



CHILDREN'S PREVIEW

This month's picks show the key role children's books can play in spreading messages of tolerance and understanding, amid issues of migration and climate change

In a recent editorial, Philip Jones wrote about the vital role book publishing can play in times such as these, in defending the truth and spreading a core message of tolerance and understanding. Looking at forthcoming children's publishing, this is very much in evidence. Children's books are a place of entertainment, escapism and wonder. It's easy to talk flippantly of trends—the year of the vampire/superhero/sausage dog—but books about ethnic diversity, social justice and global issues such as migration and climate change will be prominent in 2017.

This month *A Story Like the Wind* by Gill Lewis, illustrated by Jo Weaver, was written in direct response to the refugee crisis, while Kate Milner's *My Name is Not Refugee* is ideal for parents and educators to share with the very young, as is Sarah Savage's *Are You a Boy or a Girl?*, illustrated by Fox Fisher, which challenges gender stereotyping. *Release* by Patrick Ness could become just as much of a pivotal text for gay teens as Judy Blume's *Forever* is for straight ones. Plenty more like this will come later in the year: this is not a trend, but a response to world events, offering children, teenagers and parents the opportunity to reflect.

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EDITOR'S CHOICE/BOOK OF THE MONTH

Personal favourites

TOP SELLER

Likely to be the biggest selling titles of the month based on an author's sales history

ONES TO WATCH

Titles with strong sales potential and publisher support, regardless of sales history of the author

DÉBUT BOOKS

Indicated by the icon below



BOOK OF THE MONTH



FICTION 9-12

GILL LEWIS, JO WEAVER (ILLUS)
A STORY LIKE THE WIND

OUP, 4TH, £8.99, HB,
9780192758958

Gill Lewis is best

known for inspirational animal adventures such as *White Dolphin* and *Moon Bear*, but she takes a new direction in this emotional, lyrical fable, written in response to the refugee crisis. In a small boat spinning out in the ocean sit a group of people who are far from home and have lost everything, after fleeing war-stricken places. Their memories and music, stories and songs, keep hope alive. One boy, Rami, has only his most precious possession: a violin. The tale of that violin and a stallion that could

run like the wind is the thread weaving their stories together. Each page is heavily illustrated in Weaver's distinctive and very evocative charcoal. She's a big new talent, do look out for her picture book debut, *Little One*, which is in paperback this month.

At times deeply affecting, *A Story Like the Wind* is a celebration of the power and solace of words and music, and it joins books including Zana Fraillon's *The Bone Sparrow*, Francesca Sanna's *The Journey* and Elizabeth Laird's *Welcome to Nowhere* as essential reading on the topic of the plight of refugees.



FICTION 5-9

DAVID ALMOND, ALEX T SMITH (ILLUS)

THE TALE OF ANGELINO BROWN

WALKER, 4TH,
£10.99, HB,

9781406358070

Almond's books for younger readers are always a treat, involving collaborations with artists such as Oliver Jeffers, Polly Dunbar and Dave McKean. This time it's Alex T Smith and I'll confess to particular excitement at this pairing. A tiny angel appears one day in a bus driver's pocket, touching the lives of everyone in the town and school. Or nearly everybody: the local bully and mysterious School Inspector are not so sure . . . This is charming, profound and very funny, and Smith's exuberant black-and-white illustrations add real humour.



PICTURE BOOK

NICOLA DAVIES, LAURA CARLIN (ILLUS)

KING OF THE SKY

WALKER, 4TH, £12.99, HB,
9781406348613

An immigrant boy starting life in a new country feels lost, alone and alien, until he meets an elderly man who keeps racing pigeons. When they back a special bird—the King of the Sky—on a race across Europe, their shared purpose brings about an unexpected friendship. There's much here to resonate with current world events and it's one of the most visually stunning books of the year. Carlin's artwork is mesmerising, with beautiful use of colour to represent hope and warmth. Their previous collaboration, *The Promise*, was shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal.