

# READING RAMPAGE

## Booktalking Notes

<i>Notes by</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
JS	Eve Ainsworth	Because of You
<p>Poppy's not happy! Her Mum's new boyfriend has just moved in with his daughter Kayla– the most popular girl in the school, leaving her beloved Dad out in the cold.</p> <p>The school bully Lia is out to get Poppy, big time. All Poppy wants is to be left alone and for things to go back to the way they were – but it seems that not everything can be mended. Poppy becomes the target of the spiteful school bullies. As the vicious online comments and humiliating pranks escalate, with even her friends joining in, it looks like Poppy has no one left to turn to.</p> <p>Can she stand up to the bullies, and face up to the truth about her family? An absorbing story about change, acceptance and coming through the storm.</p>		

<i>Notes by</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
CK	Keren David	The Disconnect
<p>Could you live without your phone for 6 weeks? 6 weeks without sharing photos, group messages or social media! What about if someone said you would win £1000 to do it?</p> <p>That's the question that is asked of students at Esther's school. They are to be part of a social media experiment and not many students take on the challenge, despite the incentive.</p> <p>But Esther, who desperately wants to win the prize money to visit her dad, sister and her baby in New York, hands in her phone and begins a social-media-free life.</p> <p>What happens when she discovers it may not be the simple experiment they were told it was? What if there is something more sinister at work...?</p>		

<i>Notes by</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
AM	Christopher Edge	The Longest Night of Charlie Noon
<p>This book is a real brain-bending mystery of a story! After Charlie's friend Dizzy finds a strange message in the woods they want to investigate, but this other boy Johnny has a warning for them about someone called Old Crony... <b>(read extract, pgs. 13 "Who's Old Crony?" to 14 "ever know")</b>.</p> <p>Despite this they venture into the wood and see and experience things that they will never forget as long as they live! As the woods seem reluctant to let them escape Charlie must work out what they need to do to get home.</p> <p>At times this book feels like you're stuck in a really strange dream, but it's so well written that once it sucks you in you've finished it in no time!</p>		

<i>Notes by</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
<b>CK</b>	<b>Gill Lewis</b>	<b>The Closest Thing to Flying</b>
<p>A story of two young girls, separated by over a century, as they fight for their individual freedoms!</p> <p>In the present-day, refugee Semira, her mum and a man called Robel (who is pretending to be her dad) escaped from Eritrea when Semira was 4 years old, brought to the UK for a better life. But life in the UK isn't turning out how Semira expected it to and she's worried about how Robel treats her mother. They have to keep moving from place to place, afraid of getting caught, and Robel is cruel <b>(EXTRACT pages 56-57)</b>.</p> <p>Semira finds a diary from 1891 written by 12-year-old Henrietta, who knows exactly what to call home thanks to her mum. Semira learns from Henrietta's diary that it's ok to stand up for what you believe and for others who are being controlled and bullied. She finds inspiration to be brave and fight for her place in the world.</p> <p>I absolutely loved this book and it's got so much to it, looking at equality and the suffragette movement, human rights, cruelty to animals (we find out about the women who started the RSPB) and bullying. It's a book full of hope and you just won't want to put it down!</p>		

<i>Notes by</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
<b>JS</b>	<b>Tom Mitchell</b>	<b>How to Rob a Bank</b>
<p>Dylan really, really fancies Beth, but in his eagerness to impress her, he does something extremely daft – he burns down her house – with a Nepalese scented candle! It turns out the house wasn't insured so now Beth's family are in desperate straits, and Dylan is equally desperate to make amends.</p> <p>So... he decides that the solution is.... to rob a bank! His first attempt to rob the post office doesn't go too well <b>(read pages 42-44)</b> but he's not giving up.</p> <p>Whilst juggling an unwanted Saturday job in the bank and his overdue history homework, can he pull off the heist of the century and finally get the girl of his dreams? Funny story with a lovable – if hapless – hero.</p> <p><b>Alternative extract: pgs. 11 "I took the candle" to 15 – Dylan has an embarrassing incident in Beth's bedroom and burns down her house.</b></p>		

<b>Notes by</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>NG</b>	<b>Onjali Q Rauf</b>	<b>The Star Outside my Window</b>
<p>From the author of <i>The Boy at the Back of the Classroom</i>, another touching novel which explores some key issues facing children in the world today. The main character is ten-year-old Aniyah, who with her little brother Noah has been put into the foster care of Mrs Iwuchukwu. A strong but naïve narrative voice has been effectively created to explore the idea within the novel. Aniyah and Noah are unsure what has happened to Mum she has disappeared and the police have brought them to Oxford, some distance from their home in London.</p> <p>As Aniyah and Noah get to grips with their new foster home and the other children who share the home, their back story slowly unfolds. Aniyah's fascination with astronomy is revealed after news about a new star that has been behaving strangely in the sky is on the TV, she innocently believes it must be Mum, after all she has told her that the brightest hearts become stars and stay with us forever. The children decide they must go to Greenwich where the star is due to be named to let them know mum's name. Will they get there in time?</p> <p>A story of domestic abuse, loss, trust and friendship told sensitively and eloquently through Aniyah's voice.</p> <p><b>P77/78 – Look at Aniyah's innocence around her family situation and how her mum handled it</b></p>		

<b>Notes by</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>NG</b>	<b>Alexandra Sheppard</b>	<b>Oh My Gods</b>
<p>Teenager Helen Thomas is settling into her new home after her move to London from Derby to live with her dad and her half-brother and sisters. Her worries about making friends are immediately allayed when she meets a great group of friends. Her main problem is her family! But this is no usual set of family problems...</p> <p>Her father's side of the family are hiding a huge secret...the clue is in the title! Her awkward father, professor and antiques fanatic, is actually Zeus. Her spectacularly gorgeous older sister, is actually Aphrodite (all trying to fit into life in modern Britain). But that's just the start of it; wait until you meet the rest of the family!</p> <p>That's correct. Helen is a demi-god (half human/ half Greek god). Her everyday life is involved the immortality and exceptional superpowers of her thousands of year old family....but she can't breathe a word of it. No one must find out their secret. It is against the rules of the gods</p> <p>Add into the mix the usual teenage troubles, her feelings for a boy she meets at a party and you will discover a light-hearted novel which is somewhere between a Cathy Cassidy book and a Percy Jackson novel! Her heartfelt letters to her mum who has passed away provide the reader with updates and background details to Helen's life.</p> <p>Helen is a lively teenager who, having come to terms with the loss of her mother, has to face moving to a new city and living with her extraordinary relatives. This book is a humorous and slightly absurd read but still manages to deal with the trials of teen life.</p>		

<i>Notes by</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
SG	Jenni Spangler	The Cell
<p>Raheem’s gran has a saying for every situation: “They say we fear the thing that is destined to kill us.” Raheem has no time for this; he’s far more interested in his latest urban explorer adventure – trespassing inside old buildings and filming the experience with his mate Josh.</p> <p>Tonight’s adventure is different though. The police are all over town, alarms are going off and Raheem thinks someone may be following behind them in the claustrophobic passageways of the old shopping centre they’re trespassing in.</p> <p>The boys split up and Raheem ends up arrested by the police for trespassing. But locked in a tiny cell that brings out his fear of small spaces, Raheem hears the sounds that tell him something far worse is happening beyond the police station walls than being arrested and the cell might be the only thing keeping him alive.</p> <p>This is a zombie-fest where the visual feast is drawn in your mind through the sounds Raheem hears and by reading the meaning between the compact lines. The cover sets the tone and the telling will not disappoint horror-hungry readers.</p>		

<i>Notes by</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
AM	Lisa Thompson	The Day I was Erased
<p>Maxwell’s best friend is his dog Monster, but not everyone is so keen on him... <b>(read extract, pgs. 2 “Mrs Banks caught” to 4 “authorities”)</b>. So Maxwell is always getting in trouble, especially at school, and after he does something particularly bad which he thinks has turned everyone against him he wishes that he had never been born. Then he wakes up the next day and finds that nobody knows who he is and this random guy is living in his house. It turns out the world where he’d never been born is quite different, and he’d done a lot more good for people than he realised. But how can Maxwell reverse the erasure and put things back the way they were? This is an amazing story with a great concept that shows how much good people can do without even realising.</p> <p><b>Alternative extract: Pgs. 95 “Why can I not do anything right?” to 97 – Maxwell makes his wish</b></p>		

<b>Notes by</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>SG</b>	<b>Damaris Young</b>	<b>The Switching Hour</b>
<p>“Just on the right side of scary” [Observer].            Atmospheric and pacey, this page turner will have readers gripped as they are drawn into an adventure about family, friendship and facing your fears.            The Switching Hour is set during a terrible drought that readers may well be able to relate to in these times of extreme weather and climate change.            The Switching Hour is a story that references legends and myths through the device of a shape-shifting creature that is awoken by drought and grows in power by capturing people in the twilight hours and consuming their dreams.</p> <p>Never stay out after the Switching Hour... Never let the outside in...</p> <p>That’s the rules Amaya’s grandmother sets for Amaya and her small brother Kaleb. Every night, the doors must be locked after twilight - the Switching Hour - because the drought has awoken Badeko, a pale, spider-legged creature that snatches people away to eat their dreams. If someone is taken by Badeko, Grandmother says that the Sorrow Sickness will come and in just 3 days all memory of that person will be gone from your mind, as if they had never existed. All that is left is a terrible grief that consumes those left behind without them knowing why. When Kaleb is taken by Badeko, Amaya is full of guilt and braves the journey into the drought-stricken forest, facing up to deadly spiders and meat-hungry jackals, to find her brother before she forgets him.</p> <p>On the way she forges a friendship with Mally, a forest girl, who also has fears of her own to deal with and is constantly grateful for Tau the goat, her brave and dependable companion.</p> <p>The story taps into a fundamental fear - forgetting. It plays on the recognisable vulnerability of children taking on adult responsibilities when there is no adult to take care of them. The tools Amaya finds to use against the web that Badeko weaves are friendship, love, storytelling to keep memory alive and, at the end, the courage to turn her own terrifying dream of fire against the dream-eater himself. Amaya is a fiercely loving character who stumbles, falls but stares into the face of a demon and demands her brother back.</p> <p>This is a well-paced exploration of family bonds, the fear hidden inside grief and the powerful tool we call memory.</p>		