

Hello Bookpenpals!

Hope you're all doing well in lockdown. As I write to you this time things are a bit different in the world, but there's still hope and love and that's what I'm focusing on at the moment.

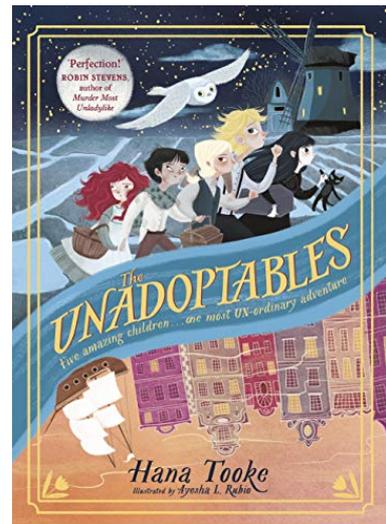
First of all, thank you so much for the CAT card. It made me laugh, all those cats – especially the CATapult and CATalogue. My visit to your school seems like a long time ago now, but it still makes me smile and remember how much I enjoyed it. Glad to know from your individual cards that you did too!

To Florence, I was so happy to hear you say that you could see why my book won Waterstones Book of the Month! Thank you. Alex J, I'm thrilled that I inspired you to write. That's the loveliest thing for an author to hear. To Grace, I love your elephant drawing with the squirting water! Margot, I'm so glad I could sit next to you too, and your picture at the back of your card is lovely. Regan, you've done some great cartoons, I've enjoyed looking at them and trying to interpret in different ways. To Arnav, thank you for your message and I hope you got to watch some good cricket before the break. Videh, I enjoyed my visit too and am so glad I answered your questions to your satisfaction.

These days I'm keeping a diary to record what's happening now. We're living through an important moment in history, and it'll be nice to look back on it someday. I'd recommend it if you have the time and enjoy writing. Imagine if your diary becomes as famous as Samuel Pepys'! There is a project for children where you could get something published in a book if you keep a diary. Check this website for details: <https://www.ourcoronadiary.com>

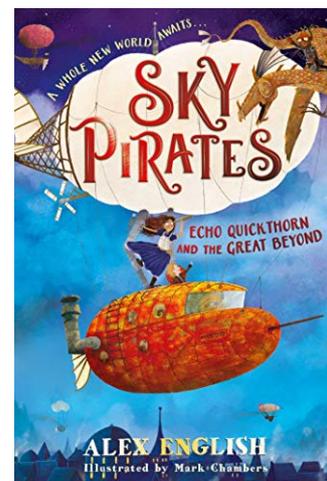
And on to books! I've been reading a few books that are yet to be published. Before a book is published they sometimes send out copies of the book to some people to read. I'm going to tell you about a few of these books so you'd be some of the first children to know about them!

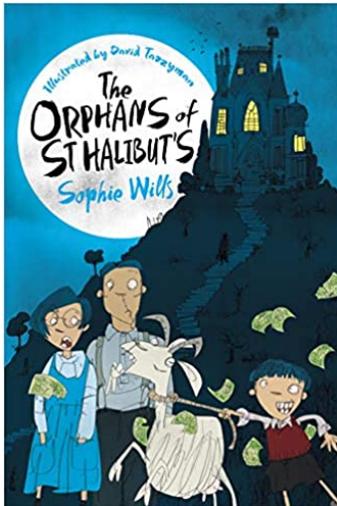
The first is *The Unadoptables*. I think I've told you about this book before, and it'll be out in May. It's about five children in an Amsterdam orphanage escaping to a better life when the matron is about to sell them to a cruel employer. I'm reading for the second time and it's even better.



The next one is called *The Wild Way Home* by Sophie Kirtley. This book is about Charlie, who slips into a time long, long ago and has an adventure with a stone-age boy! This isn't just an adventure though, Charlie's just had a baby brother who's very poorly, so there's lots of emotion too.

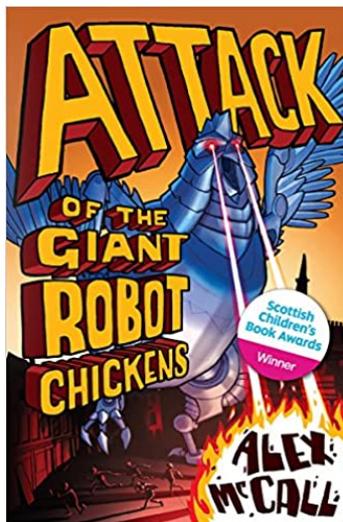
Then there's *Sky Pirates*, by Alex English. It's a series and the first one is called *Echo Quickthorn and the Great Beyond*. It's the story of a girl who lives in a castle and has been told that nothing exists beyond the kingdom she lives in. But she meets a crazy explorer and starts to have doubts, and then goes looking for her lost mother in his sky ship!





The last is *The Orphans of St Halibut's*, by Sophie Wills. This is another orphans book, and it's so funny I was laughing all the way I read it. It has a very Roald Dahl feel to it, so if you like his books you'll love this one. When the matron of the orphanage accidentally dies the orphans have peace at last, and have to go to all sorts of lengths to keep people from knowing they're alone!

So you have advance knowledge of some great books due in the next few months! But for now I'd like to recommend something *completely* different. This is actually a recommendation from my daughter, and it's light and funny. Even the name of the book is funny. It's called *Attack of the Giant Robot Chickens*, by Alex McCall. It's about a group of kids who're trying to save humanity from giant robot chickens who've taken over the world!



That's it from me! Take care and stay safe, Eagles.

Nizrana

31/03/2020