

## Spellbinding 2020 Shortlist



### Bilan, Jasbinder **Asha and the Spirit Bird**

*AR level 5.3*

Asha lives in the foothills of the Himalayas. Money is tight and she misses her papa who works in the city. When he suddenly stops sending his wages, a ruthless money lender ransacks their home and her mother talks of leaving. From her den in the mango tree, Asha makes a pact with her best friend, Jeevan, to find her father and make things right. But the journey is dangerous: they must cross the world's highest mountains and face hunger, tiredness - even snow leopards. And yet, Asha has the unshakeable sense that the spirit bird of her grandmother - her nanijee - will be watching over her.

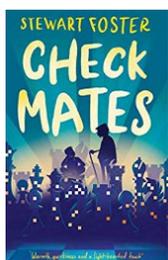
ISBN: 978-1911490197



### Rurlander, Danny **Spylark**

Ever since the accident, Tom's struggled with his mobility. But he has a secret escape: Skylark, his drone - through this technology, he can fly above his Lake District home, exploring his world from a totally different perspective. But when he stumbles upon a terrorist plot, he knows no one will believe him. Maggie and Joel, a sister and brother on holiday in his aunt's cottage, are the only ones who can help ... but can they stop the plot in time?

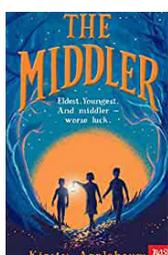
ISBN: 978-1911490708



### Foster, Stewart **Check Mates**

Felix is struggling at school. His ADHD makes it hard for him to concentrate and his grades are slipping. Everyone keeps telling him to try harder, but no one seems to understand just how hard he finds it. When Mum suggests Felix spends time with his grandfather, Felix can't think of anything worse. Granddad hasn't been the same since Grandma died. Plus he's always trying to teach Felix boring chess. But sometimes the best lessons come in the most unexpected of places, and Granddad soon shows Felix that there's everything to play for.

ISBN: 978-1471172236



### Applebaum, Kirsty **The Middler**

*AR level 3.3*

"I was special. I was a hero. I lost the best friend I ever had." Eleven-year-old Maggie lives in Fennis Wick, enclosed and protected from the outside world by a boundary, beyond which the Quiet War rages and the dirty, dangerous wanderers roam. Her brother Jed is an eldest, revered and special. A hero. Her younger brother is Trig - everyone loves Trig. But Maggie's just a middler; invisible and left behind. Then, one hot September day, she meets Una, a hungry wanderer girl in need of help, and everything Maggie has ever known gets turned on its head. Narrated expertly and often hilariously by Maggie, we experience the trials and frustrations of being the forgotten middle child, the child with no voice, even in her own family. This gripping story of forbidden friendship, loyalty and betrayal is perfect for fans of Malorie Blackman, Meg Rosoff and Frances Hardinge.

ISBN: 978-1788003452

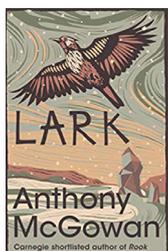


### Anderson, Sophie **The Girl who Speaks Bear**

*AR level 5.2*

Found abandoned in a bear cave as a baby, Yanka has always wondered about where she is from. She tries to ignore the strange whispers and looks from the villagers, wishing she was as strong on the inside as she is on the outside. But, when she has to flee her house, looking for answers about who she really is, a journey far beyond one that she ever imagined begins: from icy rivers to smouldering mountains meeting an ever-growing herd of extraordinary friends along the way.

ISBN: 978-1474940672

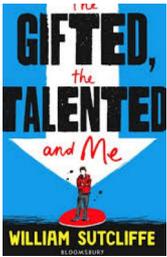


### McGowan, Anthony **Lark**

*AR level 4.2*

Things are tense at home for Nicky and Kenny. Their mum's coming to visit and it will be the first time they've seen her in years. A lot has changed since they were little and Nicky's not so sure he's ready to see her again. When they head for a trek across the moors to take their minds off everything, a series of unforeseen circumstances leaves the brothers in a vulnerable and very dangerous position. There might even be a chance that this time not everyone will make it home alive... a shorter novel particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant, or dyslexic readers.

ISBN: 978-1781128435

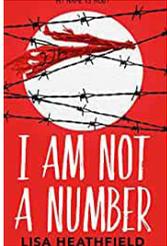


### Sutcliffe, William **The Gifted, The Talented and Me**

AR level 5.5

Fifteen-year-old Sam is not a famous vlogger, he's never gone viral, and he doesn't want to be the Next Big Thing. In fact he's ordinary and proud of it. None of which was a problem until Dad got rich and Mum made the whole family move to London. Now Sam's off to the North London Academy for the Gifted and Talented, where everyone's busy planning Hollywood domination or starting alt-metal psychedelica crossover bands. Sam knows he'll never belong, even if he wanted to. And that's before he ends up on stage wearing nothing but a fur onesie ... A brilliantly funny look at fitting in, falling out and staying true to your own averageness.

ISBN: 978-1408890219



### Heathfield, Lisa **I Am Not A Number**

The Traditionals have been voted to lead the country, winning people over with talks of healing a broken society, of stronger families and safer streets. They promised a happier future for everyone. They didn't promise this. When Ruby is swept up with protesters from the opposition, her life is changed forever. Locked in a prison camp far from home and with her belongings taken from her, she's now known by the number 276. With horror escalating in the camp, Ruby knows that she has to get her family out - and let the world know what's happening. Set in the present day, I Am Not A Number is a powerful and timely book.

ISBN: 978-1405293860

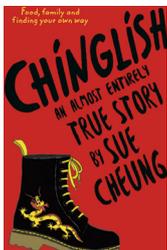


### Crossan, Sarah **Toffee**

AR level 4.0

When Allison runs away from home she doesn't expect to be taken in by Marla, an elderly woman with dementia, who mistakes her for an old friend called Toffee. Allison is used to hiding who she really is, and trying to be what other people want her to be. And so, Toffee is who she becomes. But as her bond with Marla grows, Allison begins to ask herself -where is home? What is a family? And most importantly, who am I, really? Written in non rhyming verse format.

ISBN: 978-1408868133



### Cheung, Sue **Chinglish**

Jo Kwan is a teenager growing up in 1980s Coventry with her annoying little sister, too-cool older brother, a series of very unlucky pets and utterly bonkers parents. But unlike the other kids at her new school or her posh cousins, Jo lives above her parents' Chinese takeaway. And things can be tough whether it's unruly customers or the snotty popular girls who bully Jo for being different. Even when she does find a BFF who actually likes Jo for herself, she still has to contend with her erratic dad's behaviour. All Jo dreams of is breaking free and forging a career as an artist.

Told in diary entries and doodles, Jo's brilliantly funny observations about life, family and char siu make for a searingly honest portrayal of life on the other side of the takeaway counter.

ISBN: 978-1783448395