

# Year 9 Recommended Reads

## This Book Kills by Ravena Guron

Jess Choudhary has always tried to be on her best behaviour. As one of only two scholarship students at the prestigious Heybuckle boarding school, she knows that her position is precarious. With a fast-paced plot and a satisfying ending, This Book Kills will appeal to fans of Gossip Girl and Holly Jackson's A Good Girl's Guide to Murder. [Read our full review.](#)

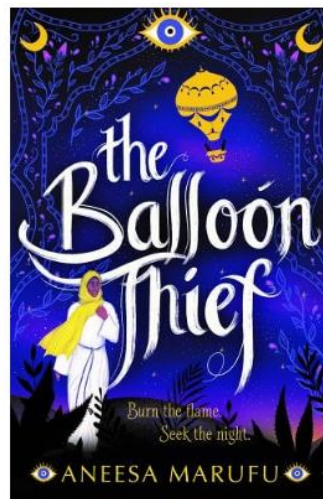
**Thriller**



## The Balloon Thief by Aneesa Marufu

When Khadija spots a hot air balloon about to break its moorings, she seizes a dangerous opportunity to flee from a life of arranged marriage. With warring factions, visceral violence, subjugation, shape-shifting magic and a compelling heroine, this is a heady tale of tested loyalties, moral dilemmas and redemption. It's a compelling insight into a vividly drawn fantasy world, with characters who experience forms of discrimination that older teenagers will identify and empathise with.

**Fantasy**



## Giften by Leyla Suzan

Ruthie is a 'Giften', born with the power to raise food from dead soil. But as she tries to protect her community, there's a sinister regime that hunts people like her. Readers will relate to the prescient ecological themes and emphasise with the characters as they face danger and isolation. A clever post-apocalyptic dystopia, 'Giften' will challenge readers to think about survival, power, and how greed could destroy the world we live in. Perfect for KS3 book clubs.

**Dystopia**



## Let's Play Murder by Kesia Lupo

Set in 'The Game', a virtual reality mystery, Veronica joins players trapped in a creepy manor house with a murder to solve. As they get closer to the truth, they encounter glitches, strange NPCs and a mysterious figure. It all changes when real players start dying in real life and Veronica realises that this is the definition of a must-win game. With a binge-worthy blend of page-turning mystery and cutting-edge VR gameplay, readers will be fully locked in. Ideal for readers interested in technology.

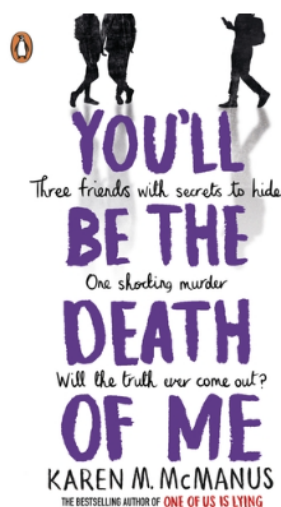
**Thriller**



## You'll Be the Death of Me by Karen M. McManus

Skipping school for one last time, three high school friends – Ivy, Mateo, and Cal – spot another student from Carlton High and follow him. The next thing they know, he's dead! They are all hiding something – but what? This absorbing, fast-paced web of secrets and danger features a signature Karen M. McManus. A gripping YA crime thriller.

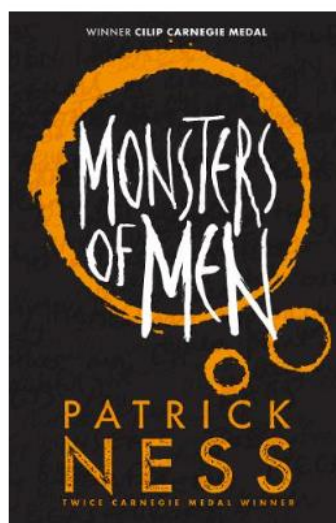
**Thriller**



## Monsters of Men by Patrick Ness

Part three of the Chaos Walking trilogy, Monsters of Men explores the effects of war. A fast-moving dystopian thriller set in a fantasy world war to end all wars. Todd and Viola have to fight, but what are they fighting for, and is it worth it? A modern classic and a great book for 13-year-olds.

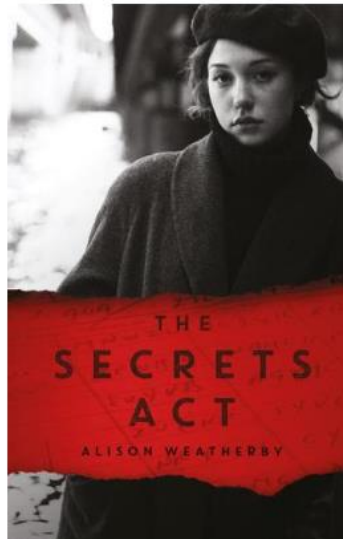
**Dystopia | Thriller**



## The Secrets Act by Alison Weatherby

This mesmerizing novel follows Pearl and Ellen, two teenagers who are working at the super-secret Bletchley Park during WW2. Ellen cracks codes and Pearl delivers messages, but both find themselves drawn together and thrust headlong into a world of intrigue, treachery and spies – a dangerous puzzle that they might not be able to solve in time. A fascinating and original historical novel for young adults, *The Secrets Act* is highly recommended for year 9 pupils.

**Historical fiction**



## Every Line of You by Naomi Gibson

When Lydia builds an AI friend to fill a void in her life, nothing can prepare her for what happens when Henry turns from a computer into an overprotective defender. This modern cyber-thriller catapults teens into a world of tech, AI and fear of the unknown. With a breakneck plot, it thrusts the reader into themes that are prescient but firmly rooted in today's reality. A great book to discuss in year 9 book clubs.

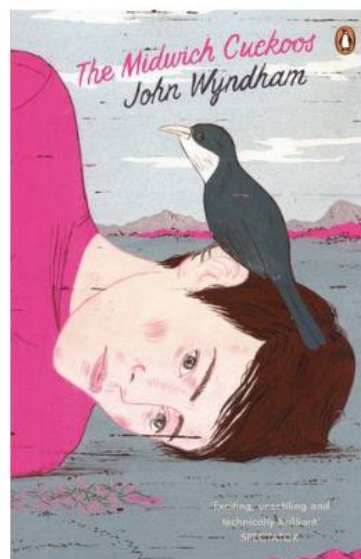
**Thriller**



## The Midwich Cuckoos by John Wyndham

In a quiet English village, everyone falls asleep unexpectedly. When they wake up a day later, all the women are inexplicably pregnant. It soon becomes apparent that the children have abilities and powers that are not normal, threatening the community. Brilliantly written, this unsettling story is ideal to spark philosophical debate and discussion. Recently adapted into a TV series by Sky, *The Midwich Cuckoos* is a classic work of science fiction that has renewed relevance in an age of conformity, information wars and distrust in political leadership.

**Science fiction**



## Lionheart Girl by Yaba Badoe

Mysticism, fear and West African witchcraft are blended into this heady and lyrical potion of a modern fable that explores friendship and loyalty. When Sheba discovers her magic abilities, she uses them to uncover dark family secrets that threaten to untie all that binds her life together. Memorable and atmospheric, this novel would be a powerful and provocative read for KS3 book clubs.

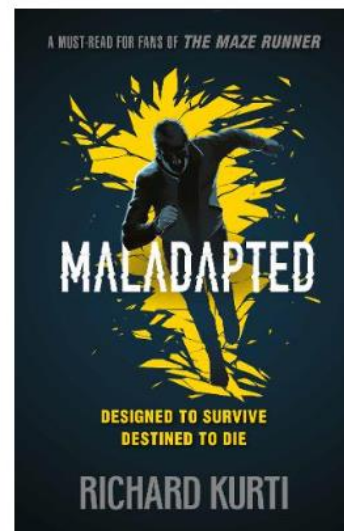
**Modern fable | Fantasy**



## Maladapted by Richard Kurti

A rocket-paced thriller set in a dystopian near future. The only survivor of a terrorist attack on a packed train, Cillian starts to wonder if and why he was spared. Soon he finds himself drawn into a web of deceit and mind-bending revelations. Ideal for reluctant teen readers in Year 9.

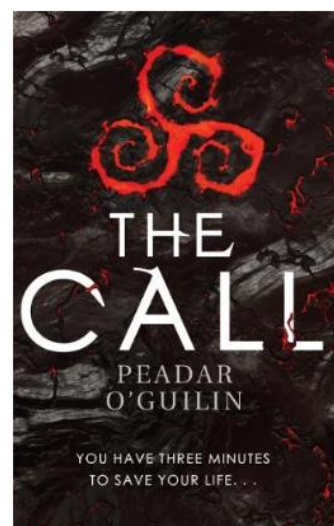
**Dystopia**



## The Call by Peadar O'Guilin

Set in a similar but realistic world that features myths and faeries, each teen needs to prepare for The Call – 3 minutes where they disappear with only a one in ten chance of returning alive. A dystopian, dark and addictive read that will resonate and linger in the subconscious. Could become a teen cult classic and will be a popular loan from your KS3/4 library.

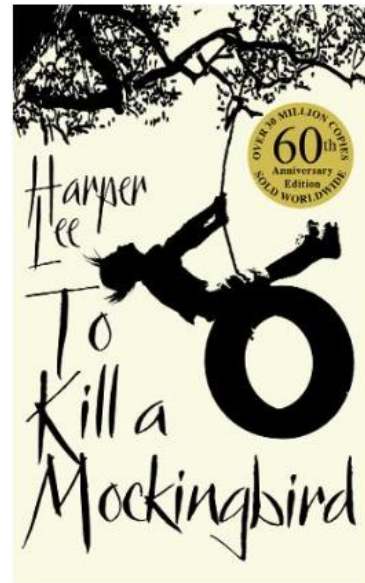
**Thriller**



## To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

In this classic 1930s story, a black man is charged with raping a white girl and has to fight class, racial hatred and depression-era prejudice – as well as the courtroom. Atticus Finch, a white father, has the task of defending him. A great book for Year 9.

**Classic**



## Shakespeare: The World as a Stage by Bill Bryson

This book is ideal for adding humour to turgid GCSE Shakespeare exam schemes. It explores the myths, lies and reality of Shakespeare's plays and brings to life the sixteenth-century acting world.

**Funny | Biography**

