



CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY?!

THAT'S the reality in Sibéal Pounder's new book, *Sprouts*. But is it all it's cracked up to be? Be careful what you wish for...



FUN FACT

Sprouts is Sibéal's third festive book – she also wrote *Tinsel* and, last year, the book version of the *Wonka* movie! She had to have the book ready for when the film came out, so she was sent the movie's top-secret scripts and photos from filming to work from. Some scenes that were cut from the film live on in Sibéal's book version!



● **Hi Sibéal! Tell us about your new book, *Sprouts*.**

It's set in the year 4024, and Christmas is everywhere. Santa Claus rules the world and he has an army of Krampus beasts who patrol the skies and make sure everyone is very jolly. Witches have been banished to the Mince Pie Isles, this horrible, snow-swept place, because they only believe in celebrating Christmas once per year.

● **That seems unfair! So, who's the story about?**

Gryla Garland, a witch who dreams of it being Christmas every day. She meets Merrilee Claus, the daughter of the ruling Santa Claus, and discovers that Christmas every day isn't all it's cracked up to be, and they set about trying to restore the magic of Christmas.

● **What happens if someone's caught not celebrating Christmas?**

Well, there's a Krampus Code – very strict rules. You have to decorate your tree every morning, wear Christmas clothes, and eat a sprout-flavoured candy cane every day that's meant to keep the witches away. If the Krampus catch you [breaking it], they punish you. For the worst crimes, you're taken down these chimneys to the Krampus lair. No-one comes back from the Krampus lair!

● **Eek! Santa in *Sprouts* isn't the Santa we know and love, is he?**

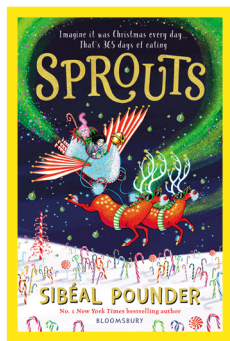
He lives in a sort of gingerbread castle, and has these snowman footmen, and the snowmen rise up to become the next Santa. The ruling Santa is picked from the snowmen. Only boys are allowed to become a ruling Santa. He doesn't deliver presents or things, he just rules over the world!

● **We've got to ask – would you like it to be Christmas every day?**

The witches in *Sprouts* say that having too much of something is as good as having none of it at all. The true magic of Christmas is that it builds up, and in looking forward to it every year. If it's Christmas every morning, it gets a bit boring. I like it as it is now in 2024!

● **And lastly, where does your love of Christmas come from?**

I always remember the snowy Christmases. One year, we were knee-deep in snow in Scotland, delivering Christmas cards... I think I'll remember that forever. A tradition I loved, which I put in *Tinsel*, my first Christmas book, was mince pie picnics, where you get the picnic blanket and sit out in the snow with mince pies and hot chocolate!



QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

● **Favourite Christmas film?**
Definitely *Home Alone*.

● **Best role you ever had in your school's Christmas play?**

One of the angels in the Nativity.

● **Favourite Christmas song?**
I like *Driving Home For Christmas*.

● **Do you cheat with your advent calendars?**
I do – on the first day, I open the 25th door for the massive chocolate!

● **Best Christmas present ever received?**
My mum piled my Christmas dinner plate high with chocolates after I became a vegetarian!

● **What's on your list to Santa this year?**
Another silly ornament to add to my collection of ridiculous Christmas decorations!

Sprouts by Sibéal Pounder is out now.



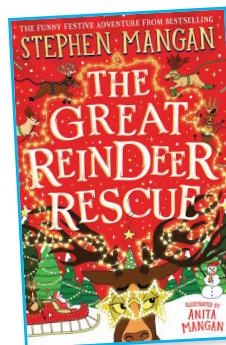
Recommended reads

in partnership with Peters



CHRISTMAS CRACKERS!

ON the lookout for more Christmassy stories to fill your stockings? Look no further. These books are stuffed with seasonal silliness, wintry wonder and all the festive feels!



The Great Reindeer Rescue by Stephen Mangan

Dave the reindeer has had enough! But after causing an accident that flings all of Santa's reindeer across the globe, can he gather them all and save Christmas?

How Winston Came Home For Christmas by Alex T Smith

This festive mystery about a mouse's global adventure has 24 and a half chapters, so you can read one for every day up to Christmas.



Juniper's Christmas by Eoin Colfer

Juniper is thrown into a Christmas adventure like no other when she seeks the help of a mysterious woodsman living in her local park.

The Biggest Christmas Secret Ever by LD Lapinski

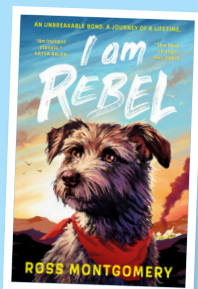
Imagine Father Christmas as your stepdad! Harper and Will don't have to imagine, but can the family keep this festive truth secret any longer?



BOOK OF THE YEAR!

ROSS Montgomery's *I am Rebel* has been named the 2024 Waterstones Children's Book of the Year!

The shop's Head of Books, Bea Carvalho, said the tale of a boy's bond with his dog "is a book to remind adults of the joy and wonder to be found in children's books, and to help young readers discover a love of reading." Congratulations, Ross!



Are you a wicked writer?

THE National Literacy Trust and stage show *Wicked* are teaming up for a third year to re-launch their epic writing competition!

Wicked Writers: Be The Change challenges pupils in Years 5-6 and in Years 7-9 to use their voices to try to change the world. You're asked to write a short, passionate piece about a change you'd like to see in your local community.

Even the prizes are wicked. You could have your entry published in a book, win book bundles for your school and bag a class trip to see the famous *Wicked* show on stage in London's West End.

● **Watch this space – we'll have more when it all launches in January!**



Wicked on stage



The Boy Who Slept Through Christmas by Matt Lucas

This story combines the joy of musicals and books! Listen to over 20 original songs as you read about how Leo tries to fix his Christmas wish.