



2020: a look ahead Part One

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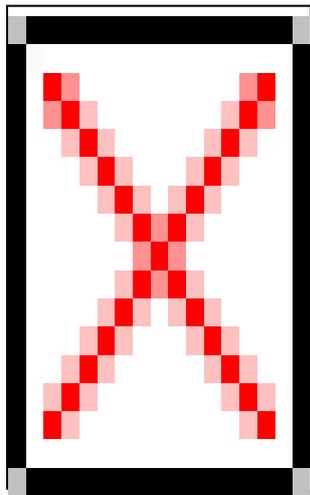
Books of the Year as chosen by their editors

Which are the books to watch in 2020? We asked leading editors to tell us about the book (one only) they are most excited to be publishing in the year ahead.

Kirsty Stansfield, Nosy Crow Head of Fiction

I read an extract from **The Girl Who Stole an Elephant** in a creative writing anthology and fell in love with it immediately. Chaya's voice was so strong and her adventure so compelling, the book's star quality shone out right away. Author Nizrana Farook writes so beautifully about Serendib, you can taste the jambu fruit and smell the ocean and imagine escaping trouble on the back of the King's (stolen) elephant! I can't wait for this brilliant book to fall into the right hands, and as many of them as possible!

Jane Winterbotham, Deputy MD and UK Publishing Director of Walker Books



What could be better, in the 20th anniversary year of Alex Rider, than to be publishing a brand new novel in the series! Publishing in April, **Nightshade** brings all the excitement and thrills that Alex fans have come to love to a mission that takes the world's favourite teen superspy to Brazil, Gibraltar and Crete, culminating in a thrilling showdown set against the London skyline. Action-packed and with a twisting plot that keeps the reader constantly at the edge of their seat, this is classic Anthony Horowitz. Fans new and old have a treat in store.

Simon and Schuster Editorial Director, Jane Griffiths

2020 is set to be a really exciting year for Simon & Schuster with brilliant new books from authors like Abi Elphinstone, Michelle Harrison, Ben Miller and Adam Silvera to name just a few as well as some exciting new names joining our list like Sophy Henn, Sarah Lean and Katie and Kevin Tsang so it's hard to pick just one favourite! But one book I can't wait to publish is **And The Stars Were Burning Brightly** by Danielle Jawando, an extraordinary novel about loss, love and the importance of speaking up when all you want to do is shut down. In an age where social media is adding an extra layer of pressure to teenagers and having a real impact on their mental health, this feels like such an important book to be publishing and Danielle is an incredible new talent on the YA scene.

Janetta Otter-Barry, MD Otter-Barry Books

I'm proud and honoured to be publishing [Joseph Coelho](#)'s major new collection **The Girl Who Became a Tree A Story Told in Poems** (September). Set in a library and a dangerous forest, the multi-layered poetic narrative charts teenage Daphne's grief and isolation after her father's death, taking her and the reader on a gripping, heartrending journey that ends in hope and reconciliation. A lost phone, a deceitful creature, a boy-tree, gaming, painful memories, family crisis. Real life and fantasy are interwoven with the Greek myth of Apollo and Daphne in this powerful story for readers of 11 and up from one of the most exciting poets writing today, with amazing illustrations by Kate Milner.

Barry Cunningham, MD Chicken House

The Loop by Ben Oliver is a coruscating debut from an astonishingly confident young Glaswegian novelist - it's the first in a trilogy which blew us away. It's a futuristic prison break story about what happens when AI takes control in a society that is being fooled by politicians? Sound familiar? Well, lots of fans agree already - it's been snapped up by Lime Pictures and Louise Sutton (producer of **Black Mirror**), foreign rights have sold in 11 countries so far, and we publish simultaneously in both the UK and USA in April 2020. This is pure high-octane excitement, and a worthy new voice to join **The Maze Runner** and **The Hunger Games** in fandoms worldwide!

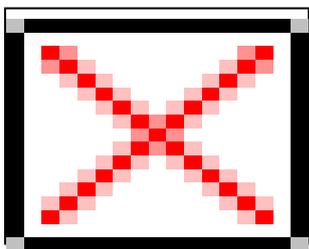
Neil Dunncliffe Publisher, Pavilion Children's Books

Emily Haworth-Booth's picture book debut, [The King Who Banned the Dark](#) [3], was a huge hit, shortlisted for numerous prizes, and **The Last Tree** is, I think, even stronger. The story starts with a group of friends looking for a place to live. They settle in an unspoiled forest, but before long start cutting down trees to make fire, shelters and homes. Soon, only one tree is left, and it is down to the children to save it. Beautifully illustrated in Emily's trademark limited palette, this book has an important message told with a light touch and lots of humour. It's the perfect picture book for our times.

Anthony Hinton, Commissioning Editor at David Fickling Books

Freddy vs School (July) is an absolute treat! It's the debut novel from Neill Cameron, who writes and illustrates award winning comics for DFB and our sister company **The Phoenix Comic**. **Freddy vs School** stars Freddy, who is 9, loves looking cool in front of his friends, and also is an awesome robot. But it turns out that teachers get really angry when you use your rocket boosters to show off at school. Can Freddy stay true to himself without getting expelled? It's been fabulous to have Neill bring his natural storytelling genius to illustrated fiction.

Erica Wagner (Publisher Children & Young Adult) Allen& Unwin



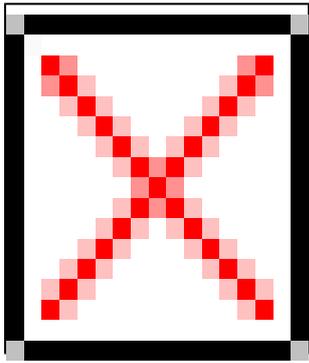
Trace Balla's graphic novel picture books **Rivertime** and **Rockhopping**, and the forthcoming **Landing with Wings**, reflect her passion for the natural world. Through lyrical words and pictures she encourages readers of all ages to slow down and observe the world around them. **Landing With Wings** (September) is the story of Miri and her mum, settling in to a new town, making friends, learning about the land's Indigenous history and culture. Miri keeps a nature diary, and in writing about the plants and animals and places around her, she shows how gentle observation and engagement with the natural world can have a ripple effect on not only her own psyche, but all those around her. In the context of the enormous challenges that are upon Australia right now with ferocious bushfires ripping through communities and forests, Trace's books are a beautiful way to engage and educate the young, and their parents, to do everything we can

to care for country.

Ruth Huddleston, Publisher, Old Barn Books

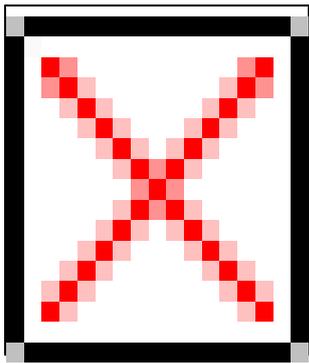
Boy, Everywhere by A.M. Dassu (August) chronicles the harrowing journey taken from Syria to the UK by Sami and his family. From privilege to poverty, across countries and continents, from a smuggler's den in Turkey to a prison in Manchester. It is a story of survival, of family, of bravery.... and how thin the line is between 'us' and 'them'. A.M. Dassu writes with skill and empathy and an immediacy that communicates directly with her audience. I love her passion for the craft of writing and her joy in sharing that with readers.

Anna McQuinn, Editor-at-Large, Alanna Max



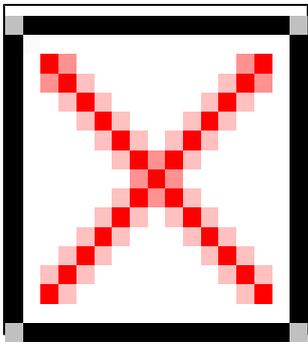
This year we are thrilled to publish Ken Wilson-Max's first title with AlannaMax. **Lenny and Wilbur** is perfect for very young readers. Lenny and his dog Wilbur who are best friends. They do everything together and on Wilbur's wash day, there is even more fun to be had. This book is full of joy - there are treats and tickles, suds and giggles, songs and snuggles. The special relationship between a little boy and his dog shines through the illustrations and will warm the heart of any reader. Totally endearing!

Sam Hutchinson, Publisher b small publishing



Following our Blue Peter Book Award-winning **Real-life Mysteries** was always going to be a challenge. Luckily author Susan Martineau and illustrator Vicky Barker have created a perilously good read in **Real-life Disasters**. From sinking ships to killer lakes and deadly diseases, we invite children to test their critical literacy skills and investigate what really happened. Maybe what they learn will help them avoid major peril. Our advice: listen to the experts!

David Bennett Boxer Books



The 2020 title I'm most excited about is **Who is in the Egg?** by Alexandra Milton. It is a simple concept illustrated with truly extraordinary artwork. The author and artist refers to her work as 'ripped and torn paper' which totally undervalues the detailed and intricate nature of the life-like illustrations. The book is a fascinating and surprising collection of animals and their eggs and their young. It's a natural history guessing game!

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