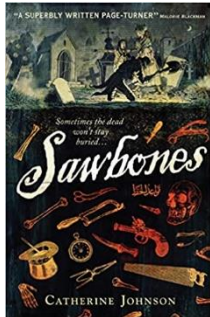


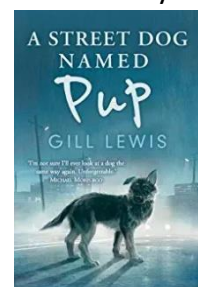
Recommended Reads for Y7 & Y8

***Sawbones* by Catherine Johnson.** Dissection, grave-robbing, amputations with bone-saws, espionage, corpses galore, body-switching: this book has everything you might want in a forensic murder mystery, with the added bonus of learning about 18th century London as this is superb historical fiction. Ezra is 16 years old, a freed Jamaican slave and an apprentice to a London surgeon; he meets a magician's daughter, Loveday, who believes her father was murdered and is willing to do whatever it takes to find out what happened to him. Together they embark on a series of adventures which keep the reader constantly on edge. This book has just the right amount of gruesomeness for Key Stage 3 students who enjoy a bit of blood and gore – nothing excessive or too detailed, but enough to keep you turning the pages. The diverse (and historically accurate) cast makes this thriller even more appealing. And there is a sequel called *Blade and Bone* set in revolutionary France!



***Cane Warriors* by Alex Wheatle.** Fourteen-year-old Moa is enslaved, toiling on a Jamaican sugar cane plantation. He has experienced the 'backripper' of Misser Donaldson, and he sees brutality, rape, amputation and a degradation of life for enslaved people. When Tacky begins recruiting for an Easter rebellion, Moa and his friend Keverton join, going against the wishes of Moa's demoralised father. The fight for freedom that follows is harrowing, but also inspiring, showing resilience, heroism and the importance of African traditions. This newly published, well-researched historical novel is based on the true events of Tacky's War, a rebellion against slavers in Jamaica in 1760; it is a must-read for our Year 8 students who have studied the Atlantic slave/sugar trade this school year, and for anyone who wants to better understand this notorious period. It disrupts the narrative that enslaved people were passive recipients of chattel slavery. And it is written by one of the best writers for young people, Alex Wheatle, who has a magical ability to weave words to create vivid images and characters.

***A Street Dog Named Pup* by Gill Lewis.** This recently published book tells the extraordinary story of Pup, a dog who loved and lost, again and again. Pup has an unbreakable bond with his Boy, but the adults don't want Pup and he is abandoned in 'Dead Dog Alley'. Frenchie, a street dog, finds and adopts him into the 'crew' where Pup learns to survive, avoiding the vicious Sewer dogs and the Snatchers who take street dogs to 'Dogsdoom'. Pup experiences moments of joy and forges close bonds with the unusual dogs in his pack, each with their own heart-breaking story. I rooted for Pup throughout his trials and tribulations; I raged at the cruel humans; I laughed at the dogs' antics; I felt my heart breaking for the Boy and for Pup; and I cried (repeatedly). It is an absolutely

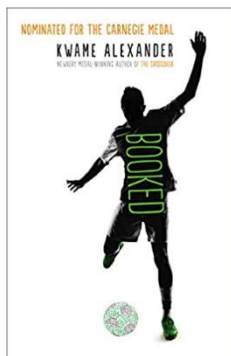


engrossing book and will appeal to all dog-lovers. It would be brilliant as a shared read aloud as well!

***Mortal Chaos* by Matt Dickinson.** This thriller starts with a butterfly startling a race horse in training in Wiltshire – and this tiny action eventually affects dozens of events and lives across continents in this novelised version of chaos theory ! Chapters are short and pacey, and include seemingly unconnected people and places from a commercial pilot in Wiltshire to a climber on Mount Everest to a boy in Malawi protecting his crops from baboons to an American psycho setting off to bomb his wife. This is complex book with many narratives – but it is easy to read as it is so exciting, and local connections to Wiltshire and Newbury make it especially interesting.

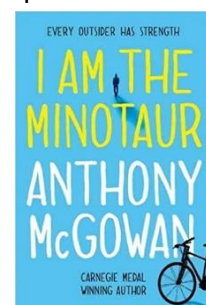


***Booked* by Kwame Alexander.** In this powerful verse novel, 12 year old Nick loves football and hates books – despite (or because) his father wrote a dictionary of unusual words. This book features travails of teenage life like bullies, separating parents, injuries, and developing love – but it also has a rapping librarian, fascinating vocabulary and plenty of football. This is a brilliant book for both reluctant and enthusiastic readers – it hasn't failed me yet when I have recommended it! And Audible Stories has made the audio version of the book available for free – you can access it by clicking on the book title in our new Virtual Library.



<https://bit.ly/KAsVirtualLibrary>

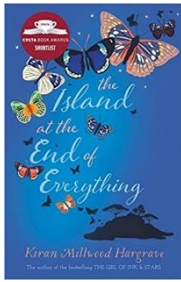
***I am the Minotaur* by Anthony McGowan** is a newly published book in the 'Super Readable' OUP series; these books are short, accessible -- and beautifully written. *I am the Minotaur* is about 'Stinky Mog', a cruel nickname that Matthew was given at primary school because his clothes were unclean; his mum suffers from depression meaning that Matthew has had to largely fend for himself. Now in secondary school, Matthew suffers from a deep sense of shame and tries to be invisible. He mostly succeeds, but then 'golden girl' Ari's bike is stolen, and Matthew is determined to steal it back. This book features Greek myths, a superb librarian and a courageous group of geeks. It made me cry, and it is perfect for both reluctant and keen readers.



***Boy, Everywhere* by A.M. Dassu.** Sami is a middle-class Syrian boy with a perfectly normal life – until the bombs hit Damascus. After a traumatic experience leaving his sister unable to speak, Sami and his family escape and experience a distressing journey as they travel through Turkey and Greece. When they arrive in the UK claiming refugee status, their troubles have only just begun. This is a gripping read based on extensive research, and it challenges stereotypes of refugees. It is on the 2021 'Read for Empathy' list produced by Empathy Lab UK.

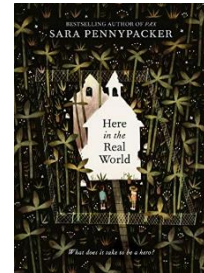


***The Island at the End of Everything* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave.** Twelve-year-old Ami lives



on a beautiful, remote island that no one ever visits because many of the inhabitants have leprosy -- including Ami's mother. They make the most of the life they have, but then the government official Mr Zamora arrives and wrenches Ami -- and all children who don't have leprosy -- away from everything they know and love, forcing them into an orphanage. Can a beautiful colony of butterflies help Ami find her way back? This is heart-breaking and heart-warming story from one of the best young adult/children's writers.

***Here in the Real World* by Sara Pennypacker.** In this heart-warming story, eleven-year-old Ware is an introvert, which worries his parents as they feel he needs 'Meaningful Social Interactions'. He is sent to 'Rec camp' but secretly absconds to play in an abandoned churchyard -- where he meets Jolene, who is an 'outcast' for different reasons. They argue, but also band together when their local environment is under threat. This is a story of friendship, making a difference, acceptance and being true to who you are. It's a fast-paced novel and absolutely lovely.



Year 7 & 8: *The Dog Runner* by Bren Macdibble. In this fast-paced adventure novel,



environmental disaster has destroyed all wheat, oat, sugar and grass leading to catastrophe in Australia and around the world. Ella needs to find a way to survive, and her 'doggos' are ready to help. This is a wonderful story that will make you bite your nails, laugh and cry -- and it will remind you of what might happen if we don't take care of our environment.