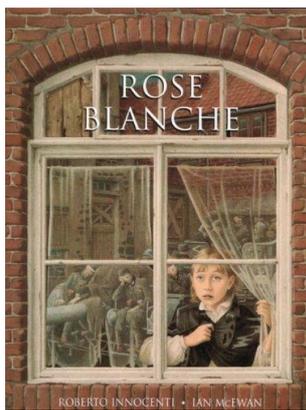


## World War II

This booklist focuses on fiction for children set during World War II and includes classics as well as many new books. Also included are picturebooks, graphic novels, poetry and a play and selected non-fiction.

### Picturebooks

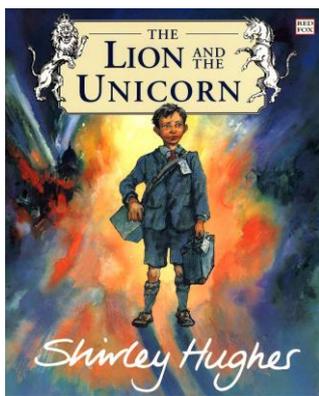


#### ***Rose Blanche* by Roberto Innocenti**

Red Fox 9780099439509

An exceptionally moving picture book in which the reader views the sorrow of war through a young girl's eyes. Rose Blanche discovers a concentration camp full of children in the forest near her home town and silently takes food to them for the remainder of the war. Heartbreakingly, there is no happy ending for Rose Blanche. Roberto Innocenti's illustrations create a powerful and eloquent text. A CLPE Core Book

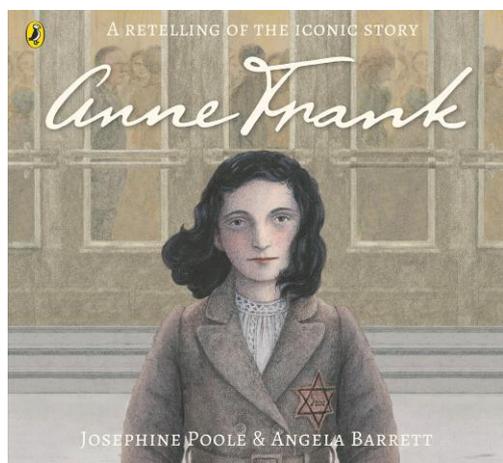
<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/rose-blanche>



#### ***The Lion and the Unicorn* by Shirley Hughes**

Red Fox 9780099256083

Readers will gain insight into the life of an evacuee in World War II through this picturebook about Lenny, a young Jewish boy sent to the countryside, where he learns that there are 'different kinds of courage' symbolised by the lion and the unicorn on the badge given to him for safekeeping by his soldier father. The expressive colour illustrations are flanked by columns of text and small delicate black and white illustrations which highlight moments from the story complementary to those in the main picture. A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/lion-and-unicorn>

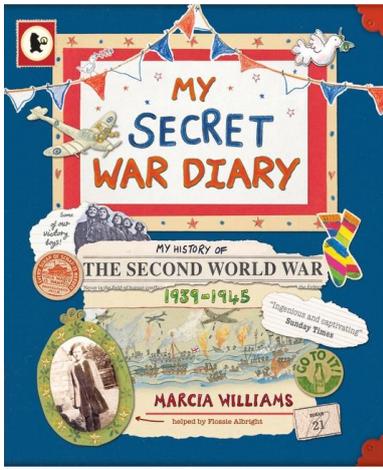


#### ***Anne Frank* by Josephine Poole and Angela Barrett**

Red Fox 9780099409762

This picturebook biography of Anne Frank gives context to the existence of her world famous diary and the tragedy of her short life. It describes her early life in a loving family in Germany, their move to Amsterdam and their incarceration in cramped quarters in an annexe until the time they are taken away to a concentration camp. The final spread shows Miep Gies handing Anne's diary, which she had preserved, to her father Otto Frank, the only family member to survive. An appendix comprises a chronology from 1918 to 1980 and information about how Anne's diary came to international attention. Angela Barrett's illustrations incorporate many interesting details and their sepia tone suggests a fittingly solemn tone.

For readers mature enough to read Anne's diary the definitive edition is *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Penguin 9780141315188) and there is also an abridged edition (Puffin) 9780141345352).

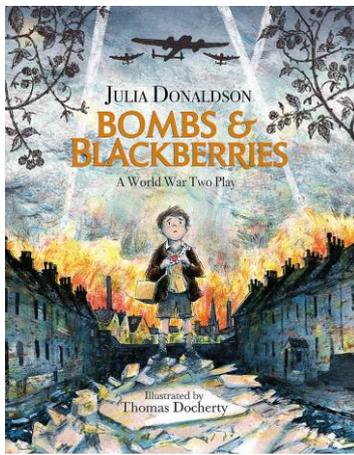


***My Secret War Diary* by Marcia Williams**

Walker 9781406331998

In *Archie's War*, Marcia Williams used the format of a scrapbook to tell the story of one boy's experience in World War 1. Here she uses some of the same techniques - flaps to open and the integration of contemporary photographs and numerous thumbnail drawings - to create this World War 2 diary of Archie's daughter Flossie. Flossie's good sense and humour come over strongly, as she copes with her father's wartime absence, caring for her baby brother (her mother has recently died) and the arrival of evacuees, including a German Jewish boy. Correspondence from family and friends gives insights into what is happening away from Flossie's countryside home near to the English south coast. A book which could inspire children's own writing in a variety of formats. A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/my-secret-war-diary-flossie-albright>

Play

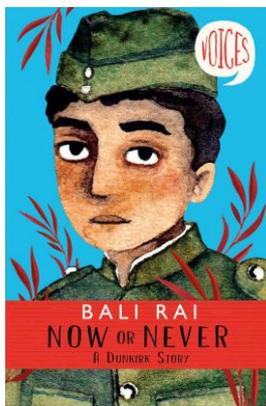


***Bombs & Blackberries. A World War Two Play* by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Thomas Docherty**

Hodder 97814444938807

This play in six scenes follows a group of children evacuated from Manchester to the countryside at the beginning of the war. There are 29 speaking parts and the settings cover a variety of locations. Contemporary songs are interspersed within the play and there are simple ideas for staging and costumes. This edition of the play has been produced in a picturebook format with illustrations that help readers and performers to visualise the time and places.

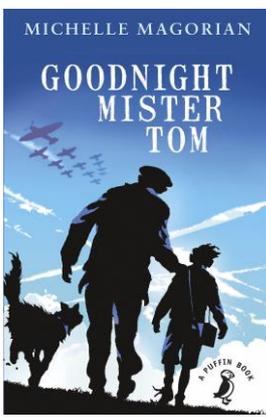
Fiction



***Now or Never. A Dunkirk Story* by Bali Rai**

Scholastic 9781407191362

In 1939 Fazal Khan decides to leave his home in Rawalpindi to join the Royal Indian Army Service, following in the footsteps of his grandfather who served in World War 1. During his time in Europe, where he eventually takes part in the evacuation from Dunkirk, he encounters both racism and comradeship from fellow soldiers and others that he meets. Based on real life experiences, this book is one of the Voices series bringing to light hidden histories for young readers. A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/now-or-never-dunkirk-story>

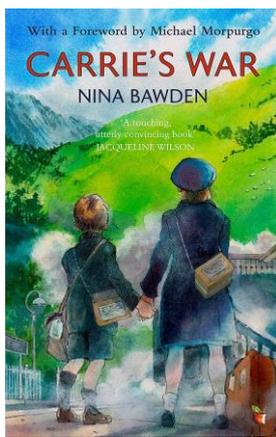


***Goodnight Mister Tom* by Michelle Magorian**

Puffin 9780141354804

A substantial and involving novel about the experiences of a Second World War evacuee and his growing relationship with the old man with whom he is billeted. The carefully described details of their everyday life as they get to know each other better allows the two characters and a rich cast of lesser characters to develop against an authentic background. Adapted for television and available on DVD. A CLPE core book

<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/goodnight-mister-tom>

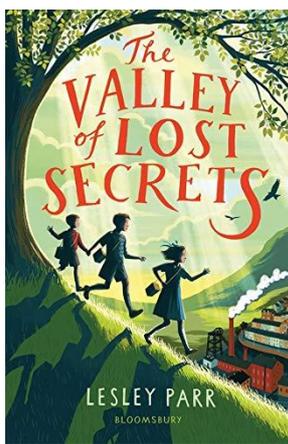


***Carrie's War* by Nina Bawden**

Virago Modern Classics 9780349009162

Nina Bawden drew on her own experience during World War II when writing this story about Carrie and her younger brother who are evacuated to a small community in Wales. How Carrie and Nick adapt to their unfamiliar surroundings and, particularly, how Carrie's meeting with a cast of interesting characters allows her to blossom and grow, is movingly described. Another novel by this author about evacuation during World War II:

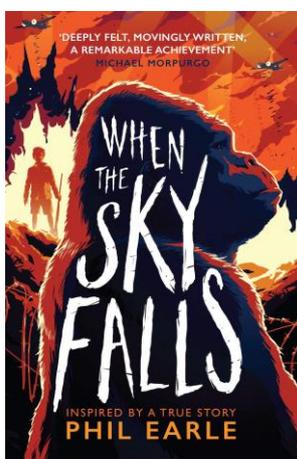
*Keeping Henry* Virago Modern Classics 9780349009193



***The Valley of Lost Secrets* by Lesley Parr illustrated by David Dean**  
Bloomsbury 9781526620521

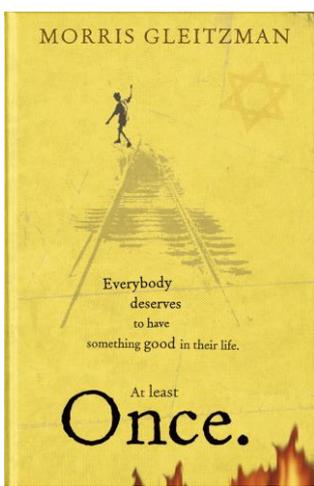
Jimmy and his little brother Ronnie are evacuated to Llanbryn in Wales at the beginning of the war along with other children from their school in Islington, London. Initially, Jimmy is loathe to fit in and sees his new environment as ‘just great green lumps with bits of black from the mine’. The story of how his feelings change as he discovers more about those he thought he knew, as well as those he meets in this new community, unfolds affectingly as he plays his part in the unravelling of a local mystery from many years ago. Lesley Parr explores the background to her novel here:

<https://www.waterstones.com/blog/the-houses-that-look-like-ours-an-essay-by-lesley-parr>



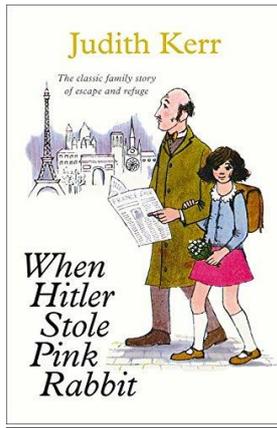
***When the Sky Falls* by Phil Earle**  
Andersen Press 9781783449651 (June 2021)

In a reverse of the situation where a child is evacuated to the countryside, this novel opens with a boy arriving in a city by train during World War II. Joseph Palmer has been sent there by his grandmother, his father having gone to war and his mother being long gone. He is met by the taciturn Mrs F who runs a zoo in which the most significant animal is a silverback gorilla named Adonis. Joseph feels angry and abandoned and this moving story is about facing up to feelings and the loss of loved ones as the stories of Joseph, his new friend Syd, Mrs F and Adonis unfold in the context of inner and outer worlds at war.



***Once* by Morris Gleitzman**  
Puffin 9780141320632

Living in an orphanage in Poland in 1942, Felix tries to make sense of what’s going on around him. He believes his Jewish bookseller parents are still alive and, seeing book burning by Nazis taking place, he leaves the orphanage to find them and warn them. His imagination and the stories he invents sustain him and others throughout his journey in this short novel inspired by the true story of Janusz Korczak, a Jewish doctor who took care of orphaned children. The story of Felix and his friend Zelda continues in several subsequent books. The background to these can be found on the author’s website [www.morrisgleitzman.com](http://www.morrisgleitzman.com) The sequels in chronological order of Felix’s life are: *Then* 9780141324821, *After* 9780141343136, *Soon* 9780141362793, *Maybe* 9780141388656 and *Now* 9780141329987. The final book in the series *Always* 9780241380482 is due for publication in August 2021.



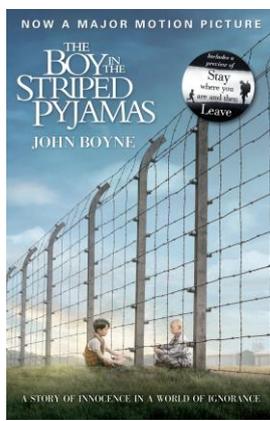
**When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by Judith Kerr**

HarperCollins 9780007274772

The story of how Anna and her Jewish family left Berlin on the eve of Hitler's election is based on the real life events Judith Kerr experienced. After spending some time living in a guesthouse in Switzerland, the family move to a small flat in Paris where Anna's writer father is initially able to get more work. The book details the adjustments they all must make, focusing on the perspective of a young girl with a positive outlook on life and a loving family. It ends with their arrival in England to begin another new stage in their lives and Anna's story when she is older continues in:

*Bombs on Aunt Dainty* HarperCollins 9780007137619

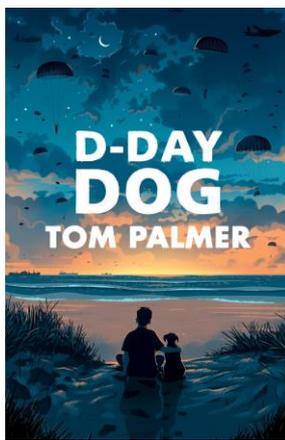
*A Small Person Far Away* HarperCollins 9780007137626



**The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne**

Definitions 9781862305274

Nine year-old Bruno knows nothing of the Final Solution or the Holocaust. All he knows is that he has been moved from a comfortable home in Berlin to a house in a desolate area where there is nothing to do and no one to play with. Until he meets Shmuel, a boy who lives a strange parallel existence on the other side of the adjoining wire fence and who, like the other people there, wears a uniform of striped pyjamas. Bruno's friendship with Shmuel will take him from innocence to revelation.



**D-Day Dog by Tom Palmer**

Barrington Stoke 9781781128688

Jack finds his views about war challenged through a combination of his dad, who is a reserve soldier, being called up to serve in Afghanistan, a school trip to Normandy to visit the sites and cemeteries of the D-Day landings and a friendship with Kasandra, a Syrian refugee. He finds himself questioning how animals are made to participate in war through discovering the true story of Emile Corteil and his dog Glen. Resources related to this book, including the author reading it aloud to his dog Finn, namesake of Jack's dog in the story can be found at

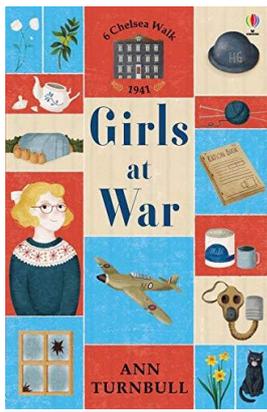
<https://tompalmer.co.uk/dday-dog/>



***Girl with a White Dog* by Anne Booth**

Catnip 9781846471810

Jessie is learning about Nazi Germany at school and unexpectedly discovers links to her own family's history. A novel that raises questions about bullying and prejudice in modern times, demonstrating the possibility of parallels with the past.



***Girls at War* by Ann Turnbull**

Usborne 9781474954969

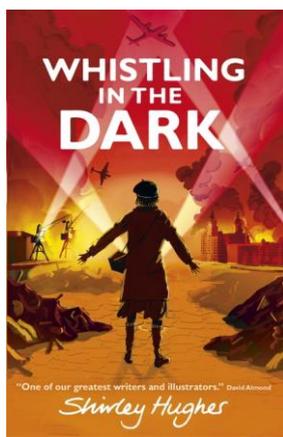
One of a series each of which features a girl from a different historical period living in the same house at 6 Chelsea Walk. It's 1941 and Josie goes to stay with her aunt and cousin Edith in Chelsea while her mother nurses her grandmother. While attending Edith's school she is fearful that people will find out that her brother is a conscientious objector which has led to her being bullied at her local school. When she discovers a secret about a girl at her new school who is shunned by others, Josie has to face a moral dilemma. Lots of period detail is incorporated into this short novel.



***Hero on a Bicycle* by Shirley Hughes**

Walker 9781406366174

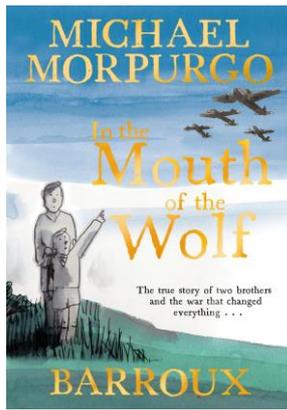
Paolo and his sister Constanza live with their mother Rosemary just outside Florence, Italy. The year is 1944 and their area is occupied by the Nazi German forces. Their father has been absent for some time, working for freedom with the Partisans. What can a boy and his bicycle do in the struggle for this cause? The story shows how each member of the family plays their part.



***Whistling in the Dark* by Shirley Hughes**

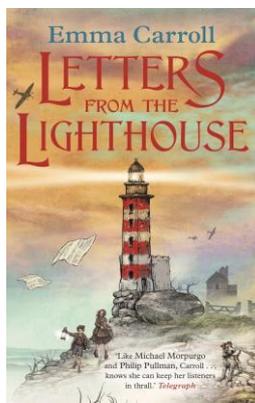
Walker 9781406365696

Set in Liverpool in 1940, this story depicts everyday life during wartime for Joan and her family. In addition to fears of air raids, tensions arise from their mother's new relationship with Captain Harper Jones who has unexpected access to rationed food and from worries about the whereabouts of Dai, a wireless operator in the Merchant Navy, boyfriend of Joan's sister Audrey. And who is the man lurking in the back garden? There are plenty of cultural insights too – such as what they listen to on the radio, what films Joan and her friend Doreen see at the cinema.



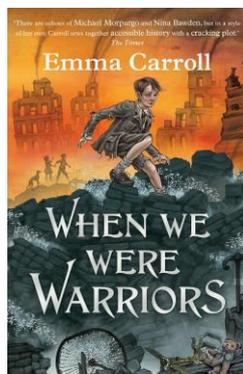
***In the Mouth of the Wolf* by Michael Morpurgo and Barroux**  
Egmont 9781405293402

A ninety-year-old man looks back on his life during World War II on the occasion of his birthday where he is feted by the people in the French village where he is spending his final years. However, Francis Cammaerts spent his early formative years in England, was a pacifist at the beginning of the war but was moved to join up when his brother died in action. He was Michael Morpurgo's uncle and here the author writes as Francis addressing in his mind the significant people in his life during the war – his brother, his wife and his comrades in the resistance. Barroux's black and white illustrations enhance the text, helping children to empathise with a story which is focused on adult memories.



***Letters from the Lighthouse* by Emma Carroll**  
Faber & Faber 9780571327584

Following an air raid, Olive and Cliff's mother decides it's time to evacuate them from London and the children end up by the coast living in a lighthouse. However, what has happened to their older sister Sukie who went missing during the bombing and does this have any connection with people in the community in Devon where they find themselves? An engrossing story with unexpected twists and turns.



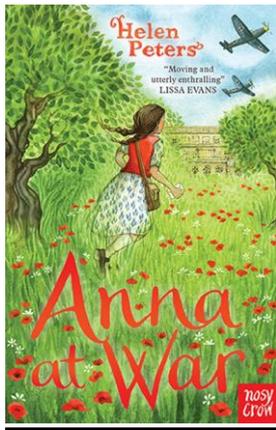
***When We Were Warriors* by Emma Carroll**  
Faber & Faber 9780571350407

Readers can meet Olive and her friends and family again in one of the three stories in this book, all of which are set during World War II. There are some interesting interconnections between the stories themselves and with other books by this author, and there is a linking character who appears in all three stories.



***The Silver Sword* by Ian Serraillier**  
Vintage Children's Classics 9780099572855

Four children make their way across war torn Europe from their home in Warsaw, Poland to Switzerland, where they seek to be reunited with their parents. Their courage and resilience in each new situation that arises make this a gripping story.



**Anna at War by Helen Peters**

Nosy Crow 9781788004718

Daniel is studying World War II in Year 6 and his teacher asks if anyone knows someone who lived through the war. This provides the framework for his grandmother to tell him about her childhood, beginning with her travelling on the Kindertransport that brought Jewish children from Germany to England. Many aspects of Anna's story are inspired by the experiences of real children and her fictional story is dramatic, emotional and well crafted.

**The Midnight Guardians by Ross Montgomery**

Walker 9781406391183



It's 1940 and Col has been evacuated to the Peak District to stay with his Aunt Claire. He is looking forward to seeing his sister Rose who is a volunteer despatch rider with the emergency services back in London. It would be their first Christmas since the death of their father. Then Rose writes to say she can't come as planned and Col embarks on a journey to be with her. However, he is not alone – the childhood friends he had thought were created in his own imagination – a large shape-shifting tiger, a waistcoat-wearing badger and a fearless four-foot-high knight - appear to join him in his quest along with Ruth, a refugee from the war in Europe. A parallel Spirit World comes into play and threatens to encroach on the one Col inhabits. The author writes about his favourite books set in World War II here:

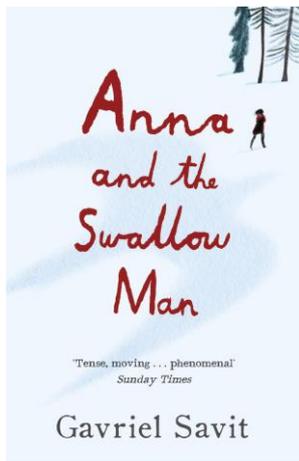
<https://www.waterstones.com/blog/ross-montgomery-on-his-favourite-books-set-during-wartime>



**Mohinder's War by Bali Rai**

Bloomsbury 9781472958372

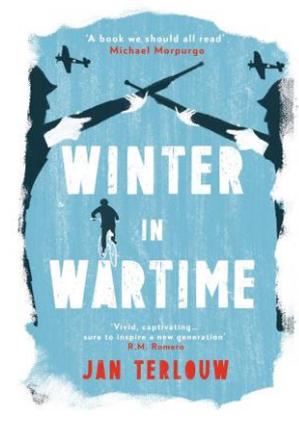
At the funeral of his great-grandfather, Mohinder Singh, Simpreet meets a woman his family has never seen before who tells him about Mohinder's time as an RAF pilot during World War II and what happened after his plane crashed in occupied France. Joelle Breton was thirteen at the time and her parents were in the French Resistance.



***Anna and the Swallow Man* by Gavriel Savit**

Penguin 9780141376646

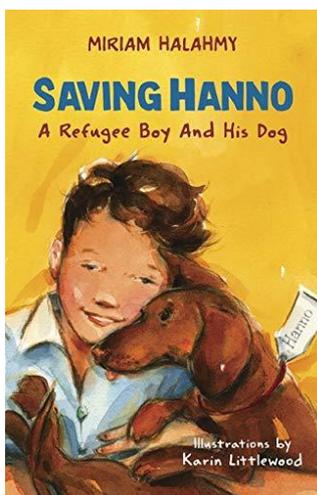
Anna is seven years old in 1939 and lives in Krakow where her father is a professor of linguistics. Shortly after her father disappears, Anna meets the mysterious Swallow Man who, like her, speaks many languages, and in the following years they become itinerants, endlessly crossing and re-crossing borders. This is a third person narrative which has a distancing effect and this novel requires us to read between the lines at times almost as though we were Anna trying to make sense of what is happening. It is a story that demonstrates how war and conflict can bring together unlikely companions.



***Winter in Wartime* by Jan Terlouw, translated from Dutch by Laura Watkinson**

Pushkin Children's 9781782691839

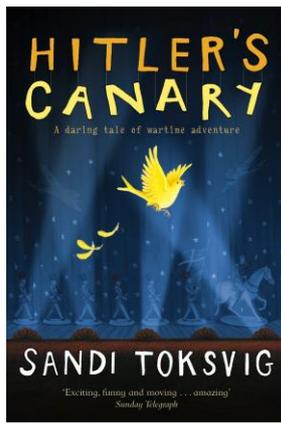
Sixteen-year-old Michiel lives in a small community in Nazi occupied Holland where his father is the local mayor. When a friend entrusts a letter to him, Michiel finds himself looking after an injured British pilot who is hidden in the woods and he is soon drawn in to taking part in the resistance. Based on the author's own childhood memories.



***Saving Hanno* by Miriam Halahmy, illustrated by Karin Littlewood**

Otter-Barry Books 9781913074685

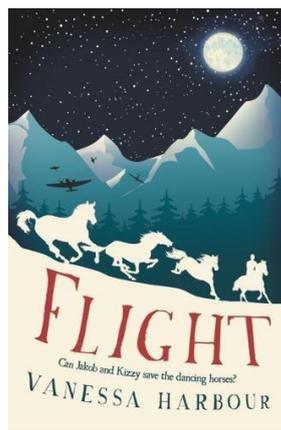
The story in this short novel is seen from the viewpoint of Rudi, a Jewish child sent to England from Frankfurt in Germany via the Kindertransport just before war breaks out, as life becomes more dangerous and difficult under the Nazi regime. Hanno is his faithful dachshund with whom he is reunited a few months after arriving in England, only to discover that many people are having pets destroyed as they fear they will not have sufficient rations to feed them during wartime. Will Rudi and his new friends find a way to avoid this happening to Hanno?



***Hitler's Canary* by Sandi Toksvig, illustrated by Sandy Nightingale**

Yearling 9780440866626

The rescue of Danish Jews in 1943 is seen through the eyes of a boy whose theatrical family live in Copenhagen. The story includes some humorous episodes, some of which are illustrated in the evocative black and white drawings. However, these do not undermine the essential gravity of a novel that highlights events during World War II that are rarely explored in children's books.



***Flight* by Vanessa Harbour**

Firefly 9781910080764

Jakob and his guardian Herr Engel are hiding the magnificent Lipizzaner stallions from Vienna's Spanish Riding School in a rural stable. When an SS officer comes looking for Jakob, who is Jewish, this leads to an incident in which one of the horses is killed. Realising that Jakob and the remaining horses are in severe danger, they journey with Herr Engel and an orphaned Roma girl, Kizzy, over the Austrian mountains to take them back to Vienna.



***The Swallows' Flight* by Hilary McKay**

Macmillan 9781529033335 (May 2021)

A companion volume rather than a sequel to *The Skylarks' War* (which was set during World War I) that follows the families in the earlier novel through to the next generation. Three sets of characters (and a dog!) are introduced and, as the story progresses, their lives intertwine. The action moves between Berlin, Plymouth and Oxford with period detail wonderfully woven into a story that demonstrates the care and understanding that human beings can bestow on each other at times of crisis.



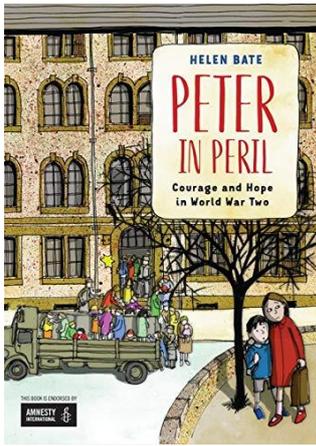
***Red Stars* by Davide Morosinotto, translated from Italian by Denise Muir**

Pushkin Children's 9781782692577

Twelve-year-old twins Nadya and Viktor who live in Leningrad where their parents work at the Hermitage Museum. When the Nazis invade Russia, the children are sent away to the countryside for safety. However, they become separated and their courage is stretched to the limit in their struggle to become reunited. This fast-paced story is presented within the framework of an official of People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs reading the diaries kept by each of the twins, distinguished by Viktor's being written in red. He writes comments in the margins as he tries to determine

whether they should be punished for ‘crimes’ he considers they have committed by their actions. This format, in which maps and pictures have also been inserted, contributes to making this an involving read.

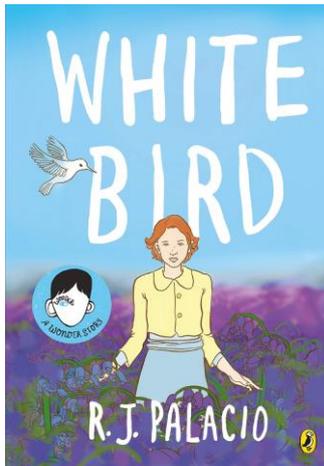
## Graphic Novels



### ***Peter in Peril. Courage and Hope in World War Two* by Helen Bate**

Otter-Barry Books 9781910959039

This picturebook in comic strip format is based on the true story of a Jewish family in Budapest, Hungary, during the war, seen through the eyes of a boy Peter. A map of the city showing the significant sites for Peter can be found on the endpapers and there are appendices giving background to the story and showing photographs of the real family as they were then and as they are today.

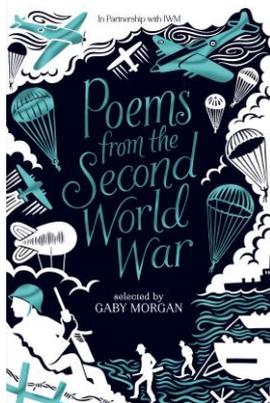


### ***White Bird* by R J Palacio**

Penguin 9780241399699

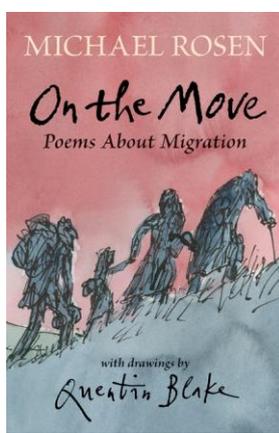
Julian, a character from R. J. Palacio’s novel *Wonder*, asks his French grandmother to tell him about her experiences during World War II. After initial reluctance, Sara describes how the Nazis came to her school to round up the Jewish children, including herself, and how she was rescued and hidden by her classmate Julien, a disabled boy whom she had previously ignored, and his family. Vividly and expressively told with a message about not allowing the injustices of the past to be repeated.

Poetry



***Poems from the Second World War* selected by Gaby Morgan**  
Macmillan 9781509838882

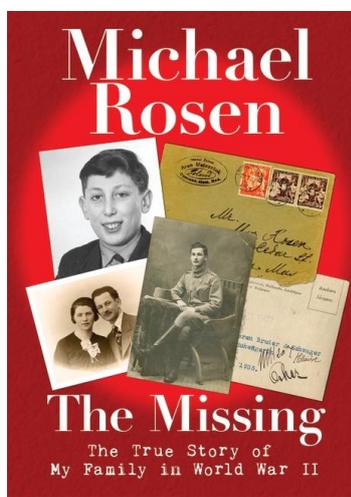
Poetry that reflects experiences of World War II from beginning to end, from the declaration of war to remembering and grieving for the dead. The collection is produced in partnership with the Imperial War Museum.



***On the Move. Poems About Migration*** by Michael Rosen,  
illustrated by Quentin Blake  
Walker 9781406393705

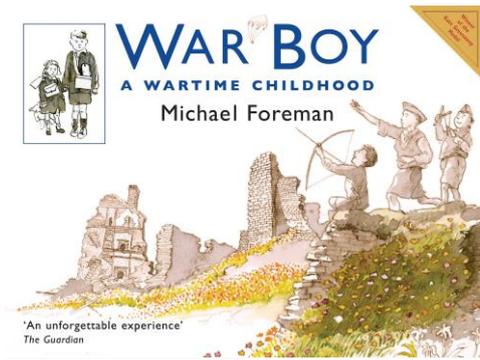
Many of the poems in this collection are linked to Michael Rosen's search for information about his own relatives and what happened to them in World War II and which he writes about in *The Missing* (see below). The book is illustrated by Quentin Blake with pictures of people who, as Michael Rosen says in his introduction, 'could be people throughout history – on the move through the Second World War, or on the move today'.

Non-Fiction



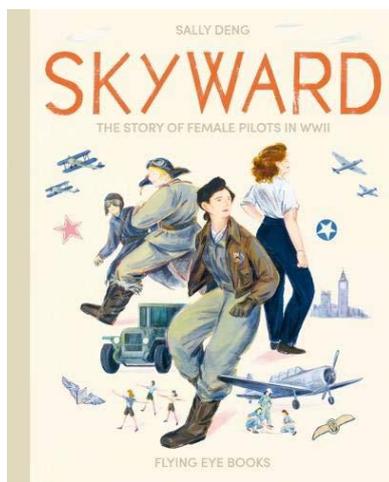
***The Missing. The True Story of My Family in World War II*** by  
**Michael Rosen**  
Walker 9781406386752

Michael Rosen often writes about his family including his parents who were of Jewish heritage. In recent years he has traced back what happened to their relatives during World War II and describes his journey movingly in a way that is accessible to children and will encourage them to ask questions about history and explore the past of their own families. Michael Rosen links the situation of refugees in World War II to the plight of refugees in the world today and this comes over particularly strongly in some of the poems which are interspersed throughout the book. A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/missing-true-story-my-family-world-war-ii>



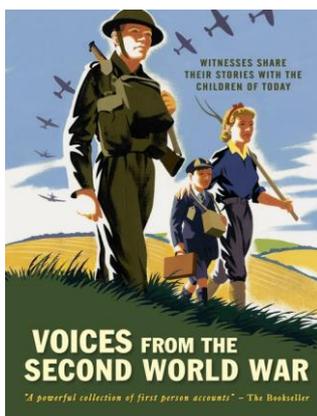
**War Boy. A Wartime Childhood by Michael Foreman**  
Pavilion 9781843650874

Michael Foreman's evocation of his Suffolk childhood during World War II. The reader is enticed into this carefully drawn world and in the process learns much about everyday life in Britain at that time. In addition to his wonderful watercolours, Foreman integrates contemporary visual elements, such as cigarette cards and advertisements, into the illustrations. This book is effective because it conveys information in such a personal way. A CLPE Core Book <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks/war-boy>



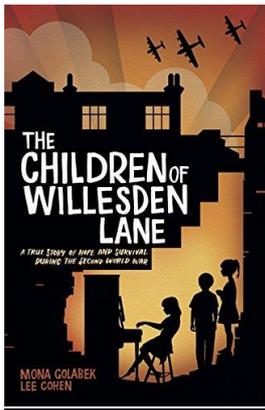
**Skyward. The Story of Female Pilots in WWII by Sally Deng**  
Flying Eye 9781911171515

Sally Deng explores the role of women pilots during World War 2 in this narrative about Hazel, Marlene and Lilya, living in the USA, England and Russia respectively. She describes their childhood interest in flight and how they each came to be pilots during the war, fulfilling roles that had hitherto not been available to women. The illustrations have an appropriately retro feel and are full of interesting details. The book is described as 'creative non-fiction', being based on real events and people with some elements of the story and aspects of the characters being fictionalised to some extent. A bibliography gives details of several books that can be consulted to find out more.



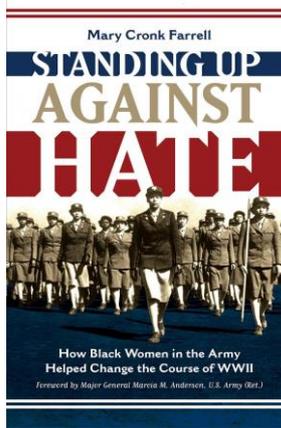
**Voices from the Second World War**  
Walker 9781406365986

A wide variety of people from different countries and social backgrounds describe their personal experiences during World War II, a number of them interviewed by children. The accounts are grouped in sixteen sections such as 'The Outbreak of War', 'Evacuees', 'Women at War', 'The Holocaust'. The contributors include Judith Kerr and Shirley Hughes whose novels drawing on their own lives at the time appear in this list.



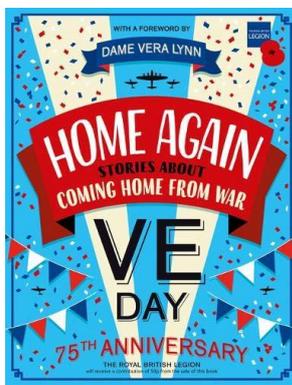
***The Children of Willesden Lane* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen**  
Franklin Watts 9781445161303

Mona Golabek relates the true story of how her mother, talented pianist Lisa Jura, had to leave her home and family in Vienna in 1938 to travel to England on the Kindertransport when she was fourteen. She spent the duration of the war in a hostel in Willesden Lane, London, with a group of refugees her own age. There she found encouragement to pursue her love of music and her and gift and accomplishments brought joy to many others through difficult times.



***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.



***Home Again. Stories about Coming Home from War* by Tony Bradman, Bali Rai, Leila Rasheed, Jim Eldridge, E.L. Norry**  
Scholastic 9780702300547

Published to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day, this book contains twelve accounts by six authors writing as fictional characters but based on the real experiences of a range of people during World War II. They include a Land Girl, an Indian Lance Corporal, a child Prisoner of War and a Bletchley Park codebreaker. Each story is followed by an illustrated fact file of information relating to it.