

Pie Corbett's Reading Spine

This selection covers a range of stories that extends to fantasy as well as introducing Anne Fine's wonderful books. I came across *Perry Angel's Suitcase* by Glenda Millard in Australia. It is a deeply moving book, both sad, but also full of hope – a lovely book. Read it yourself before reading it with the children to judge whether it is right for your class.



Bill's New Frock

READ & RESPOND

Anne Fine (Egmont)

Read the first sentence and then discuss how might things be different for Bill. With the class list and discuss the various things that happen to Bill as a girl. The book was written in 1989, so together consider if anything has changed since then. Act out the classroom scene in Chapter 2. Discuss the line 'I am a person' in Chapter 7. Encourage the children to write an extra scene for the book. (See the Read & Respond title for further ideas.)



Charlotte's Web

READ & RESPOND

E.B. White (Puffin)

It is 63 years on, but it is still a great read, starting with such a startling opening: 'Where's Papa going with that axe?' With the class track the different characters, gathering clues about their different natures. Also, chart with a character graph how Wilbur's character develops. Produce a class timeline to show the sequence of events, so the plot can be seen in one glance. Role play conversations between Fern and Avery about different events, revisiting what has happened and discuss the implications of the key events. (See the Read & Respond title for further ideas.)



Why the Whales Came

Michael Morpurgo (Egmont)

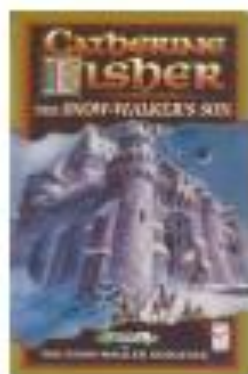
Provide the children with some information about Narwhals as they feature in the story. Also, check out Bryher on the Isles of Scilly, and Rusty Bay – which is a key setting – and research on the internet why families left Samson Island. On the board draw a map of Bryher and together label with events. Ask: How do our views of the Birdman change and why? Issues to discuss in class: fear, bullying, friendship and should whales be hunted. (See the Read & Respond series for further ideas.)



The Firework-Maker's Daughter

Philip Pullman (Random House)

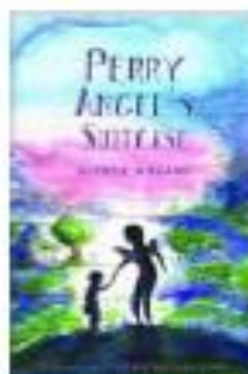
As a class invent names for new fireworks and draw designs for amazing explosive fireworks! Encourage children to write a letter from Lachand back to Lila (Chapter 2). Ask: *What is the big challenge that Lila faces?* Then in groups they can act out the scene where Lila meets Razvani. Ask: *How does the author show how Lila fools in Chapter 5? 'illusions': what does this mean in Chapter 5? What sort of person is Lila?* Invite them to gather evidence. Provide time to create persuasive adverts for a firework show by Lila and Lachand. Also, read *The Scarecrow and his Servant* (Random House) by the same author.



The Snow Walker's Son

Catherine Fisher (Red Fox)

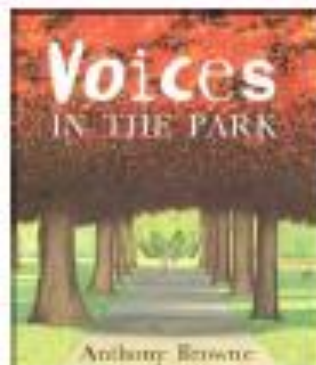
From a 'Fire' daughter to a 'Snow' son, this is the first part of a powerful trilogy involving 'magic' written by the Welsh novelist and poet, Catherine Fisher. Track the two main characters, Kari and Jossa, perhaps using a class timeline to show the main events and their developing characters. With the class make notes and discuss at the end the role of heat and cold in the story. Can they predict (or write) what might happen in the next story, *The Empty Hand* (Red Fox)?



Perry Angel's Suitcase

Glenda Millard (Phoenix Yard Books)

Read this book yourself before sharing it with the class. Discuss in lesson how everyone feels before Perry arrives and then discuss Perry's behaviour, thinking about why he acts as he does. Discuss the suitcase. Pause in Chapter 10 to discuss why Perry gets onto the raft. Ask: *What advice can be learned from Chapter 10? Discuss the viewpoints of those involved at the end of each chapter. The themes run deep and it will help for children to talk about their feelings. There are other books in this series, all equally magical.*



Voices in the Park

Picture book

Anthony Browne (Random House)

Read the book through several times. Ask the children to list 'things to talk about' or 'questions' then discuss. Ask: *How do you feel about each character and why? (Is the mother really a bad mother? Where is the dad? Why does she wear a bowler hat? Is it right that the girl makes the dad a cup of tea?) Together place them in order of sympathy. Then discuss relationships. Ask: Which is the most important picture? Why? How long did the story take to read? What is the story about? What is its theme? Discuss the pictures, use of colour, playfulness, lines and the font used. Also, study *The Tunnel* (Walker Books) by the same author.*