hard times before a happy reunion brings the story to a comforting close for readers.



31 Mog The Forgetful Cat

by Judith Kerr HarperCollins, (first published 1970)
If family cats are independent creatures who wander off and do their own thing, Mog is no different. Often the moggy is daydreaming her way into a series of adventures, and in this book, the first ever Mog story, she forgets she can't fly when she chases birds and forgets that she has a basket when she sleeps in front of Mr Thomas's view of the television. Like any naughty toddler she is told off for everyday misdemeanours, so the books translate beautifully.



32 Maisy's Bus

by Lucy Cousins Walker, (first published 1998)

Maisy, Mimi, Mausi or even Molly has been translated into 28 languages and sold over 25 million copies. There are now more than 150 colourful first stories about the little mouse and her friends. A wonderful route to colours, objects and early words.



33 Matilda

by Roald Dahl Puffin, (first published 1988)

Made into a Hollywood film in 1996, Matilda is the story of a girl genius breaking out from the confines of a horrible home life and boring school. Instead, her supportive and encouraging teacher Miss Honey and Matilda's own special powers transcend Dahl's vision of neglectful parenting.



34 Charlotte's Web

by EB White and Garth Williams Puffin, (first published 1952)

Charlotte is a spider who lives in a barn where one day, a runt piglet called Wilbur comes to live. When she discovers that Wilbur is destined for slaughter, the spider manages to save him by writing special messages in her web. The pair become famous and are celebrated at the county fair, but sadly a spider's life is not a long one. This book for confident readers explores sometimes difficult issues in a compassionate, celebratory and magical story.



35 One Snowy Night

by Nick Butterworth HarperCollins, (first published 1989)

This, the first Percy book, has Butterworth's trademark soft illustrative appeal. Percy the Park Keeper always feeds the animals, but when there's heavy snow, he realises he'll have to keep them safe and warm in his hut and it quickly becomes a bit of a squeeze. The Percy series has enjoyed huge success with preschoolers.



36 Thomas The Tank Engine

by Rev W Awdry Egmont, (first published 1946)

Reverend Awdry made up the railway stories for his young son, Christopher, based on his own childhood love of steam trains. Embuing the various trains and engines with human traits, Awdry created tales that taught little children about life – tantrums, mishaps an' all. Now an international phenomenon, the original books have a wonderfully dry humour.



37 Mr. Men

by Roger Hargreaves Egmont, (first published 1971)

Several Mr. Men books made it into the voting box (including some of the Little Miss series, which began in 1981). Simple in design and illustration, these bold characters get up to all kinds of comic capers because of their particular traits or habits. Mr. Tickle was

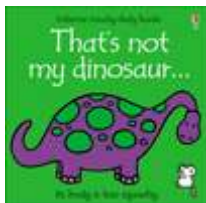
Hargreaves' first invention, but the series continued with the likes of Mr. Bump, Mr. Messy and Mr. Forgetful, all of which allow young children to explore different personalities through fun stories.



38 The Baby's Catalogue

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg Puffin, (first published 1982)

Inspired by their own baby daughter's love of shopping catalogues with nursery goods in them, the Ahlbergs created a lovely picture book of objects and scenes from a baby's world to share with a child as a first book. Beautiful, pastel-shaded illustrations have made this a classic.



39 That's Not My...

by Fiona Watt and Rachel Wells Usborne, (first published 2002)

A simple idea that has stretched to all kinds of themes. Chunky boardbooks with textured pages take a child through a simple narrative: "That's not my dinosaur/teddy/dolly/tractor". And on each page there's a reason why not – like bumpy skin, shiny hair ties, squashy wheels, until eventually we arrive at the right item. As well as the touchy-feely experience, the basic vocabulary repetition is a valuable – and enjoyable – early learning tool.



40 Horrid Henry

by Francesca Simon, and Tony Ross Orion, (first published 1994)

Horrid Henry hates his brother Perfect Peter, and his classmates Moody Margaret, Weepy William, Aerobic Al and, well, you get the idea. School life is all about avoiding work and causing the teachers as much grief as possible; home life is a trial of avoiding parental discipline, while also eating all the sweets, cheating at competitions and generally being horrid. His wickedly rebellious world appeals to young children instantly, and this first volume has spawned a young-reader series now immortalised on television. The Dennis the Menace of his time.



41 The Wind In The Willows

by Kenneth Grahame Egmont, (first published 1908)

It might be 100 years old, but this novel about Ratty, Mole, Badger, Toad and the other animals of the riverbank is an evocation of rural England that still captures the imagination. Adapted again and again as an animation, film, stage play and television series, Grahame's story, which afforded the wildlife human characteristics, brings themes of friendship and morality to children's books.



42 Goodnight Moon

by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd Campbell, (first published 1947)

A sweet and enduring bedtime book in which the reader can say goodnight to the objects around the room and outside the window, in preparation for sleep. It is regarded as a major text for early

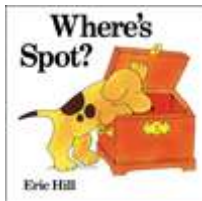
childhood in America and has enjoyed much success here, too.



43 Where, Oh Where, Is Kipper's Bear?

by Mick Inkpen Hodder, (first published 1994)

Subtitled 'A pop-up book with light!', this is a playful bedtime story where Mick Inkpen's dry-witted dog has to go on a hunt for his cuddly toy. The series of Kipper books began in 1991 and have been adapted deftly for television. Despite the rich ginger colours of our hero, the scenes are often basic on a white background, allowing Inkpen's humour and a child's imagination to do the rest.



44 Where's Spot?

by Eric Hill Frederick Warne, (first published 1980)

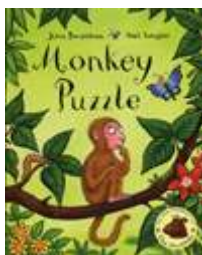
One of the great pioneers of the lift-the-flap novelty books for babies, Spot remains a timeless classic. Here, the honey-and-black puppy has gone missing at dinner time and mummy dog, Sally, must find him. Hill's deceptively simple narrative and bright, bold illustrations make this a great choice with very young children. Hill has sold millions of books in the Spot series.



45 Is It Bedtime Wibbly Pig?

by Mick Inkpen Hodder, (first published 2004)

Simple counting, vocabulary and exploration of emotions are all great pluses that the Wibbly Pig series bring to Inkpen's sweet little picture books. In this story, a very familiar bedtime scenario is played out: Wibbly Pig wants to do everything but go to bed. Splashing in the bath, counting the stairs... what else can the little pig do to side-step sleep? Of course, eventually he has to give in to slumber – so a happy ending for all parents!



46 Monkey Puzzle

by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 2000)

A clever book with a familiar children's picture book theme: a little animal who's lost his mummy. However, Donaldson's easy rhyming narratives are never one-dimensional, and here, children can enjoy the fun of the monkey meeting all kinds of beasts who share one or two traits with his mother, but who are completely different to him, before being reunited with his family.



47 Alice's Adventures In Wonderland

by Lewis Carroll Walker, (first published 1865)

The oldest book in the Top 100, the sheer brilliant fantasy of this story has not dimmed in over a century. Originally created by Carroll (real name Charles Dodgson) to amuse three young girls on a boat trip down the Thames, it tells of a curious child (Alice) who follows a large white rabbit down a rabbit hole, only to find a door opening to a strange world of weird creatures. A Cheshire cat, a tea party, a Queen and a Duchess all add to the very English adventure. A great story to read to children of six years and up.



48 The Gruffalo's Child

by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 2004)

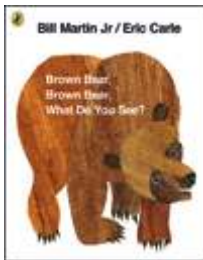
In the first book, the Gruffalo is the threatening beast of legend, but in a clever switch it's now the Big Bad Mouse who is the object of awe and fear in this sequel. Donaldson's lilting rhyming narrative here has the Gruffalo telling his child about the legend of said rodent. Of course, the curious little one just can't resist going in search of the Big Bad Mouse as this tale twists and turns comically again. This is a gentle follow-up with a sophistication we've come to expect, and a great way to dispel fears of monsters before bedtime.



49 Meg And Mog

by Helen Nicoll and Jan Pienkowski Puffin, (first published 1975)

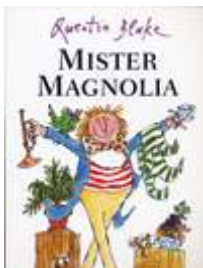
Simple, fun witchy tales that paired Nicoll's humorous narrative with Pienkowski's trademark mix of stark black characterisation and rich colourful landscapes. The Meg And Mog series has continued to appear for over 30 years, and is great for developing vocabulary.



50 Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

by Bill Martin Jr and Eric Carle Puffin, (first published 1967)

It is the glorious collage illustrations of Eric Carle that has made this book such a hit. Brown Bear has the now trademark textured colourful pictures better known in The Very Hungry Caterpillar. The question-and-answer format allows children to participate in and predict the narrative and spot things with Bear.



51 Mister Magnolia

by Quentin Blake Red Fox, (first published 1980)

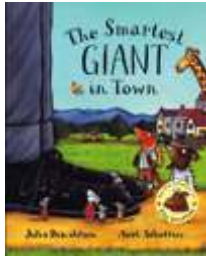
Dahl illustrator Blake has written some wonderful books for small children. Mister Magnolia is a poetic joy in which our hero possesses lots of wonderful objects, animals and even two sisters, but he only has one boot!



52 Duck In The Truck

by Jez Alborough HarperCollins, (first published 1999)

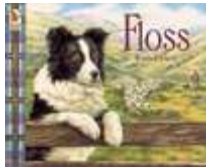
There's something almost Looney Tunes in the pacing and the humour of the first Duck book (Fix-It Duck and Captain Duck followed). Duck and his friends end up in a manic, muddy mess. This is a fun, rhyming romp for three-year-olds, with slapstick visuals.



53 The Smartest Giant In Town

by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 2002)

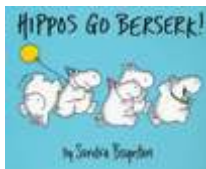
The scruffiest giant in town attempts to buy a whole new outfit. However, on his way home, George encounters various animals in need and ends up giving away all his fabulous new gear (his shoes make the perfect abode for a mouse and her homeless mouselings, for example). Clever and funny reading.



54 Floss

by Kim Lewis Walker, (first published 1992)

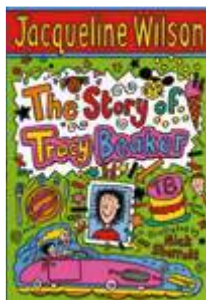
The first in a series of stories about Floss the sheepdog that tells of how she goes from being a playful town dog to a hard-working farm animal. Lewis creates a wonderful natural landscape in the writing and illustrations. A great story that's told without getting too sentimental.



55 Hippos Go Berserk!

by Sandra Boynton Simon & Schuster, (first published 1977)

A great counting book in which a bored hippo calls his mates around until eventually there is what can only be described as a mayhem of hippopotami. Boynton's soft, rounded illustrations make this a charming book for very young children, and something of a classic.



56 The Story Of Tracy Beaker

by Jacqueline Wilson and Nick Sharratt Random House, (first published 1991)

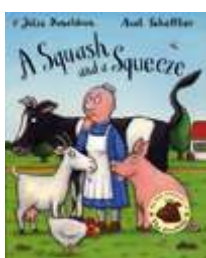
Human, honest and told in a language that doesn't patronise children, Wilson's stories don't boast happy endings, yet they have become incredibly successful. Tracy Beaker is a ten-year-old in a care home with apparent "behavioural difficulties" – she has become an anti-hero for our times.



57 Heidi

by Johanna Spyri Puffin, (first published 1880)

An orphaned girl who is taken to live with her reclusive grandfather in the Swiss Alps, Heidi is a warm-hearted child who gradually helps the old man to find a new happiness. But then she is packed off to the city by an aunt where the cultural differences cause her to learn even more life lessons. Stirring, girls' own stuff. Often adapted for television and film.



58 A Squash And A Squeeze

by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 1993)

"Wise old man, won't you help me please? My house is a squash and a squeeze," moans an old lady to a friend. He suggests she takes in a series of farm animals to solve her problem. Of course the little house is made even more cramped and chaotic. But when the wise

old man then advises the lady to shoo them all out again, she realises her house seems positively palatial after all! Children love the poetic repetition, the naughty animals and the fun adjectives: “tiny”, “titchy”, “teeny”, “weeny”, and so on.



59 Olivia

by Ian Falconer Simon & Schuster, (first published 2000)

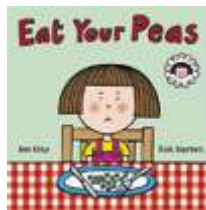
The black, white and red in Falconer’s stylish piglet tales perhaps stem from his sophisticated background as a painter and illustrator for The New Yorker, the New York City Ballet and the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. In the first book we’re introduced to a busy little pig who loves to get dressed (and try everything on), sing, build sandcastles, dance, paint, and eventually go to bed! The series has seen Olivia try her trotters at ballet, the circus and, in her latest foray, help get Christmas sorted.



60 The Bad-Tempered Ladybird

by Eric Carle Puffin, (first published 1977)

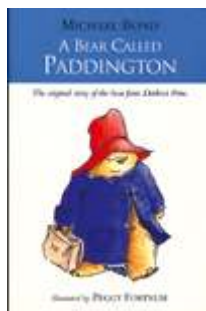
This story is about a moody little fellow who gets on the wrong side of everyone, no matter how big they are. But he gets his just desserts and learns the joys of a pleasing disposition!



61 Eat Your Peas

by Kes Gray and Nick Sharratt Red Fox, (first published 2000)

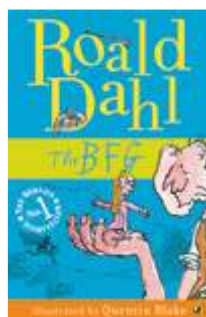
This award-winning picture book gave rise to a series of books about Daisy, the spirited little girl, who doesn’t like much of what she’s given for tea – and will not be tempted by anything.



62 A Bear Called Paddington

by Michael Bond HarperCollins, (first published 1958)

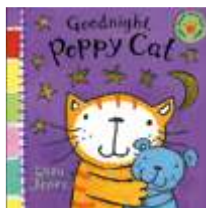
Bond was inspired to write about the accident-prone bear from Darkest Peru when he bought the last teddy bear on a shop shelf. In the story, Paddington is found at the station with a sign reading “Please look after this bear”. Kindly Mr and Mrs Brown adopt him – to their well-meaning cost!



63 The BFG

by Roald Dahl Puffin, (first published 1982)

Despite Sophie being scared of him when she first sees him at her bedroom window, The Big Friendly Giant is just that. He blows sweet dreams through the windows to children at night, and battles unfriendly giants. Dahl creates a wonderful giant language – the bad ones eat children or ‘humanbeans’.



64 Goodnight Peppy Cat

by Lara Jones Campbell Books, (first published 2003)

This touch-and-explore series of books appeal to very young readers who find this round, ginger cat adorable, and love squishing the bathtime bubbles.



65 Fantastic Mr Fox

by Roald Dahl Puffin, (first published 1970)

Mr Fox enjoys his life doing fox-like things, such as eating chickens and turkeys, much to the annoyance of farmers Bunce, Boggis and Bean. The trio decide they must rid themselves of this pest any way they can, but Mr Fox and his fellow wild animals manage to outwit the foolish men. Typically Dahl in its cruel characterisation of the vile farmers and its dark comedy, this is a great antidote to the more wholesome reads available for six- and seven-year-olds.



66 The Man On The Moon

by Simon Bartram Templar, (first published 2002)

Subtitled A Day In The Life Of Bob, this beautifully illustrated picture book is all about a polite English chap who lives on Earth and commutes to the Moon every day to work – showing tourists around and dispelling the rumours that aliens exist. Except that keen young readers can spot aliens everywhere, hiding in craters, sneaking into Bob's rocket and even peering out of his garden bushes back home! An offbeat delight with a retro Fifties shimmer to it.



67 Black Beauty

by Anna Sewell Puffin, (first published 1877)

Parents of a certain age will remember the classic Seventies television series of Black Beauty, but this Victorian tale of a fine young foal who passes through the hands of good, bad and cruel owners, is still classic reading for all little girls who are mad on horses.



68 Fix-It Duck

by Jez Alborough HarperCollins (first published 2001)

Our plucky Duck hero spots a leak in the roof, but can he fix it? Well, no he can't, but we can have some great fun the ensuing slapstick chaos. Alborough plays with language to wonderful effect, with a tongue-twister challenge young children find hilarious.



69 You're All My Favourites

by Sam McBratney and Anita Jeram Walker, (first published 2004)

Like Guess How Much I Love You (in our Top 10), this McBratney tale reassures children about parent-child love and closeness. It's a great book if your child has siblings, because here three little bears want Mummy Bear and Daddy Bear to say which one of them is their favourite. Needless to say, the parents put each individual's

mind to rest...



70 The Snowman

by Raymond Briggs Puffin, (first published 1978)

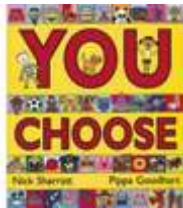
After working on the slime of Fungus The Bogeyman, Briggs wanted something airy and pleasant to work on, hence the soaring, crisp clean landscape for his much-loved The Snowman. It's hard to avoid thinking of Aled Jones's voice when you picture this story, but the power of Briggs' heart-warming book lies in the fact the story is told using only images. A boy's snowman comes to life and takes the child on an incredible journey to meet Father Christmas. However, the Snowman can't last forever and the boy must come to terms with his loss when the warm weather melts his friend away.



71 Good Night, Gorilla

by Peggy Rathmann Egmont, (first published 1994)

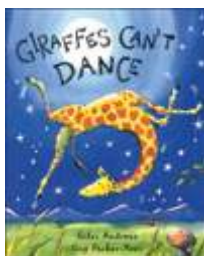
The zoo keeper is doing his last evening round and saying goodnight to various animals, but there's one gorilla who isn't ready for bed and who releases all his other furry friends... Also available as a gift pack with a toy gorilla!



72 You Choose

by Pippa Goodhart and Nick Sharratt Picture Corgi, (first published 2003)

A vibrant picture book with detailed cartoon-style illustrations from Sharratt and a lively narrative from Goodhart who offers young children the chance to choose where to live, sleep, what to do, play, and so on. A great book for interactive reading.



73 Giraffes Can't Dance

by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees Orchard, (first published 1999)

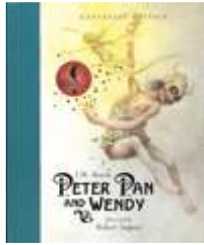
Owing to his ungainly physique, Gerald the giraffe can't dance. However, a friendly cricket reassures him that everyone can dance, they just need the right tune! A lovely rhyming picture book about understanding differences.



74 Pumpkin Soup

by Helen Cooper Picture Corgi, (first published 1998)

Cat, Squirrel and Duck love their soup, but one night the recipe is upset and mayhem ensues. This beautifully illustrated book could be just what you need to persuade a fussy eater to try new meal-time ideas.



75 Peter Pan And Wendy

by JM Barrie Templar, (first published 1911)

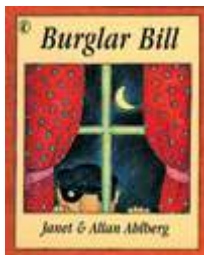
Based on Barrie's original stage play, Peter Pan The Great, the novel is a roaring childhood story which raises deep questions about growing up, the end of innocence and the blurring of fantasy and reality. Peter Pan lives in Neverland in a state of perpetual childhood with the Lost Boys and likes to swoop down to hear bedtime stories in the real world. One night he connects with children, Wendy, John and Michael, who fly off with him to his magical home for a perilous adventure.



76 Peek-A-Boo

by Jan Ormerod Bodley Head, (first published 1997)

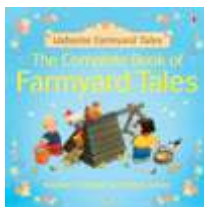
This is a classic first boardbook for babies, combining their love for playing peek-a-boo with the fun of flaps to lift. On each page a baby hides behind a bib, bath towels or snugly bedclothes. Very young children respond to seeing other babies in the illustrations. In truth, you'll be hard-pushed to find any family copy that hasn't been very well-thumbed indeed.



77 Burglar Bill

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg Puffin, (first published 1977)

Burglar Bill has stolen everything he possesses, from his breakfast to his bed. One night, when he's out robbing houses, he steals a box which he discovers to his horror has a baby inside! Soon, a robber comes to his own house: it's Burglar Betty, mother of the baby... For children who are beginning to read independently.



78 The Complete Book Of Farmyard Tales

by Stephen Cartwright and Heather Amery Usborne, (first published 2004)

Sam and Poppy get into all kinds of situations on their mother's farm and the nostalgic picture books collected here convey that wholesome excitement beautifully. There's a small yellow duck to find on each page. Comes with a CD.



79 Mr Gumpy's Outing

by John Burningham Red Fox, (first published 1971)

Mr Gumpy fancies a trip along the river, but there are plenty of other passengers waiting to join him – children, a pig, a rabbit and many more. Can his boat (and his patience) cope with their rowdy antics?

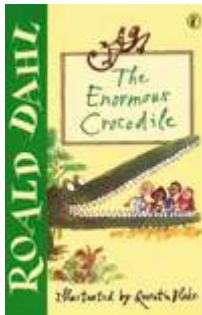


80 My Friend Bear

by Jez Alborough Walker, (first published 1998)

Alborough is the master of relating human experiences through a child's relationship with their teddy bear; it's a device employed by many picture books. In My Friend Bear, little boy Eddy finds a

kindred spirit whose best friend is his teddy, too – except it's a real bear!



81 The Enormous Crocodile

by Roald Dahl Puffin, (first published 1978)

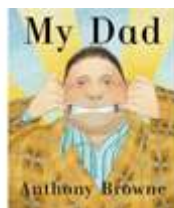
Despite there being an abundance of child-eating in Dahl's books, they continue to be extremely popular with children. In this story a mean croc in the muddiest river in Africa is out to find as many juicy little children to eat as he can, but the wild animals he boasts to have other ideas, until elephant finally gets rid of him for good.



82 Funnybones

by Janet and Allan Ahlberg Puffin, (first published 1980)

Here the Ahlbergs' inventive sense of humour creates a story about a family of skeletons who live in a "dark dark cellar" in a "dark dark house" in a "dark dark street". One night, the two skeletons are out walking their skeleton dog, when it bumps into a bench and ends up as a pile of bones they have to fit together again. Great fun, and this year's 'Booktime' free gift for young children starting school.



83 My Dad

by Anthony Browne Corgi, (first published 2000)

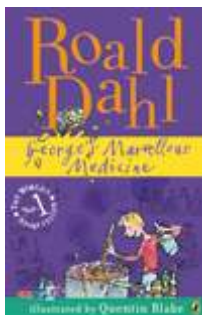
Inspired when he one day found his father's old dressing gown and felt instantly close to him, Browne wrote this lovingly illustrated evocation of a child's pride in his father. It instantly appeals: most children see their parents as superheroes even when their feats of heroism are simple everyday tasks. Cute.



84 Where's My Teddy?

by Jez Alborough Walker, (first published 1992)

Eddy loses his teddy and goes in search of him in the woods. He finds a very large teddy, which he thinks is his grown big. But it belongs to a real bear who then finds Eddy's teddy and thinks it's his that has shrunk...



85 George's Marvellous Medicine

by Roald Dahl Puffin, (first published 1981)

George concocts a medicine to make his grandma more likeable, but makes her grow extremely large instead. When George tries to recreate the mixture it makes things extremely small and grandma glugs that down too... A wonderful piece of writing.



86 Father Christmas

by Raymond Briggs Puffin, (first published 1973)

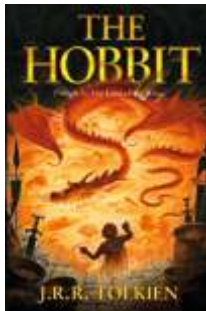
Briggs was inspired to write Father Christmas by his father, who was a milkman, because “both have wretched jobs: working in the cold, wet and dark”. Indeed, Briggs’s Santa is far from the jolly fellow most children know about. Instead, humour arises from the begrudging old chap having to lug himself out of his cosy home to work on his busiest night of the year. Children love the confounding of their expectations in this deftly written and illustrated classic.



87 Charlie Cook’s Favourite Book

by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler Macmillan, (first published 2005)

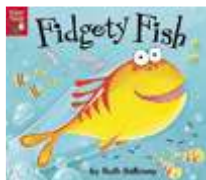
A totally ingenious idea! Charlie is reading a book about a captain at sea, who is reading about Goldilocks, who is reading about... and so on as the warped fun unravels. A glorious celebration of children’s books.



88 The Hobbit

by JRR Tolkien HarperCollins, (first published 1937)

Long before the blockbuster films, Tolkien’s fantasy series had legions of fans old and young. The Hobbit is regarded as the prelude to The Lord Of The Rings and it is probably the best place to start for readers under ten. Wizards, dragons and dwarves play out the adventure with the furry-footed Bilbo Baggins, the reluctant Hobbit hero.



89 Fidgety Fish

by Ruth Galloway Little Tiger Press, (first published 2001)

A loveable picture book and a cautionary tale. Tiddler is too fidgety to stay at home and eventually his mother lets him go off on his own – so long as he steers clear of Big Fish. Tiddler encounters all kinds of other sea creatures, when all of a sudden he’s gobbled up. Luckily for Tiddler, his fidgeting comes to the rescue!



90 Famous Five

by Enid Blyton Hodder, (first published 1942)

Blyton sure knew how to brand a product decades before most people had heard of ‘marketing’. In this the first ripping Famous Five yarn, Julian, Dick, Anne, tomboy George and Timmy the dog go in search of shipwrecked treasure and foil the villains also on its trail. Plucky boys and girls using their wits to nail adult criminals made for great adventures. All 21 Five novels are still lashings of fun.



91 Little Miss Muffet Counts To Ten

by Emma Chichester Clark Red Fox, (first published 1997)

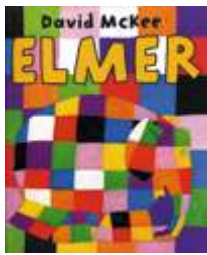
A clever twist on the nursery rhyme, in this pretty picture book, the spider persuades Miss Muffet not to run away and in return two, three, four and more other creatures arrive and reward her bravery with treats. A lovely way of introducing first numbers at storytime.



92 Miffy

by Dick Bruna Egmont, (first published 1955)

Bruna says Miffy's very basic rabbit form is down to his own limitations as an illustrator, yet her simplicity has made her an icon. Some of the books have no words, others have small verses to follow. Hello Kitty might have stolen her thunder, but Miffy's looking good for 57.



93 Elmer

by David McKee Andersen, (first published 1989)

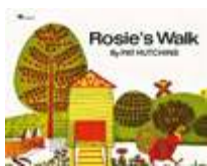
While some parents might associate McKee with the erstwhile Mr. Benn, there are now two generations who can't see a grey elephant without wanting to colour it in a rainbow patchwork of colours. A cheery fellow, Elmer has appeared in a series of books about life in the wild: he helps to sort out the plight of his fellow elephants in Elmer And The Hippos and arranges a jungle jamboree in Elmer's Concert.



94 Harry The Dirty Dog

by Gene Zion and Margaret Bloy Graham Red Fox, (first published 1956)

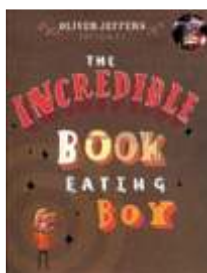
Avoiding bathtime is a hot topic in bedtime stories, and this one is a real classic. Harry, a white dog with black spots, is such a soap-dodger it's hard to tell if he's actually a black dog with white spots... The 1950s design style is a real treat.



95 Rosie's Walk

by Pat Hutchins Red Fox, (first published 1968)

Rosie the red hen walks around the farmyard – and manages to avoid being eaten by the cunning fox. A vibrant, comic tale with no words and lots of slapstick moments.



96 The Incredible Book Eating Boy

by Oliver Jeffers HarperCollins, (first published 2006)

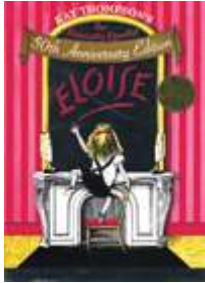
Henry loves books but one day he accidentally discovers they taste good too! He goes on a spree of gorging volumes and volumes, only to find that he is also filling up on knowledge! But just how healthy is this new diet? Jeffers is quite a new talent but has already been acclaimed for his other books, Lost And Found and How To Catch A Star.



97 Mr. Wolf's Pancakes

by Jan Fearnley Egmont, (first published 1999)

A great twist on the story of the Little Red Hen who toils to make bread with no help from her friends. Here, the charming Mr Wolf is in the mood for pancakes, but no-one, especially the snooty Chicken Little, will help him. Of course, everyone wants to eat when the air is filled with the aroma of cooking – but does Mr Wolf want guests?



98 Eloise

by Kay Thompson and Hilary Knight Simon & Schuster, (first published 1955)

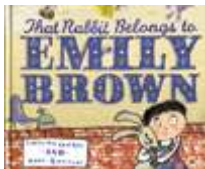
Thompson was a Hollywood star (the absolutely fabulous magazine editor in *Funny Face*) and whose party trick was to act the precocious little girl. Eventually she created a series of books about this six-year-old who lives at the posh Plaza Hotel in New York City in the care of her very British nanny. Rather like a St Trinian's girl who's won the Lottery.



99 Little Rabbit Foo Foo

by Michael Rosen and Arthur Robins Walker, (first published 1990)

Do you know a toddler who likes to lash out for fun? Little Rabbit Foo Foo has to learn that cycling around bopping other animals on the head is not good form. Rosen's simple but direct narrative is married perfectly with Robin's colourful cartoon illustrations.



100 That Rabbit Belongs To Emily Brown

by Cressida Cowell and Neal Layton Orchard Books, (first published 2006)

Emily gets up to all kinds of imaginary adventures with her cuddly rabbit. However, Queen Gloriana (another little girl) has heard tell of the rabbit and sends all her horses and men to offer riches in exchange for him. Emily refuses but one night he is stolen! Emily marches straight to the palace to find him and ends up showing Gloriana that she can create her own beloved cuddly that is well-loved and played with every day.