



# Literacy News

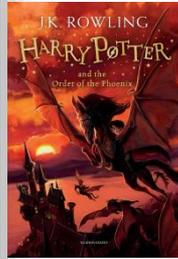
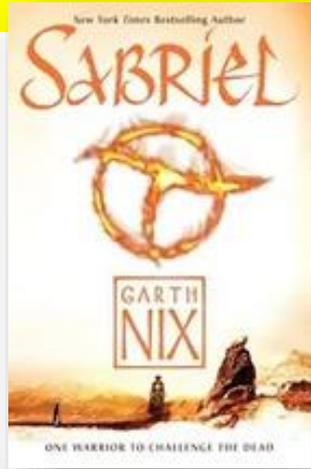
March 2016



Kelmscott Literacy department

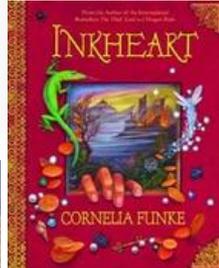


# What are the best children's fantasy book series?

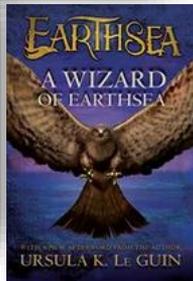
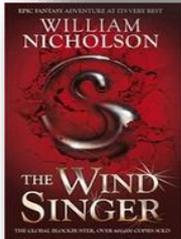


Coming to the end of a great fantasy sequence can be a devastating moment. You've lived with those characters for so long; you've walked in their footsteps, shared their hopes and fears, and stood by them through heartbreak, happiness and as they have faced their greatest challenges.

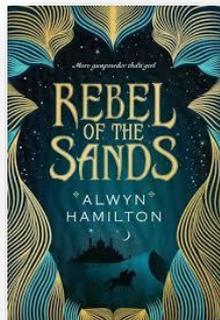
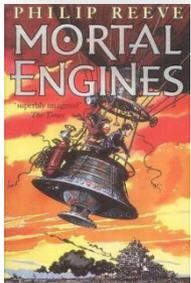
The traditions of fantasy series are strong and long in the UK and in the US. Ursula le Guin's classic *A Wizard of Earthsea* introduces *Ged*, the young boy with a great wizarding destiny, and launches the wonderful *Earthsea* sequence. *His dark materials* tells how a child with a destiny has to navigate his or her way through the obstacles thrown at them as they take their rightful place in the world. Typically, in all of these young characters, there is an underlying goodness in them which will ultimately benefit the whole of mankind - if they are allowed to thrive and survive.



In William Nicholson's *The Wind on Fire* trilogy which begins with *The Wind Singer*, Kestrel and her twin Bowman, a pair bonded by 'empath'. Manth children, they are growing up in Aramath, a city where everything is governed by exams. When Kestrel challenges the system, derides its values and denounces the unseen ruler of the city, she and Bowman have to flee from everything they know.



Australian author Garth Nix's gripping *Old Kingdom* trilogy also has a young female protagonist and tackles life-changing themes. The Amulet of Samarkand is the first title in Jonathan Stroud's *Bartimaeus* trilogy. Mythological and magic Underpin this trilogy which is set in a version of London which has been shaped by an alternative history.



Philip Reeve's steam punk '*Traction Cities*' sequence begins with *Mortal Engines*. Richly imagined, it is set in the UK after the 60 minute war has ravaged the country and the geology of the whole has been radically altered with sea beds dried up.

Other new fantasies are Alwyn Hamilton's *Rebel of the Sands* is a brilliant mix of magic of the East and the violent myths of the Western. Cornelia Funke's Entertaining *Inkheart* trilogy contains magic and villains.



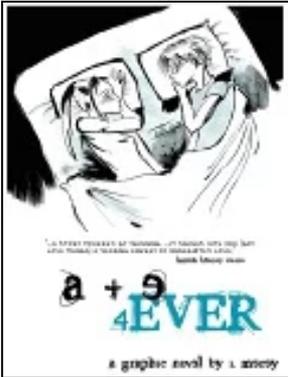
# Top 10 books by transgender authors featuring trans characters.

Despite the huge growth of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) fiction over the few years., young adult and middle grade books with trans main characters remain sorely lacking.

Reading this list of books please keep in mind that many of these books are published through small presses, so they likely won't be available in physical bookshops. If any of them catch your eye you can order them from the library.

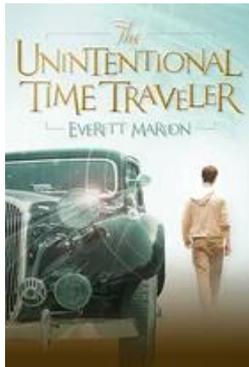


1. One in Every Crowd by Ivan Coyote  
An anthology of more than forty stories, this book blends humour and heartbreak.



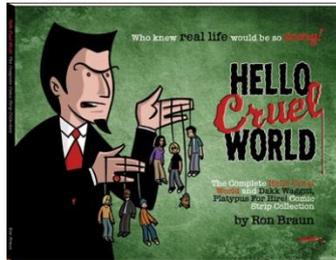
2. A+E 4ever by I Merer  
This graphic novel is about two artistic and music loving friends who become something more.

3. First Spring Grass Fire by Rae Spoon



4. The Unintentional Time Traveller by Everett Maroon.  
Jack participates in an experimental trial to cure his epilepsy and ends up displaced in town.

5. Hello Cruel World by Kate Bornstein



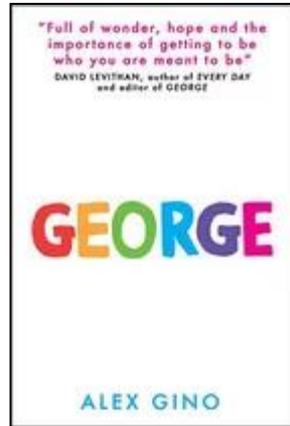
8. I Know Very Well How I Got My Name by Elliott DeLine,  
It chronicles Dean's journey from childhood to adolescence. Can be disturbing.

6. Lizard Radio by Pat Schmatz  
Set in a futuristic world that takes cues from our own.

7. Roving Party by Sassafras Lowrey  
A roving pack explores the world of homelessness.

9. George by Alex Gino  
It tells the story of a girl who wants to play Charlotte in her class's rendition of Charlotte's Web. She devises a plan to get the part.

10. If I Was Your Girl by Meredith Russo  
A teen with a secret moves to a new town - and turns it into a powerful examination of life post-transition.



# The Vocabularist: Where did the word 'crisis' come from?



Barley a week passes without something being referred to as a crisis. But what makes a crisis a crisis.

The Greek word krino meant separate, judge or decide, and from it came the nouns krites 'judge' - from which we get critic, and kriterion, a test to judge by.

Normally a crisis is a parting of the ways - a point of uncertainty before events move on. Some end in wars, like the Falklands crisis of 1982 - others end when war is averted, like the Cuban missile crisis.

For many years in English the word was most commonly applied to the climax of a disease - the point after which the patient recovers, or does not.

But sometimes it is just used to mean a very serious thing that has happened.

One paper wrote in 2014 that "the flooding crisis has reached Britain's most famous river". In fact it was not a "crisis" which had reached the towns along the Thames - it was the floodwater.

We often talk of people "hit by the financial crisis" when we mean hit by unemployment, bankruptcy or austerity. One of the most celebrated uses of the word is the 1980s advertising slogan for Commercial Union by copywriter Susie Henry: "We won't make a drama out of a crisis". But perhaps when you need your insurance company, the crisis is already past and you are on to the drama.

