

### **The King of Nothing** **by Nathaniel Lessore**

This is a transformation story. Anton is a feared gang member, reluctantly dragged into another way of life by his mother. A positive story about the dangers of toxic masculinity, tribalism, redemption, and having the courage to be yourself.

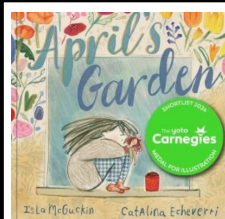
**Find me in the Teen Fiction section.**  
**AR Level 4.9**

### **A Sudden Storm** **by Bali Rai**

On Arjan's 16th birthday, he is horrifically attacked by a racist gang. This powerful story allows us to step into the lives of a family whose lives have been destroyed by something so senseless as hating someone for the colour of their skin.



**Find me in the Adult Fiction section.**  
**AR Level 3.4**



### **April's Garden** **by Isla McGuckin**

April and her mother have been housed in temporary accommodation. April finds herself being frustrated by her life and struggles emotionally, until she plants some seeds, and starts to believe in a brighter future.

**Find me in the Picture Book section.**  
**AR Level 2.6**

### **Where the Heart Should Be** **by Sarah Crossan**



Power and class are explored in this historical verse novel, documenting the brutality of the rich oppressing the poor. Nell works as a scullery maid in the kitchen of the Big House. She loved school and books, but her work choices are limited. Upstairs, where Nell is forbidden to go, Johnny Browning arrives. Johnny is the nephew of Sir Phillip Wicken, the man who owns the Big House. Nell and Johnny find each other and hope is not lost. This is a love story, and the story of people being torn apart.

This is a verse novel.

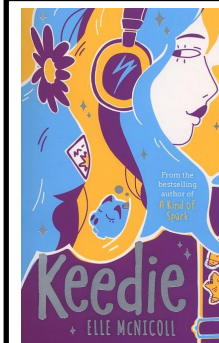
**Find me in the Adult Fiction section.**  
**AR Level 4.1**



### **The Girl Who Couldn't Lie** **by Radhika Sanghani**

A magical story about Priya and an exploration of truth. Is honesty always the best policy or are white lies sometimes kinder? Priya lies. A lot. She pretends everything in her life is perfect, so she doesn't disappoint anyone. But when she puts on a bangle left by her Ba, the one person she was always honest with, she finds herself unable to tell a lie. Priya is mortified. And she can't take the bangle off. Can Priya learn to be honest without hurting the people she loves?

**Find me in the Teen Fiction section.**  
**AR Level 4.6.**

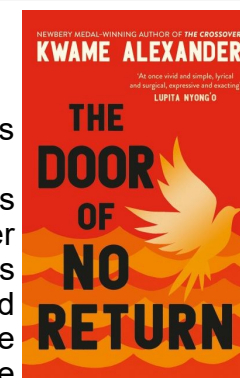


### **Keedie** **by Elle McNicoll**

Keedie Darrow is driven by her fierce passion for justice. She is always ready to defend those who are vulnerable, but it can lead her into trouble. A hugely engaging character, even as she battles her own issues. A wonderful novel that challenges the misconceptions around neurodivergence.

**Find me in the Teen Fiction section.**  
**AR Level 4.8**

### **The Door of No Return** **by Kwame Alexander**



Dreams are today's answers for tomorrow's questions. 11 year old Kofi Offin dreams of water, of its urgent whisper that beckons with promises and secrets. He has heard the call on the banks of the Upper Kwanta, where he lives. He loves these things above all else: his family, the fireside tales of his father's father, a girl named Ama and, of course, swimming. But when the unthinkable ( a sudden death) occurs during a festival between rival villages. Kofi ends up in a fight for his life. What happens next will send him on a harrowing journey across the sea, and away from everything he loves. Yet Kofi's dreams may be the key to his freedom...

This is a verse novel.

**Find me in the Teen Fiction section.**  
**AR Level 5.9**



### **The Wrong Shoes** **by Tom Percival**

Will has the wrong shoes. He has always known it but he doesn't know how to change it. Navigating the difficulties of home and school when you feel you stick out is tough, but finding confidence with the help and empathy of friends can be all you need to see the way.

**Find me in the Teen Fiction section.**  
**Not currently on AR.**

### **The Letter with the Golden Stamp** **by Onjali Q Rauf**



9 year old Audrey has a secret. She's the main carer for her severely ill mother, who has osteoporosis. With her dad having left half a year ago, Audrey is constantly in fear of being found out by Social Services, so she has fine-tuned her life into becoming one of the best actresses on the planet. Audrey is determined to find a way to help her mum get to the best doctor in the country so that she can get better. The only problem is, it's a dream that will cost her thousands. As Audrey sets about trying to make her dream come true, someone else on the street embarks on their own secret mission. One that will alter Audrey's and her family's lives forever.

**Find me in the Teen Fiction section.**  
**AR Level 5.3**

## **Top tips on reading for empathy**

1. Read books that not only reflect your own life experiences, but that also have characters and stories from different races, religions and experience. Think about people whose situations are different to your own.
2. Focus on the characters and their feelings, more than the plot. Wonder what the characters may be feeling or thinking and what they might do next.
3. Try to recognise the feelings of the characters and your own feelings when reading the story.
4. Don't forget that pictures in books can really help us to 'read' other people. What do the illustrations tell us about how the characters are feeling?
5. Has the story inspired you to put your empathy into action? Has the book helped you to think of ways you can help others?

Now, put empathy into action!

## **HAZELWICK SCHOOL LIBRARY**

### **Empathy Reads**



#### **What is empathy?**

Empathy is the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel.

To be able to see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place, whilst showing compassion and consideration.

This is a collection of fiction and non-fiction books that have been recommended by the Empathy Lab for their 2025 reading collection.

If you have any questions regarding any of these books or need more suggestions, please come and ask Mrs Thornton or Mrs Bridgman in the Library.

Happy reading...