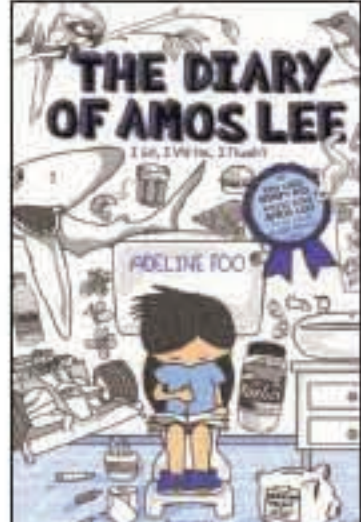
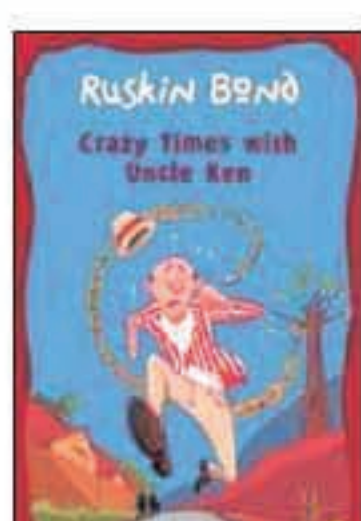


JUST RIGHT FOR KIDS

A child gets a diary and there's no stopping him; Uncle Ken has some unlikely adventures in the hills; and Septimus Heap tries to save the wizards' world



CHILDREN love their diaries, but no one loves it as much as Amos Lee, from Singapore, who writes every day, sitting in a place where he will never be disturbed, the loo. In **THE DIARY OF AMOS LEE** (Hachette India, Rs 195) by Adeline Foo, Amos says he has started writing since that is his Mum's New Year resolution. Armed with coloured pencils and an old jotter book, Amos starts with his "crazy" family. The first chapter is dedicated to the family, to how he got his name thanks to his mother's favourite cookies brand, his dad's work at the airport, his five-year-old sister who is an absolute "WPI" (Whiny. Pesky. Irritating) and his grandparents, Ah Kong and Po-po. The writer Foo follows the best-selling formula of Jeff Kinney's *Wimpy Kid* series, but here the setting is entirely different. It is about eating meatballs and fried carrot cakes and playing ping-pong and mahjong. The diary becomes in many ways a peep into Singapore. And although Amos' mum reads his diary and corrects his mistakes, he loves putting his very detailed thoughts on paper — and some descriptions are delightful. It has fun drawings too. This is for children between 6 and 9.



RUSKIN BOND reminisces about his boyhood in Dehradun, his friends, neighbours and, most importantly, his bumbling, absent-minded Uncle Ken. He went through life "without having to do much, although a great deal seemed to happen around him". These mishaps and adventures are on record in **CRAZY TIMES WITH UNCLE KEN** by Ruskin Bond (Puffin, Rs 175). Uncle Ken moves into Granny's house and creates havoc — he drives his car into a wall, falls prey to a "pret", a mischievous "north-Indian ghost", gets chased by a swarm of bees and fights off Speedy, the crow who likes collecting toothbrushes. Bond's trip down memory lane with his eccentric uncle, who has more than his share of "bad luck", is a great set of adventure stories for children between 6 and 12 years. When Uncle Ken is not attacked by "feathered foes" who drop out of the clear blue sky to snatch buttered currant buns from his hands, he also has a few good days, like when he is mistaken for a famous cricketer. A simple, fun and entertaining read.



SEPTIMUS HEAP is back. This time, he is all set to celebrate his 14th birthday on the shortest day of the year, and start a difficult period in his apprenticeship. Heap faces the terrible Darke Week. **SEPTIMUS HEAP: DARKE** by Angie Sage (Bloomsbury, Rs 499) is the sixth book in the series. Things continue to be "Magykal" as Heap, the extraordinary wizard, is one year and a day away from completing his apprenticeship with Marchia Overstrand. She is an extraordinary with green eyes and an all-powerful amulet. But things are anything but quiet in the Castle. A Darke Dragon is unleashed by the evil wizard Merrin Meredith to destroy the wizarding tower. Every wizard and witch is under a spell of gloom. Heap and his good friend Beetle have to save the Magykal world and the victims of the Darke domain, "those in trance and those missing". Will Heap manage to earn his apprenticeship in the Darke Week? Heap fans would know the answer to that. For those between 10 and 14 years.