

UNLEASH THE POWER OF STORY WITH THIS
ENCHANTING EDUCATION PACK

THE MAGIC BOOKMARK



CONTENTS

This is an interactive pack, so if you want to come back here, just click on The Magic Bookmark image on each page. Magical!



- ✧✧ An interview with Mama G
- ✧✧ The Magic Bookmark – an original bedtime story
- ✧✧ Games and puzzles
- ✧✧ The history of panto
- ✧✧ Information for the grown ups
- ✧✧ Activities to make you talk
- ✧✧ Activities to make you laugh
- ✧✧ Books for the kids and grown ups





WHO IS MAMA G?

Hello! I'm Ian from Timbrell Education. I've put this pack together and I thought it would be good to chat with Mama G during rehearsals for The Magic Bookmark. I had lots that I wanted to ask her and I think I've covered everything! If you've got any questions for Mama G that I haven't asked, your grown ups can find out the answers via Mama G's social media.



Ian: Hello Mama G! How are you?

Mama G: I'm very well thank you. They're working us hard here in rehearsals, so I'm glad to sit down! I'm excited for the show though, so I know the graft will be worth it!

Ian: You must have been in lots of rehearsal rooms by this point?

Mama G: Oh, I have! This is my eighteenth year of doing panto! When I started doing panto back in 2005 it only really happened at Christmas, but over the years it's become popular at Easter and during the summer holidays. Some years I've been in three and four. This Christmas I'm in two at the same time! In eighteen years I've probably been in over forty pantomimes! I've also done lots of plays and musicals, so you're right: that is a LOT of rehearsal rooms.

Ian: Do you enjoy rehearsing?

Mama G: If I'm honest, it's not my favourite part of putting on the show; but they are really important! Like everything in life, you have to work hard to get a show right and make sure you're on the top of your game when the audience comes in.

Ian: So you've been in over forty pantomimes? You must really love it!

Mama G: I do! I've loved panto since I was little.

Ian: Do you remember what you loved about it as a kid?

Mama G: I think, as a kid, I was very drawn to the glitter and the spectacle. And I LOVED seeing adults fully committed to bringing fairy tales to life and being silly. Now I'm an adult I love that, in its modern form, panto is one of the UK's only unique cultural art forms and I think it's really important.

Ian: Why is that?

Mama G: Because it's designed to be enjoyed by people of all ages and appeals to people from lots of different backgrounds. That makes it a great way of sharing important messages and information, with lots of people.



Ian: Does The Magic Bookmark have an important message?

Mama G: All of my work is driven by the motto “Be who you want and love who you are” – I think that’s pretty important! But, the story itself was inspired by the book banning that is happening in America. Certain groups are demanding that books about the LGBTQIA+ community or people of colour are taken out of schools and libraries. I was really upset about this, because we need to have access to stories about everyone, and everyone has the right to be represented. That’s why I decided to create a show that addressed why book banning is a massive problem.

Ian: Wow! That sounds serious!

Mama G: It is serious and I am very serious about it – but the joy of putting it in a panto is that we can share the message while having lots of fun!

Ian: Why do you think you’re the right person to share this message?

Mama G: I think because panto dames are the embodiment of ‘being who you are’. We’re both masculine and feminine and unashamedly themselves. It’s great for kids to see and understand the joy that results from it.

Ian: Was it fun to create the show?

Mama G: So much! I wrote it with my friend Katie Pritchard. She’s a comedian and amazing at writing songs. One of my other friends, Julie Yammanee is the voice of the Bookmark and I love her sense of humour so much. Two other panto dames have been involved: Stuart Loughland designed and built the puppets and Daniel Hanton designed the scenery – imagine how much fun that is! And my friends Sarah, Kevin, Roberto, Marc, Holly and Amée have all helped! It’s always fun when you have that many friends around.

Ian: Do you make lots of friends doing panto?

Mama G: You can do, because you work so closely with people. You become like a family. Some of those friendships only last as long as the job and some will hopefully last a lifetime. You never know! I think it’s just important to be nice to everyone, whether you want to be their friend or not!

Ian: Panto is famous for casting celebrities – do you have any celebrity friends?

Mama G: Oh I always assume that I’m the celebrity! I’m joking... I think. I do have a few. I’ve been lucky to work with lots! I’ve done panto with people from BoyZone, B*Witched, Blue, EastEnders, Neighbours, Coronation Street, Hollyoaks and just about any sitcom that aired in the 1980s!

Ian: Well, Mama G: before you get back to rehearsals. Is there anything you

Mama G: Just that I hope everyone enjoys the show and feels inspired to read stories that teach us about ALL the amazing people that make our world so special!

Ian: Thanks Mama G.



THE MAGIC BOOKMARK!

BY MAMA G



Once upon a time in a magical place called Panto Land, lived...



Mama G ran the Panto Land Library. She loved sharing stories with everyone! Mama G thought that stories could help make the world a better place.

Not everyone felt the same though.

One day Mama G was working in the library when all of a sudden the air turned green and eerie music started to play. That could only mean one thing: that a panto baddie was about to appear. Sure enough, in a puff of smoke a slimy figure holding an encyclopaedia appeared. It was...



"What do you want?" asked Mama G.

Book Worm laughed and said that he'd read the encyclopaedia and decided that books gave people too much knowledge. And when people have knowledge they have power. And he wanted to be the most powerful creature in Panto Land.

"So, I'm removing all books from Panto Land forever!" And with a wiggle of Book Worm's tail, all the books in Mama G's library vanished.

Mama G was so upset. She knew that people relied on books to feel represented and to learn about others. So, she made a bargain with Book Worm. He agreed, that if she could find three books that proved him wrong, he would return all the books to Panto Land. There was only one catch: Mama G had just **twenty-four hours** to do it. Before Mama G could argue, Book Worm vanished in a puff of smoke.


As important and exciting this challenge was, Mama G was worried. Could she do this by herself? If she was going to save the world she was surely going to need some help. Mama G looked around the empty library and wondered who she could ask.

At that moment, like in all good fairy tales, a gust of wind blew through the library. Papers flew off Mama G's desk, leaving just one scrap behind. It was a small, flat rectangle, with a tassel at the bottom. It stood up on its tassel and said: "Hello, I'm..."



"And I will help you on your quest." They said.





Mama G was so relieved to have some help, that she took the Magic Bookmark's hand. They taught her the magic travel song and away they flew through time and space, until they arrived at the first library.

Mama G looked around. "There's no books here, either. What are we going to do?"

"Perhaps we should try solving this riddle," said the Bookmark, pointing at a bit of paper on the floor.

The riddle said:

I'm under a bag,
But not a sack.
I'm full of beans,
But not called Jack.



Hmm, where could the book be? That's right! Under a beanbag!

The first book was called: (Can you remember what the first book was called?) And it was by: _____ and _____.

Can you remember what the first book was about? It was about: _____ and _____

"I think being kind and having empathy for others is really important," said Mama G.

"What a great find, Magic Bookmark. Where to next?"

Bookmark thought about it and said: "these books are as precious as gold, so I think we need to go where we might find some treasure!"

"Ooh, like an island?" asked Mama G.


"Just like that!" said Bookmark.

They took Mama G's hand and jumped into the air, flying through the cosmos, singing the magic travel song.

It wasn't too long before they arrived on an island. It had nothing on it but palm trees, sand and ... a map!

"Maybe this map will take us to some books," said Mama G. "Because there aren't any here!"

The pair followed the map, taking four steps forward, twelve hops to the right, turning anti-clockwise nine times, singing every other word of the Hakka as they travelled due north and did a conga line in a figure of eight.



Then Bookmark saw it! The second book!

The second book was called: (Can you remember what the second book was called?)

And it was by: _____ and _____ .

Can you remember what the second book was about?

It was about:

“Loving who you are is really important,” said Mama G. “This book is perfect.”

Mama G and Bookmark felt Flush with success. There was still loads of time to defeat Book Worm’s wicked scheme.

Or so they thought...

Before they could think about where to go next the air turned green and eerie music started to play. With a puff of smoke Book Worm appeared!

“You think you can beat me?” he said. “I will win the day, even if it means losing a day!”

“What do you mean?” said Mama G.

“It’s simple. I’m taking control of time! You thought you had twenty-four hours! Now you have fifteen minutes! And I’m dumping you both wherever the wind takes you!”

Book Worm wasn’t wrong. A hurricane lifted Mama G and Bookmark off their feet and they landed in a fairground, thousands of miles away from the island.

“This is hopeless,” said Mama G. “I should just give up. We’re running out of time and there’s obviously not going to be any books here. Let’s just admit defeat.”

“I don’t think so!” Bookmark replied. “We only have one more book to find and there’s always prizes to be won at the fair! Why don’t we try this hook-a-duck? Perhaps we can hook-a-book!”

Mama G wasn’t sure, but she gave it a go. Can you guess what happened?
That’s right! They found the third book!



The third book was called: (Can you remember what the third book was called?)led?)

And it was by: _____ and _____ .

Can you remember what the third book was about?

It was about: _____ and _____ .

“This book has made me feel so brave and so strong,” said Mama G. “I think it’s the perfect third book!

“Come on Mama G, we’ve got thirty seconds to get back to Book Worm. We need to be quick if we’re going to defeat him!” said Book Mark, flying them both back to Panto Land Library as fast as they could.

When they got there Book Worm was waiting for them.

Mama G and Bookmark ran through the doors and put the three books on the library shelves. As they placed each book down the other shelves began to fill up with books. Until it looked like a proper library again.

Book Worm had been well and truly defeated!

But something else magical had happened. Book Worm had spent this whole adventure discovering how important books were and all the important things we can learn from them. He realised you can’t have a world without books, because people need stories to understand the world they live in.

“Friends?” said Mama G.

“Friends!” said Bookmark.

...

“Friends!” said Book Worm.

✧ The
End ✧





WORD SEARCH

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden down and across



F	A	S	D	M	U	S	I	C	A	S	S
G	K	S	W	O	R	M	A	D	R	F	T
H	I	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	G	D	O
J	N	D	T	E	M	P	A	T	H	Y	R
K	D	Y	E	D	G	H	M	I	E	G	Y
M	A	G	I	C	H	Y	E	U	F	H	T
E	L	I	U	H	B	R	G	I	D	Y	E
S	P	A	N	T	O	M	I	M	E	U	L
D	U	F	I	R	O	Y	M	A	M	A	L
F	I	G	S	F	K	H	M	Y	T	U	I
G	O	H	N	D	S	J	A	T	H	I	N
H	P	T	H	E	A	T	R	E	G	O	G

DAME

BOOKS

MAGIC

THEATRE

PANTOMIME

KIND

WORM

MAMA

STORYTELLING

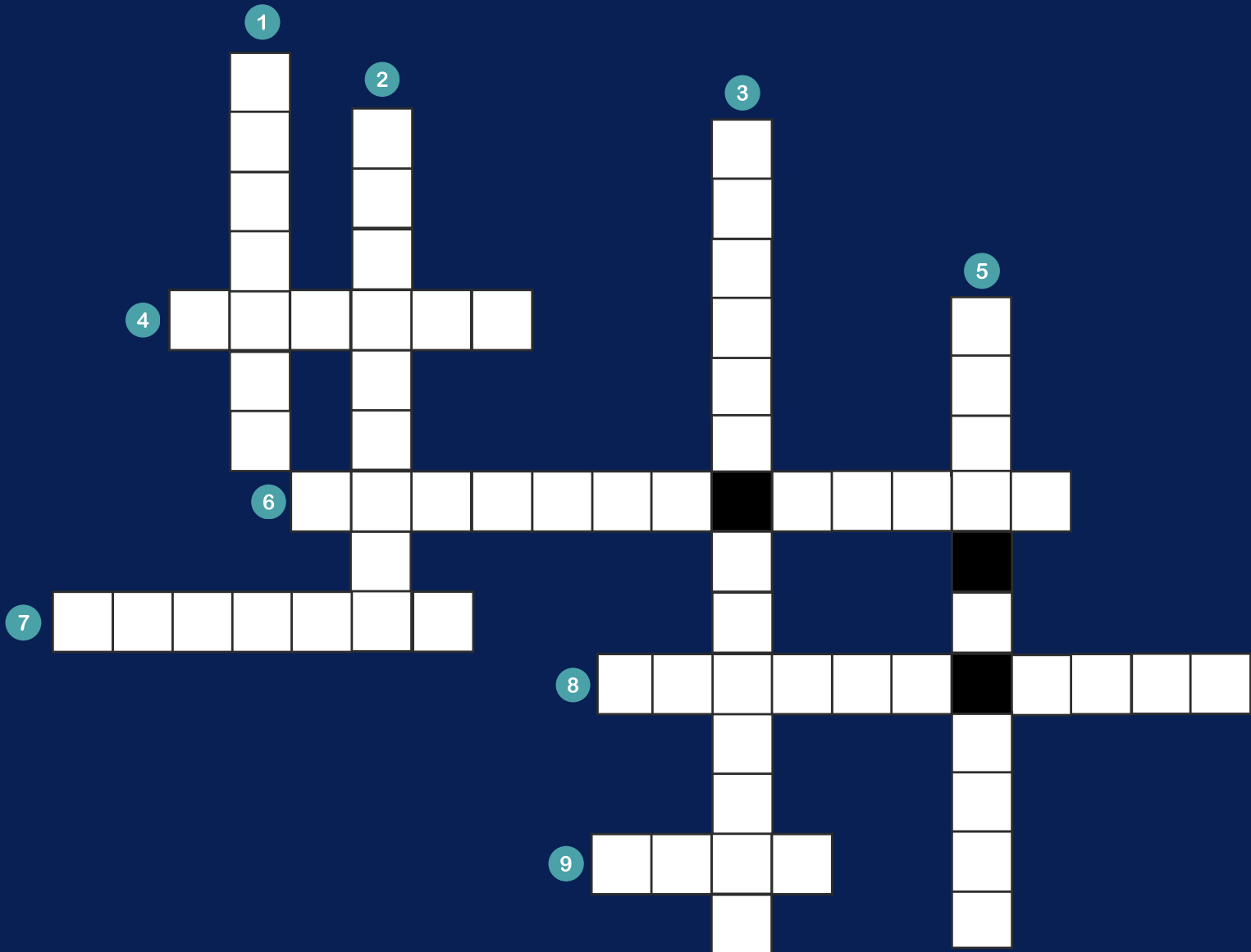
EMPATHY

FRIENDS

MUSIC



CROSSWORD



1 What does a theatre box office sell?

2 What are you watching?

3 What did you tell yourself when you looked in the magic mirror?

4 Mama G thinks inclusive stories can make the world _____.

5 How did Mama G find the third and final book?

6 What does Mama G read?

7 Boooooooooo!

8 How many hours does Mama G have to save the day?

9 What type of panto character is Mama G?

THE WHIMSICAL WORLD OF PANTO

Welcome, young adventurers, to the enchanting world of pantomime! Pantomime, often called “panto” for short, is a magical form of theatre that has been delighting audiences for many, many years. Join us on a whimsical journey through time as we discover the fascinating history of pantomime!

Act 1: Once Upon a Time...

Our story begins a long, long time ago in ancient Greece. The Greeks loved their theater, and they had a special kind of play called “pantomimos,” where performers acted out stories using only gestures and facial expressions. It was like a silent play full of excitement and emotion!



Act 2: Pantomime in Ancient Rome

The Romans loved a good show too! Pantomime evolved and became even more popular during Roman times. Performers called “pantomimus” would use elaborate masks and dance to tell stories without saying a word. Imagine a play where the actors danced their way through adventures and tales – it must have been incredible!

Act 3: Pantomime Takes a Break

As time went on, pantomime took a bit of a nap. The world changed, and people enjoyed different kinds of entertainment. But fear not, dear friends, for pantomime was destined for a grand comeback! In the Middle Ages, many English people hosted a ‘Mummers Play’! It contained many of the familiar parts of a pantomime such as stage fights, naughty humour, gender swapping, and of course good overcoming evil.

Act 4: Pantomime in Renaissance

Fast forward to the Renaissance, a time of rebirth and creativity. Pantomime also emerged in Italy, capturing the hearts of audiences once again. Called ‘Commedia dell’Arte’, performers brought tales to life through expressive movements, making everyone laugh, gasp, and cheer.

Act 5: The Birth of Pantomime in the UK

Our story now jumps to merry old England! In the 18th century, pantomime found a new home. It became a festive tradition during the Christmas season, filled with laughter, music, and colourful characters. Oh yes, it did!



Act 6: Pantomime Today

Today, pantomime is a cherished holiday tradition in many countries, especially in the United Kingdom. Families gather to watch these magical shows where good triumphs over evil, and the audience gets to join in the fun, shouting, “He’s behind you!” and “Oh no, he isn’t!”

Conclusion:

From ancient Greece to the present day, pantomime has been a source of joy and laughter for people of all ages. It’s also a great way for us to communicate ideas about the world we live in, to lots of people. I hope that The Magic Bookmark has shown you that panto isn’t just fun: it can help change the world! And long may it continue!

FOR THE GROWN UPS

Sometimes it can be difficult to know if we're saying the right thing when we talk to children about LGBT+ communities. We want to make sure that we talk to them in an age appropriate way, but that we also help them to see the wonderful diversity of the world. Here's some advice about how you can go about this, but at the end of the day, you have to do what you feel is best for your child.



Why should I talk about LGBT+ communities?

The world is a wonderfully diverse place with lots of variety in families. There are families with two mums, two dads, one mum, one dad, step mums, step dads, grandparents, adopted parents, foster parents and many many others. All of our children should understand that every family is different and unique and that they are all special in their own way. Not only will this help them understand themselves and their own family, but also to understand and respect people who have families that are different to their own.

Where do I start?

Right from when children are born, we can start reading books that show the wonderful diversity of the world. We don't need to make a 'lesson' or an 'issue' out of these books, but through reading stories with a variety of family types, we can immediately begin to instil an understanding that every family is unique. There are a list of suggested books at the end of this pack. For instance, I could read Baking with Dad, which is a book about a young girl who bakes a cake with her dad and on the very last page (spoiler alert!), the other dad comes in for his birthday. Your child may ask questions, but they may not. The important thing is that they realise that some families are different to their own but that they are all wonderful. When they get older, we can introduce books that talk about being gay or lesbian, as chances are they will have a relative or friend who is, and will be old enough to understand the language.

Should we go to Pride?

Pride can be so much fun for families! Most large Pride events have a family section where there are age appropriate activities and entertainment (including sometimes me!) Get your rainbow face-paint on, wear lots of bright colours and come and celebrate families of all shapes and sizes.





What if they ask questions?

That's wonderful! It's great to ask questions. It's important that we are open and honest with our children in an age-appropriate way. With children up to age 8, we can talk about LGBT+ diversity in terms of families and love. For instance, some families have one mum and one dad, some have two dads etc. If they ask about why this is, we can say that some people love boys and some love girls and both is ok. At this age, that's all they'll want to know!

Should I introduce the words gay and lesbian etc when they are young?

This is a decision that you need to make. Children don't necessarily need the words to understand family diversity, but it can help talk about it. Ask your child's school what they are doing with vocabulary and work together to build an approach that's right for your child.

I'm worried that if they read these books, they will turn LGBT+

We are all born the way we are and reading a book will not change our identity. Children can't be 'turned' LGBT+, just like they can't be 'turned' straight by reading books with straight characters in! By reading these books, they'll gain more acceptance for the world we live in and can help themselves or others to live as their authentic selves. And if they are LGBT+, you've created an environment where they feel loved, accepted and welcome in their family!

But my child isn't LGBT+ and they don't have two parents. Why should they read these books?

Our world is so wonderfully diverse and in all order to make all children feel included and represented in our world, it's so important that all of our children learn about all types of people; this will also help stop bullying and unkindness. We also don't know who our children will grow up to be, so it's important that they grow up in a world where they feel welcome, no matter who they are.

What if I want to find out more about the LGBT+ community?

We've included a list of books for parents at the end of this pack, or you can look at the websites of organisations such as Stonewall, Fflag or The Proud Trust. Thank you for making the world a more inclusive place!



ACTIVITIES TO MAKE YOU TALK

Draw a family

Ask your child to draw a family. How many different families can you draw? How are they similar? How are they different? Talk about how all families might look different, do different things and live in different places, but they have one thing in common: love!



Family values

Everyone in the family draw around their hand. On each finger and thumb, write or draw something that's important to them. It could be something abstract like 'honesty' or 'kindness' or something more concrete such as 'holidays' or 'cooking together'. No matter what they say, the important thing is we talk about what's special to us.



A new adventure!

Who is your favourite character from one of your stories? Can we build a story together? Using a long piece of paper, draw out another adventure for the character in a book, then tell the story out loud, taking it in turns to say the next part. Older children could then write down the story and read it to younger children.



Kindness tree

On a luggage label, write something kind that you could do for someone in your house that week and tie it to a tree branch. Each week add to the tree and build up all of your kindness deeds.

Story hunt

Quick, find five random items from around the house for someone else in your family. Can they tell a story which involves the items? It can be as wacky or as silly as you want. Then take it in turns and see who can tell the best story.



ACTIVITIES TO MAKE YOU LAUGH

Panto dame dressup!

In 10 minutes, who can find items around the house and dress up as the wackiest, funniest and most amazing panto dame? Will you use a mop for your hair? Or a blanket as a skirt? Now, take it to the runway!

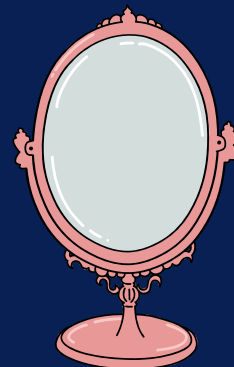


Where's the glass slipper?

Hide one shoe somewhere around the house. Who can find it first and reunite Cinderella with her glass slipper? (or normal slipper, or boot, or trainer. You get the idea!)

The mirror!

Face a partner and copy everything that they do. But can you do it without laughing? No matter their silly face, or their strange body shapes, you mustn't laugh. Whoever laughs last, wins!



Mime tug of war

Split into two teams and play tug of war with an 'invisible' rope. Who will win? Will you be pulled this way? Or that way? Maybe do this with lots of space around, we don't want a broken coffee table when one team loses!

Panto time!

Why not put on your own panto? Turn your favourite story into a play and add in the typical panto characters. Why not switch up the gender roles in typical panto style and have fun as a family acting as silly as you can, whilst telling a brilliant story?



Picture books

The Dress in the Window - Robert Tregonning and Pippa Curnick
 Out of the Blue - Robert Tregonning and Stef Murphy
 Ghost's Journey - Robin Stevenson
 The Girl with Two Dads - Mel Elliot
 Nen and the Lonely Fisherman - Ian Eagleton and James Mayhew
 My Daddies - Gareth Peter and Garry Parsons
 My Magic Family - Lotte Jeffs and Sharon Davey
 I am Not a Prince - Rachael Davis and Beatrix Hatcher
 Grandad's Camper / Grandad's Pride - Harry Woodgate
 Dick Whittington - Mama G, Katie Pritchard and Sarah Thompson
 The Fairies Fran and Vera - Mama G and Anouska Sutherland
 Uncle Bobby's Wedding - Sarah S. Brannen and Lucie Soto
 Cinder & Ella - Barbara Slade and Lucie Soto
 She's My Dad - Sarah Savage and Joules Garcia
 A Fox Called Herbert - Margaret Sturton
 Pride Puppy - Robin Stevenson and Julie McLaughlin
 The Pirate Mums - Jodie Lancet-Grant and Lydia Corry

Young novels

Jamie - L.D. Lapinski
 Glitter Boy - Ian Eagleton
 The Last Firefox - Lee Newbery
 Me, My Dad and the End of the Rainbow - Benjamin Dean
 Just Like Everyone Else - Sarah Hagger-Holt
 Melissa and Rick - Alex Gino

For the grown ups

Queer Up - Alexis Caught
 The Queer Parent - Lotte Jeffs and Stu Oakley
 Rainbow Parenting - Lindz Amer
 The Heart's Invisible Furies - John Boyne
 Maurice - E.M. Forster
 The House on the Cerulean Sea - TJ Klune
 The Gracekeepers - Kirsty Logan



I hope you enjoyed watching me in
'The Magic Bookmark'!

Why not let me know your
thoughts?



<https://www.facebook.com/MamaGStories>



<https://twitter.com/MamaGStories>



<https://www.tiktok.com/@mamagstories>



<https://www.instagram.com/mamagstories/>



<https://www.youtube.com/mamagstories>



CREATED IN COLLABORATION
WITH IAN TIMBRELL



Timbrell Education
TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY