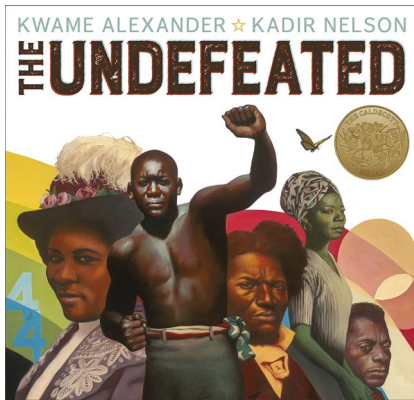


# Black History

A revised and expanded version for 2020 of our booklist which highlights Black History across the world. The list has five sections: History, Biographies, Traditional Tales, Fiction for KS2 and upwards, Fiction for KS3 and upwards.

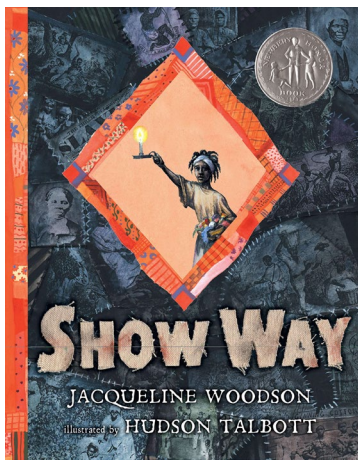
## History



*The Undeclared* by Kwame Alexander and Kadir Nelson  
 Andersen Press 9781783449286/9781783449293

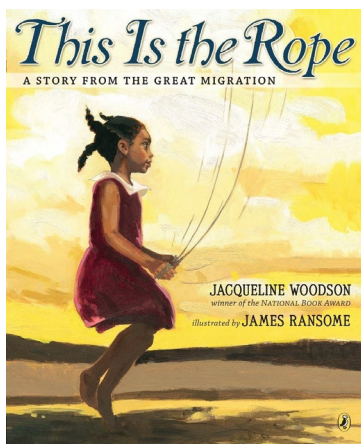
The faces of African Americans gaze out soulfully, individually and collectively, at readers from the pages and illuminate a poem about how Black Lives Matter and always have. Kadir Nelson's portraits picture people from past and present who are defiant and confident and who anyone would be proud to know. The final spread features children looking forward hopefully to the future. The artist has long been known in the USA for his nuanced illustrations which portray Black people in a painterly style which is almost photographic. The author is known for his verse novels which have been shortlisted for the CLIPPA. A CLPE core book for which teaching notes are available:

<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/undeclared>



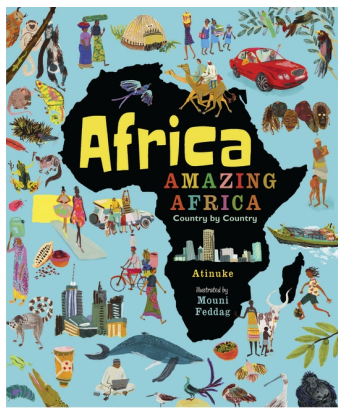
*Show Way* by Jacqueline Woodson and Hudson Talbott  
 Putnam USA 9780399237492

This picture book - with intricate illustrations inspired by the traditions of quilting - imagines how family history is passed down in ways which inspire courage and hope. A parent pieces together the story of her child's ancestors, with scraps of memory reaching back to the time of slavery when quilting - like storytelling - was akin to a secret survival skill passed from mother to daughter. For later generations, quilts are venerated as artworks that commemorate the past and - like family stories - use history as 'show ways' to the future. Available from Willesden Bookshop



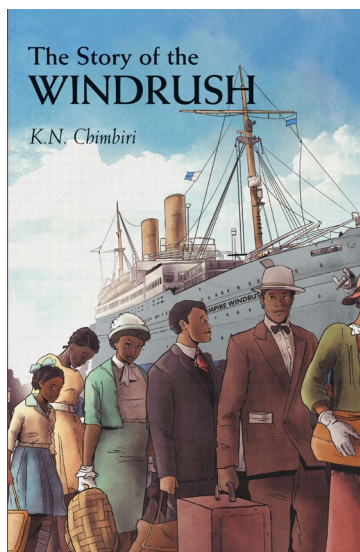
*This is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration* by Jacqueline Woodson and James Ransome  
 Puffin USA 9780425288948

Drawing on her own family's history of moving from South Carolina to New York City in the 1960s, Jacqueline Woodson commemorates the journeys many Black Americans made from the south to the north of the United States during the twentieth century in search of better lives and with the aim of leaving prejudice and discrimination behind. Jacqueline Woodson's picturebooks have been illustrated by some of the best African American artists. Another example is *The Other Side* illustrated by E.B. Lewis (Putnam USA 9780399231162) a story about segregation and a friendship overcoming this.



*Africa. Amazing Africa* by Atinuke, illustrated by Mouni Feddag  
Walker 9781406376586

Well known as a storyteller and the writer of the stories about Anna Hibiscus, here Atinuke highlights aspects of each African country individually in this attractive and colourful book which will encourage children to find out more. Atinuke is originally from Nigeria and illustrator Mouni Feddag has Algerian heritage. A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/africa-amazing-africa> *Anna Hibiscus* <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/anna-hibiscus> and *Anna Hibiscus' Song* <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/anna-hibiscus-song> are current Power of Reading texts.

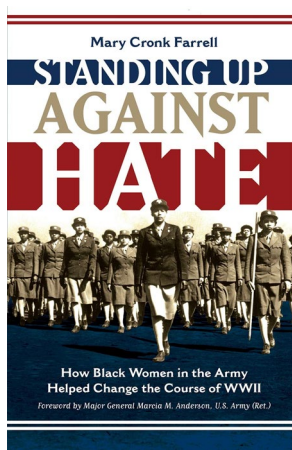


*The Story of the Windrush* by K.N. Chimbi  
Scholastic 9780702307133

Describing the story of the Windrush generation who came to Britain from the Caribbean in the late 1940s and 1950s, this book explains the history of the beginning of modern Black Britain concisely and accessibly, making it more visible and acknowledging the racism Black people have faced. Kandace Chimbi's interesting factual account is illustrated with contemporary photographs, maps and sepia toned pictures. Throughout are interwoven the stories of individual people who made the journey from the Caribbean on the ship the Empire Windrush.

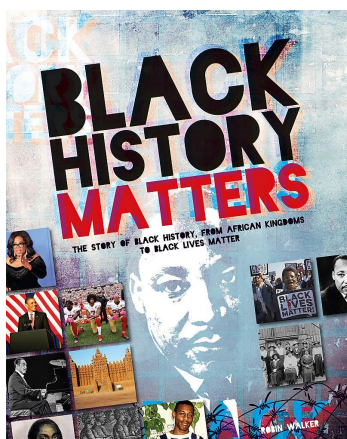
A CLPE Book of the Week <https://clpe.org.uk/story-windrush-kn-chimbi>

*Windrush Child* by Benjamin Zephaniah (Scholastic 9780702302725), a title in the Voices series, is due for publication in November 2020.



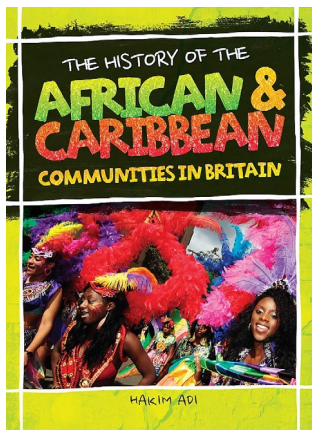
*Standing Up Against Hate* by Mary Cronk Farrell  
Abrams 9781419731600

Subtitled 'How Black Women in the Army Helped Change the Course of WWII', this book charts the little known story of some of the 6,520 Black women who served in the U.S. army during the Second World War. Their contribution was considerable and yet segregation and racism were rife both inside and outside the army. There is a particular focus on the work of Charity Adams, one of only two Black women to attain the rank of major. She was sent to Birmingham, England in charge of the 6888<sup>th</sup> Postal Directory Battalion that had the job of redirecting enormous amounts of mail that had built up over months. Their work was vital in maintaining and improving soldiers' morale.



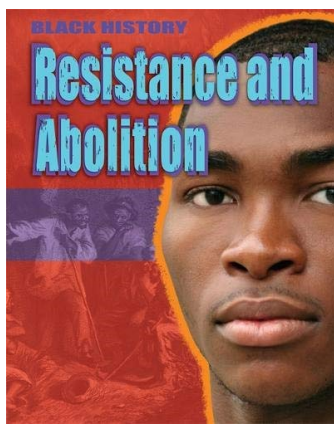
*Black History Matters* by Robin Walker  
Franklin Watts 9781445166896

Beginning by highlighting the importance of understanding and knowing about Black History in the context of contemporary struggles, Robin Walker then takes readers back to early African Empires, exploring early societies in the African continent, including those in what are now in modern day Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana and Nigeria. He describes the slave trade, resistance to it and its legacy, and moves on to consider European colonialism in Africa. Finally, he looks at the African diaspora, focusing on the fight for civil rights in the USA and the arrival of the Windrush generation in the UK. The book is well illustrated with photographs and maps.



*The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain* by Hakim Adi  
Wayland 9781526317971

A lecturer in the History of Africa and the African Diaspora writes for young people about Black British history, beginning with the first Africans who may have come to Britain thousands of years ago through to the Second World War and after.



*Resistance and Abolition* by Dan Lyndon-Cohen  
Wayland 9781445180847

One of a recently reissued Black History series, this title tells the story of the many forms of resistance, both in Africa and in the Americas that helped to bring about the abolition of slavery. It tells the inspiring stories of rebel leaders such as Nanny of the Maroons and Toussaint L'Ouverture, recounts key events such as the Amistad uprising, and profiles campaigners such as Olaudah Equiano, William Wilberforce and Elizabeth Heyrick and their leadership of the abolitionist movement in this country. The format is one of short chapters with a variety of texts, personal testimonies and visual materials with many references to British history.

Other books in the series:

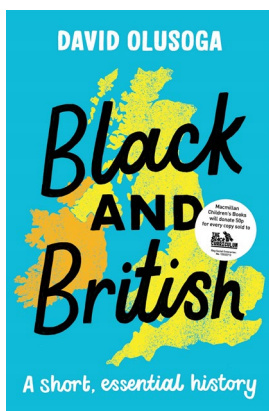
*African Empires* 9781445180779

*Arts and Music* 9781445134444

*Community and Identity* 9781445180823

*Civil Rights and Equality* 9781445180809

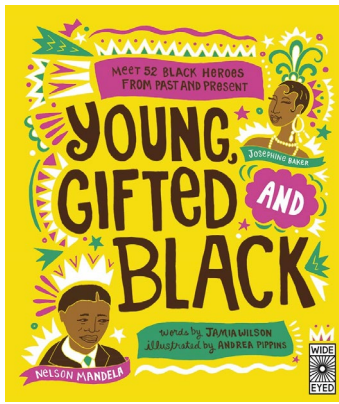
*Africa and the Slave Trade* 9781445180748



*Black and British: A Short, Essential History* by David Olusoga  
Macmillan 9781529063394

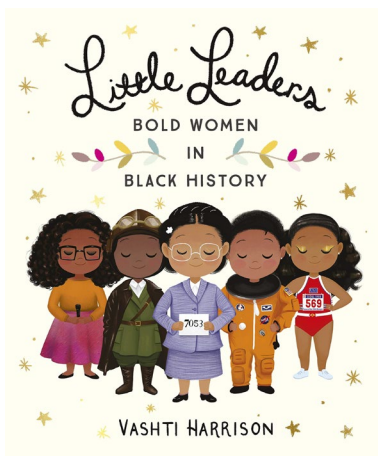
An edition aimed at secondary school students of David Olusoga's award winning book of the same title. An introduction to 1800 years of Black British history from Roman Africans who guarded Hadrian's Wall right up to present day, illustrated throughout with maps, photos and portraits. A version for primary schools is planned for 2021.

## Biographies



*Young, Gifted and Black* by Jamia Wilson, illustrated by Andrea Pippins  
Wide Eyed Editions 9781786030887

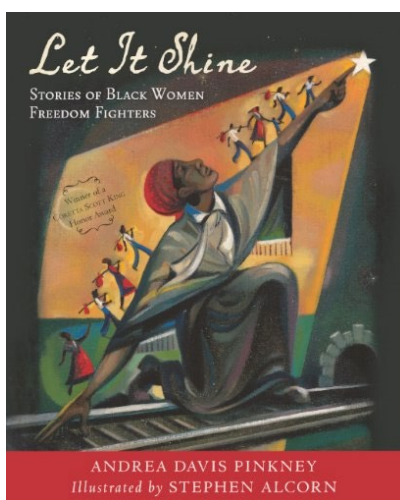
Subtitled 'Meet 52 Black Heroes from Past and Present', this book highlights 'the talent and contributions of black change-makers from around the world' as Jamia Wilson says in her introduction. They include achievers in a wide range of areas including politics, the arts and sport.



*Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* by Vashti Harrison  
Puffin 9780241346846

The lives of forty bold Black women are highlighted here and writer Vashti Harrison didn't stop there, adding more names in an appendix. A book which makes readers want to find out more. Some names will be familiar – from Sojourner Truth, Mary Seacole and Harriet Tubman through to contemporary women such as Angela Davis, Diane Abbott and Oprah Winfrey. Interesting connections emerge, for example Dr Mae Jemison, the first African American woman astronaut, was inspired to apply to NASA by seeing Nichelle Nichols' portrayal of Lieutenant Uhura in *Star Trek*. A CLPE core book  
<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/little-leaders-bold-women-black-history>  
Also by Vashti Harrison: *Little Leaders. Visionary Women Around the World* Puffin 9780241346884

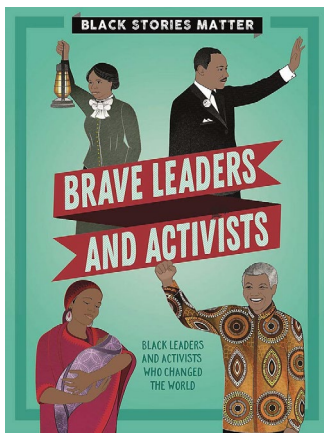
*Little Leaders. Exceptional Men in Black History* Puffin 9780241407158



*Let It Shine. Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Stephen Alcorn  
Turtleback Books 9780606266178

The stories of ten women who contributed to the struggle for American civil rights from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup>. Some are well known internationally – Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks. All deserve to be. They include Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman to seek a presidential nomination from a major political party.

Available from Willesden Bookshop



***Black Leaders and Activists*** by J. P. Miller and Chellie Carroll  
Wayland 9781526313782

These descriptions of the lives of ten significant Black activists past and present, plus eight additional mini-biographies, could lead readers to further investigation and provoke fruitful discussions. Included are Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, who founded the Black Lives Matter movement, and cultural theorist Stuart Hall, as well as familiar names such as Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. One of the Black Stories Matter series.

Other titles:

*Amazing Artists* 9781526313768

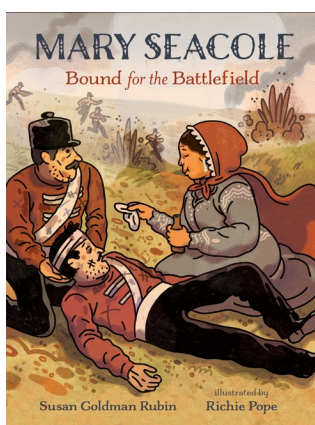
*Groundbreaking Scientists* 9781526313805

*Sporting Heroes* 9781526313393



***The Extraordinary Life of Mary Seacole*** by Naida Redgrave, illustrated by Alleanna Harris  
Puffin 9780241372777

The story of this remarkable and independent woman, inspired by her mother who ran a boarding house and was a talented healer in 19<sup>th</sup> century Jamaica. Mary travelled widely, including spending time in England and in Panama where her half-brother ran a hotel. During these times she extended her skills as a doctress and as a businesswoman. Realising that racism had led to her being turned down by the British War Office to serve as a nurse in the Crimean War, she was determined not to let this stop her and she paid her own way there, setting up a hotel for the sick when she arrived there.



***Mary Seacole: Bound for the Battlefield*** by Susan Goldman Rubin and Richie Pope  
Walker 9781406390797

Mary Seacole's early life also receives attention in this picturebook biography but here the detailed emphasis is on her work during the Crimean War. Both of these books draw on Mary Seacole's own autobiography *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*.



***Rosa Parks*** by Lisbeth Kaiser, illustrated by Marta Antelo  
Frances Lincoln 9781786030177

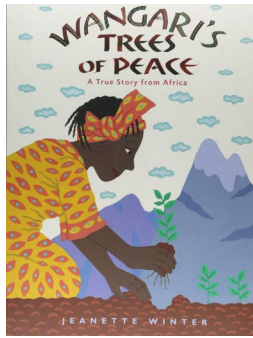
One of a series of biographies aimed at young children - Little People, Big Dreams. This book is an admirable account of the life of civil rights activist Rosa Parks, recounted simply and respectfully. The series began by featuring women who have made significant contributions to society. More recent titles also include men who lead notable and unconventional lives.

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/rosa-parks>

Also: *The Extraordinary Life of Rosa Parks* by Sheila Kanani, illustrated by Nan Lawson

Puffin 978-0241372791

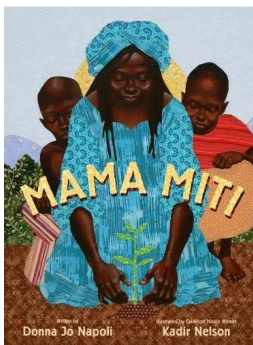
The Little People Big Dreams series includes *Maya Angelou* 9781847808905; *Harriet Tubman* 9781786032898; *Ella Fitzgerald* 9781786030863; *Josephine Baker* 9781786032911; *Muhammad Ali* 9781786037336; *Martin Luther King* 9780711245662; *Pelé* 9780711245747; *Aretha Franklin* 9780711246874; *Jean-Michel Basquiat* 9780711245792; *Jesse Owens* 9780711245822; *Wilma Rudolph* 9781786037503; *Prince* 9780711254374; *Stevie Wonder* 9780711257733



***Wangari's Trees of Peace*** by Jeanette Winter  
Harcourt, USA 9781328869210

***Mama Miti*** by Donna Jo Napoli, illustrated by Kadir Nelson  
Simon and Schuster, USA 9781416935056

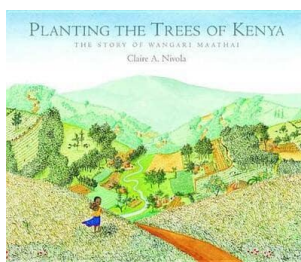
A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/mama-miti-wangari-maathai-and-trees-kenya>



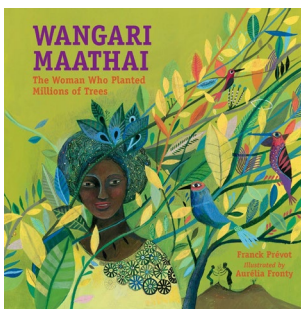
***Planting the Trees of Kenya*** by Claire A. Nivola  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, USA 9780374399184

***Wangari Maathai. The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees*** by Franck Prévot, illustrated by Aurélia Fronty, translated from French by Dominique Clément  
Charlesbridge, USA 9781580896276

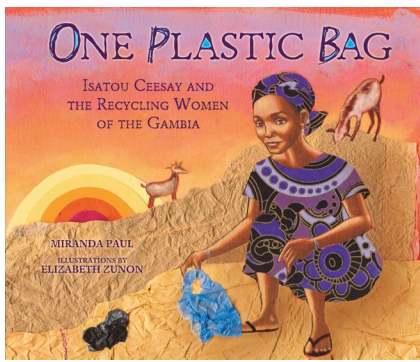
Available from the Willesden Bookshop



These four picturebooks describe the life of Wangari Maathai who was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in encouraging the planting of forests in Kenya and creating the Green Belt movement, contributing to sustainable development and democracy. The illustrator of each book uses different styles and materials to create their pictures. The way Wangari Maathai's life story is told also varies in approach and emphasis. Donna Jo Napoli brings out the healing and useful properties of different kinds of trees, incorporating their Kikuyu names.

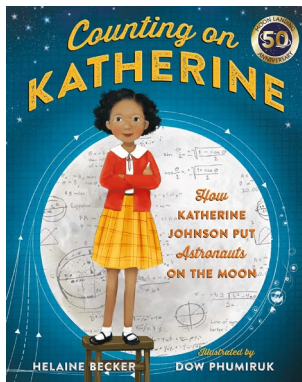


Franck Prévot gives more information about the political situation pertaining in Kenya at the time. Claire A. Nivola talks about how the planting of the seeds took place. Jeanette Winter's text is the simplest of the four but does not shy away from the difficulties Wangari encountered.



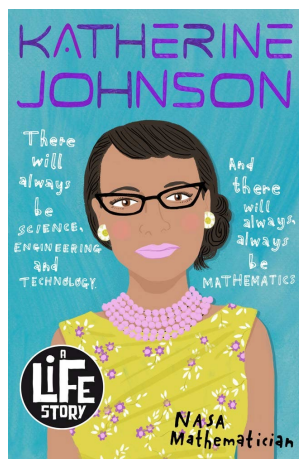
***One Plastic Bag*** by Miranda Paul, illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon  
Millbrook Press, USA 9781467716086

The true story of Isatou Ceesay who saw the problem that the proliferation of plastic bags was causing in her country, the Gambia, contaminating the environment and killing the goats that swallowed them. She collaborated with other local women to crochet thread made from the plastic bags to create purses resulting in a thriving trade and reducing pollution. The illustrator grew up in West Africa and has used colourful papers and leftover shopping bags in the creation of her pictures. A CLPE Power of Reading text  
<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/one-plastic-bag>



***Counting on Katherine*** by Helaine Becker, illustrated by Dow Phumiruk  
Macmillan 9781529005592

A picturebook biography of Katherine Johnson, an African American mathematician who is now better known thanks to the film *Hidden Figures*. Her flight path calculations allowed Apollo 11 and Apollo 12 to land on the moon and her recalculation of the flight path of Apollo 13 allowed it to return safely to Earth when things went wrong. The author interviewed Katherine Johnson and her family in order to write this accessible biography.



***Katherine Johnson. A Life Story*** by Leila Rasheed, illustrated by Sarah Papworth  
Scholastic 9781407193175

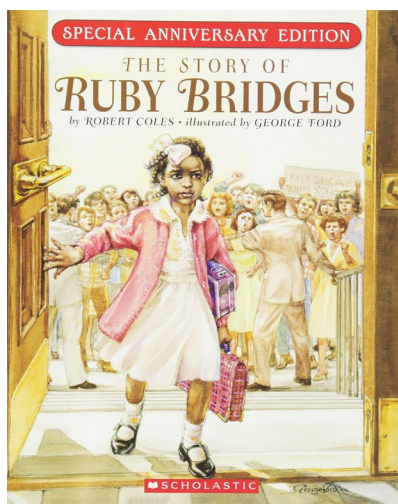
This biography of Katherine Johnson, aimed at an older age group than *Counting on Katherine* makes clear the racism and sexism she faced in her career by situating her life firmly within its historical context. The narrative is interspersed with information boxes that illuminate this and details of the 'space race' and associated technological developments. This inspiring information book includes timelines, a detailed index, a glossary and, unusually, a playlist suggesting a piece of music relating to each chapter.

Also: *The Extraordinary Life of Katherine Johnson* by Devika Jina, illustrated by Maggie Cole  
Puffin 9780241375440



***Blast Off into Space Like Mae Jemison*** by Caroline Moss and Sinem Erkas  
Frances Lincoln 9780711245143

The story of scientist Mae Jemison, the first Black woman to be accepted onto NASA's astronaut programme, is told in a conversational, interactive style that encourages readers to be ambitious and reach for the stars, just like Mae! Illustrated with striking collage pictures and with quotes from Mae Jemison throughout.

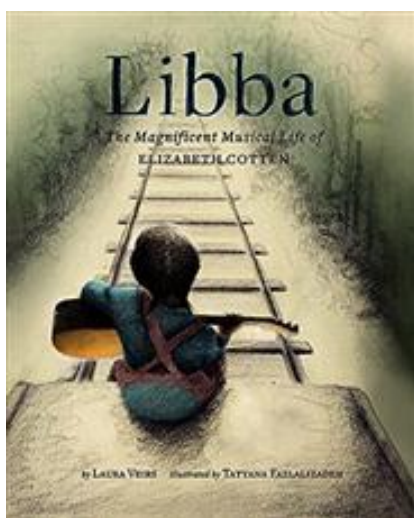


*The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles, illustrated by George Ford  
Scholastic, USA 9780439472265

The inspiring story of the six-year-old Black girl who had to endure the racism of white people in her community in order to attend elementary school in New Orleans in 1960. A law ordering school integration of black and white children had been passed but still Ruby Bridges had to contend with baying and jeering crowds as she entered her school. She bore the experience with great dignity and with forgiveness in her heart. This picturebook was written by a child psychiatrist who knew Ruby during this period. To learn the story from Ruby's point of view and find out what has happened to her in her life subsequently, see

*Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges (Scholastic USA 9780590189231).

Available from the Willesden Bookshop



*Libba* by Laura Veirs and Tatyana Fazlalizadeh  
Chronicle 9781452148571

Subtitled 'The Magnificent Musical Life of Elizabeth Cotten' this picturebook biography outlines the life of the African American folk singer who composed the well-known song 'Freight Train'. As a child, Libba taught herself to play the guitar 'upside down and backwards' as she was left-handed and the only instrument available to her was the guitar belonging to her right-handed brother, Claude. As an adult, she worked for many years and had become a grandmother by the time a chance meeting when she was working in a department store led to her becoming housekeeper to the famous folk singing family, the Seegers. Her early love of music was revived in the atmosphere of their home and, late in life, Libba became known as a composer and performer. A note by the author, herself a singer-songwriter, expands on the story in the text and there are links to websites, videos and recordings, enabling readers to explore Libba Cotten's work for themselves.

A CLPE core book with associated teaching sequence

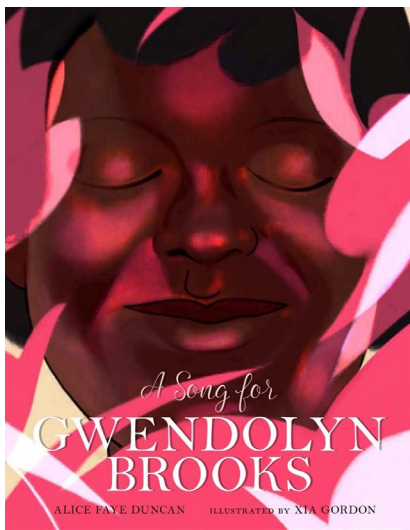
<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/libba>



*Ella Queen of Jazz* by Helen Hancock  
Frances Lincoln 9781786031259

A picturebook about the career of the great jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald. The early section of the book emphasises her talent and describes the racism she and her band faced. The scene then shifts to her friendship with actress Marilyn Monroe and her role in arranging for Ella to sing at a venue from which she had been turned away previously. While intended as a celebration of female friendship, how this focus affects the way the reader views Ella Fitzgerald's own agency in this matter would make for a useful discussion.



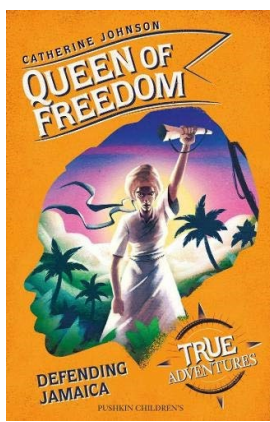


*A Song for Gwendolyn Brooks* by Alice Faye Duncan and Xia Gordon  
Sterling 9781454930884

In this picturebook biography, the author uses verse to describe the life of the 20<sup>th</sup> century African American poet, Gwendolyn Brooks, mainly focusing on her childhood. Gwendolyn Brooks was the first Black writer to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1950. In an afterword, Alice Faye Duncan says that her poems ‘are wise, witty and woeful accounts that capture Black feeling and the urban voice.’

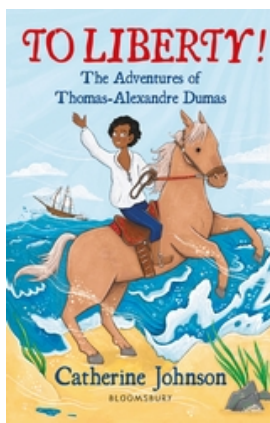
Another picturebook about this poet:

*Exquisite: The Life and Poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks* by Suzanne Slade and Cozbi Cabrera  
Abrams 9781419734113



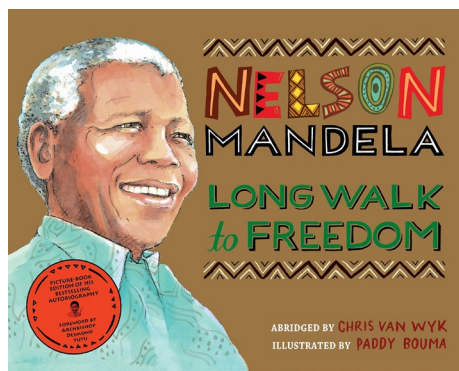
*Queen of Freedom: Defending Jamaica* by Catherine Johnson, illustrated by Amerigo Pinelli  
Pushkin Children's 9781782692799

Catherine Johnson pieces together the story of a woman who existed in Jamaica in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century from the few facts known about her to create a stirring and moving narrative. Nanny of the Maroons is thought to have been a former slave, originally from Ghana, who protected escaped slaves and fought fiercely against the British soldiers who aimed to recapture and kill them.



*To Liberty! The Adventures of Thomas-Alexandre Dumas* by Catherine Johnson, illustrated by Rachel Sanson  
Bloomsbury 9781472972552

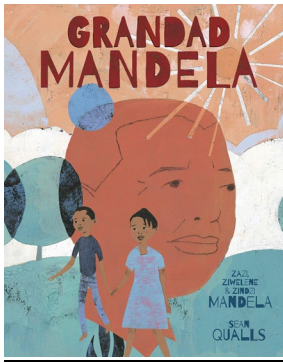
The life story of Thomas-Alexandre Dumas (father of the famous author of *The Three Musketeers*) is told from his viewpoint. It begins with his early life in Haiti in the 1770s and his voyage to France, having been sold by his own father with whom he is reunited on his arrival. Trained in fencing and horsemanship, he later gave up any claim to his inherited title and wealth and fought for freedom during the French Revolution and beyond.



*Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela, abridged by Chris Van Wyk, illustrated by Paddy Bouma  
Macmillan 9781447275541

An admirable distillation of Nelson Mandela's autobiography into a picturebook format by a South African writer and illustrator. Mandela describes his childhood, university education, involvement with politics and fight for freedom from apartheid, his long years in prison, and his eventual release and election as President of his country and emergence as one of the most significant figures in recent world history.

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/long-walk-freedom>



***Grandad Mandela*** by Zazi, Ziwelene and Zindzi Mandela, illustrated by Sean Qualls  
Lincoln Children's Books 9781786035943

This picturebook takes the form of a dialogue between Nelson Mandela's daughter Zindzi and her grandchildren Zazi and Ziwelene during which she answers their questions about his life and the struggle against apartheid. The illustrations are by an African American artist whose work explores history, race and identity.



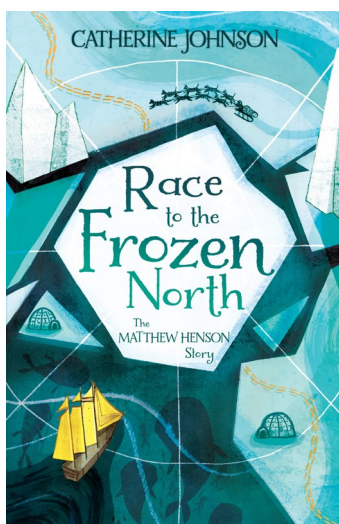
***Coming to England*** by Floella Benjamin, illustrated by Michael Frith  
Macmillan 9781509835492

The writer's autobiographical account of her childhood in Trinidad and her family's migration to Britain in 1960. The warmth and strength she gained from her family are strongly evoked, as are her feelings of bewilderment at the ignorance and racism they encountered. This edition that marked the twentieth anniversary of its first publication includes a reflective introduction by the author.

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/coming-england-0>



A picturebook adapted from Floella Benjamin's autobiography also entitled *Coming to England*, illustrated by Diane Ewen is published in October 2020. Macmillan 9781529009415



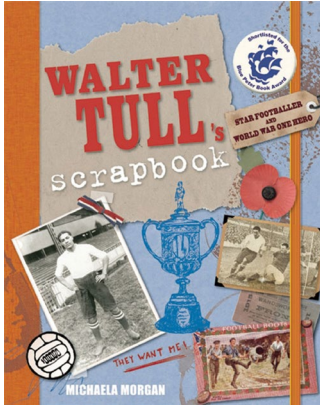
***Race to the Frozen North. The Matthew Henson Story*** by Catherine Johnson, illustrated by Katie Hickey  
Barrington Stoke 9781781128404

Catherine Johnson gives voice to the first man to reach the North Pole who has received little recognition for his achievement. As she says in the introduction: 'Why was he forgotten and ignored for so many years? The reason was the colour of his skin ...'.

After an abusive childhood Matthew Henson joined a ship as a cabin boy, the first of many journeys for him to many places. In 1890, he joined a ship travelling to the Arctic where he made friends with local Inuit and learned from them. This was the first of several expeditions, the final one being in 1909 when he and his Inuit companions became the first men to reach the North Pole, just ahead of his Commander.

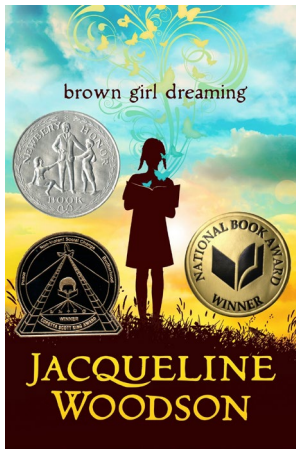
Matthew Henson narrates his own story here and, while the racism he and Black people in the USA in general faced during his lifetime is made apparent, what comes over clearly are the strong bonds he made with a variety of people who valued his qualities and his friendship.

A CLPE Book of the Week <https://clpe.org.uk/race-frozen-north-matthew-henson-story-catherine-johnson>



*Walter Tull's Scrapbook* by Michaela Morgan  
Frances Lincoln 9781847804914

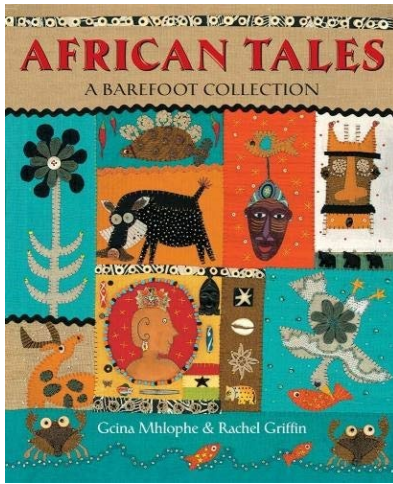
The story of Black footballer and World War One soldier Walter Tull, presented as though it were an autobiography written by Walter himself. It has an appealing and accessible layout that makes use of contemporary photos and documents. A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/walter-tulls-scrapbook>



*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson  
Nancy Paulsen Books USA 9780399252518

This book, which has won multiple awards in the USA, is the life story of the author in the style of a verse novel beginning with her birth in 1963. During the course of this beautifully written book readers get to know her extended family within the wider context of African American history. Jacqueline Woodson's evolution as a writer is a strong thread throughout. She has won the two most prestigious international awards for children's literature: the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2018 and the Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 2020. A Power of Reading teaching sequence is available for Jacqueline Woodson's verse novel *Locomotion*.

## Traditional Tales



*African Tales* by Gcina Mhlophe, illustrated by Rachel Griffin  
Barefoot Books 9781782853596

These traditional stories from the length and breadth of Africa are retold by a renowned South African storyteller. Each of the eight stories is prefaced by an introduction to the country from which it comes revealing many fascinating cultural and historical details and there is also a contextualising map of the continent. Each is set against a cloth background displaying beautifully crafted illustrations created mainly from fabrics and beads.

A CLPE Power of Reading text <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/african-tales>



*Tales from the Caribbean* by Trish Cooke, illustrated by Joe Lillington  
Puffin Classics 9780141373089

A terrific collection of tales from all over the Caribbean, retold by an author whose parents came to Britain from Dominica in the 1950s. The stories have a mixture of West African and Amerindian roots. Many are humorous including several about tricksters Anansi and Compère Lapin/Brer Rabbit. Notes at the end of the book contextualise the stories, giving information about the history and cultures of the Caribbean. The style of storytelling makes this collection ideal for reading aloud and ripe for retelling orally.

Also in this Puffin Classics series: *Tales from Africa* by K.P.Kojo 9780141373072

A CLPE Power of Reading text <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/tales-caribbean>

## Fiction Key Stage 2 upwards



*A Thief in the Village* by James Berry  
Puffin 9780141368641

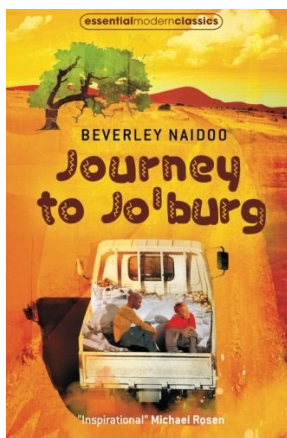
These short stories are vignettes of Jamaican village life, full of the rhythms of Caribbean speech. The stories treat of relationships between weak and strong, between generations and among young people. The themes are universal and there is a strong sense of culture and place. The reader also has an awareness of the stories continuing after the last words that appear on the page. Did the boys eventually capture the mongoose from Elias? Did Fanso go in search of his father and brothers and sisters? A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/thief-village>

One of the first Black writers to receive wider recognition in Britain, sadly James Berry died in 2017. Some of his poems for children are included in the collection of his selected poems *A Story I Am In Bloodaxe* 9781852249175. You can see James reading from his work here: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/berry-james>



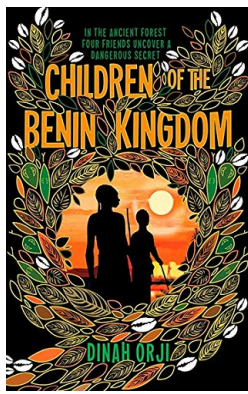
*When Life Gives You Mangoes* by Kereen Getten  
Pushkin Children's 9781782692645

This author's debut novel is informed by her own childhood experiences living in a fishing village in Jamaica. The setting and relationships within the community are strongly evoked. The story has a timeless feel in many respects although a fleeting reference to the Bob Marley museum puts the date at post 1985. A book about coming to terms with pain from the past and the recovery of memories.



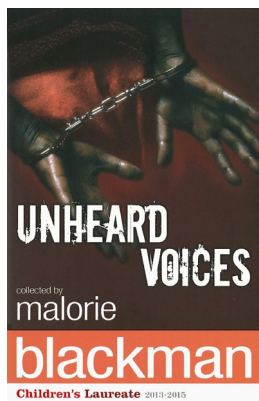
*Journey to Jo'burg* by Beverley Naidoo, illustrations by Lisa Kopper  
HarperCollins 9780007263509

This short novel about two children travelling alone to Johannesburg in apartheid South Africa to find their mother was banned in that country when it was first published in 1985. Now regarded as a modern classic, this edition has an introduction by Michael Rosen in which he explains its continuing relevance.



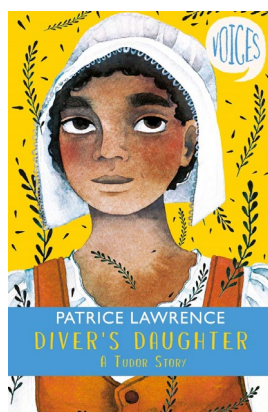
*Children of the Benin Kingdom* by Dinah Orji  
Dinosaur Books 9781999336332

A fast moving story set in the 12<sup>th</sup> century among the Edo people in the West African kingdom of what would later be known as Benin. Ada has been brought up by herbal healer Papa Eze. The day comes when he must tell her the truth about her ancestors and her quest for her true identity begins. This is interwoven with historical and cultural information but, in order that this does not affect the flow of the story, a Fact vs. Fiction Appendix includes gives plenty of details that expand on the historical context



*Unheard Voices* collected by Malorie Blackman  
Corgi 9780552556002

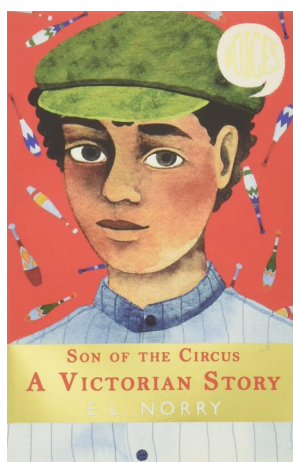
This collection was published in 2007 to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade act in Britain. It contains stories and poems by modern authors including Sandra Agard, Catherine Johnson, Grace Nichols, John Agard, Benjamin Zephaniah and Malorie Blackman and extracts of writings from and about people who were themselves slaves including Frederick Douglass, Mary Prince, Olaudah Equiano and Harriet Jacobs.



*Diver's Daughter: A Tudor Story (Voices)* by Patrice Lawrence  
Scholastic 9781407191409

Eve lives in Elizabethan Southwark with her mother who was taken from her family in Mozambique and brought to England. The sights, sounds and smells of Tudor times are woven into this exciting and sensitive story of the lives of two courageous Black women and the dangers they have to overcome when an unscrupulous man discovers Eve's mother's diving skills and inveigles her into going to Southampton to seek treasure from a shipwreck.

In an afterword, Patrice Lawrence explains her inspiration for the story, a combination of her own realisation as a child that there were Black people in England in Tudor times, although this was not evident from the history she was taught at school, memories of hearing about the raising of Henry VIII's ship the *Mary Rose*, and the true story of the black diver Jacques Francis who appears as a character in the book. A CLPE Book of the Week <https://clpe.org.uk/divers-daughter-tudor-story-patrice-lawrence>



*Son of the Circus. A Victorian Story (Voices)* by E.L. Norry  
Scholastic 9781407191416

When William Darby arrives at his Yorkshire home in March 1867, Ted discovers that this man is the first Black circus owner in Britain, known as Pablo Fanque in the business and, what's more, that he is his father! Pablo is anxious that Ted joins him in the circus and introduces him to a whole new way of life to which he initially finds it hard to adapt. A novel imagined around the real life figure of Pablo Fanque whose circus was very popular across the mid Victorian era.



*Freedom* by Catherine Johnson  
Scholastic 9781407185484

Nat is a slave boy in Jamaica in 1783. His mother and sister have been sold, and their loss is unbearable, even more so when he is taken to London. He remembers his mother telling him that no one in England is a slave, which brings solace on the journey. He determines that once he is free he will return and rescue his family. But in London he is still a slave, and his new life is full of cruelty and racism. Escape seems impossible, yet eventually he manages. He meets people campaigning to end slavery and hears about the slave ship *Zong* from which over a hundred slaves were thrown to their deaths for insurance purposes. He attends the trial of the ship's owners and joins in the celebrations of the verdict. The mood in Britain about slavery is changing. And Nat is free. This moving, important and ultimately hopeful book is based on fact, as an afterword makes clear. Winner of the 2019 Little Rebels Award <https://littlerebels.org/>

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/freedom>



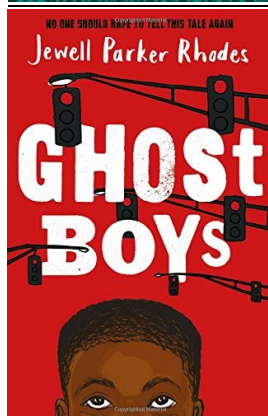
*Oh, Freedom!* by Francesco d'Adamo, translated from Italian by Siân Williams  
Darf Publishing 9781850772859

Tommy and his family are slaves on a cotton plantation in Alabama in 1850. One day a stranger arrives, a free Black man known as Peg Leg Joe and he offers to guide them on a flight to freedom in Canada. And so their journey begins...



*Some Places More Than Others* by Renée Watson  
Bloomsbury 9781526613684

When Amara and her father take a trip from Oregon to visit his family in New York, she discovers some deep truths about her own family's roots and relationships. Why have her father and grandfather not spoken to each other since she was born? At the same time as connecting with her relatives, Amara adds to her knowledge about African American history and significant individuals from the past. A moving story about a modern Black family, with an engaging central character at its heart, that also raises questions about parents' expectations of their children, significantly with regard to gender roles.



*Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes  
Orion 9781510104396

The story is narrated by Jerome who has died after being shot by a police officer who thought he was holding a gun. The opening shocks as Jerome sees his own body lying on the snowy ground. The novel alternates between sections where Jerome is a ghost, mingling with other Black boys who have died violently including Emmett Till, giving the book a sense of history, and sections where he is still alive and describing the events leading up to the shooting. The use of the present tense and short sentences make this a fast-paced and gripping, as well as thought-provoking, read.

A CLPE core book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/ghost-boys>

## Fiction Key Stage 3 upwards

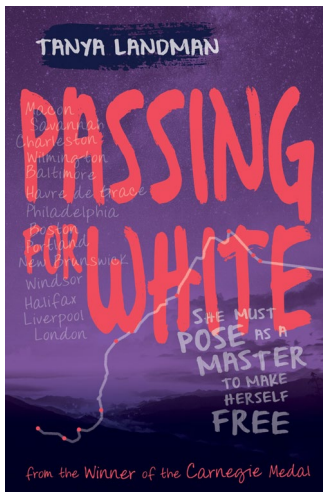


*Sawbones* by Catherine Johnson  
Walker 9781406340570

Set in London in 1792, the hero of this fast-moving novel is Ezra, who was a slave as a child and freed by William McAdam, a surgeon who trains him in his trade in which he becomes very skilled. Their work involves trying to save lives by the amputation of diseased and injured limbs but also dissecting cadavers in order to determine the cause of death. The latter leads to adventure and danger, which is exacerbated when Ezra makes the acquaintance of the redoubtable Loveday Finch. The end of the novel clearly leaves the way open for the sequel *Blade and Bone* (Walker 9781406341874) in which Ezra travels to Paris to seek his friends who have become embroiled in the French Revolution.

Also by Catherine Johnson: *The Curious Tale of the Lady Caraboo* Corgi 9780552557634

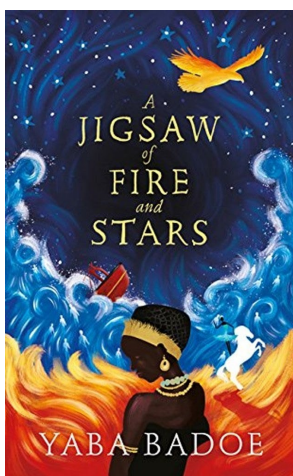
*Passing for White* by Tanya Landman  
Barrington Stoke 9781781126813



This short teenage novel is inspired by the true story of William and Ellen Craft, slaves in Georgia, USA in 1848 who escaped to the north, only to find their freedom under threat once again. In this fictionalised account, the couple are called Benjamin and Rosa and the story is told from Rosa's perspective, stirring the reader's empathy. As she explains in an afterword, Tanya Landman occasionally uses words which modern readers would consider racist in order to evoke the period accurately.

Also by this author:

*Buffalo Soldier* Walker 9781406314595 Winner of the CILIP Carnegie Medal  
*Hell and High Water* Walker 9781406366914



*A Jigsaw of Fire and Stars* by Yaba Badoe, illustrated by Leo Nickolls  
Zephyr 9781786695499

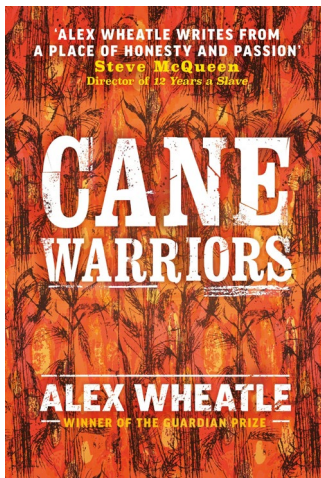
Sante, the narrator of this novel, is brought up by Mama Rose and her circus troupe, having been washed up on the shores of Spain as a baby. When she is fourteen she learns of her Ghanaian heritage and that she is named after Asantewaa, an Ashanti warrior queen. The unquiet dead are calling to her in her dreams and she has a destiny to fulfil which is realised when she and her friends become entangled with people-smugglers and sex-traffickers. The first novel for young people by a Ghanaian-British documentary film-maker.





*The Deep Blue Between* by Ayesha Harruna Attah  
Pushkin Children's 9781782692669

Ten-year-old twins Hassana and Husseina are separated when there is a raid on the Ghanaian village of Botu in the 1890s. Their life journeys over the next few years are told in alternate chapters – Hassana's in the first person, Husseina's in the third. Strands of history, geography, religion, language and culture are interwoven seamlessly into the personal stories of these engaging sisters whose older sister Aminah is the focal character of this author's earlier adult novel *The Hundred Wells of Salaga*.



*Cane Warriors* by Alex Wheatle  
Andersen Press 9781783449873

This gripping and hard-hitting novel is based on the true story of the slaves' rebellion led by a man known as Tacky against their white masters in Jamaica in 1760. Events are seen through the eyes of fourteen-year-old Moa who stands by the side of his friend Keverton and their fellow slaves in the violent actions they must take in their fight for freedom.