

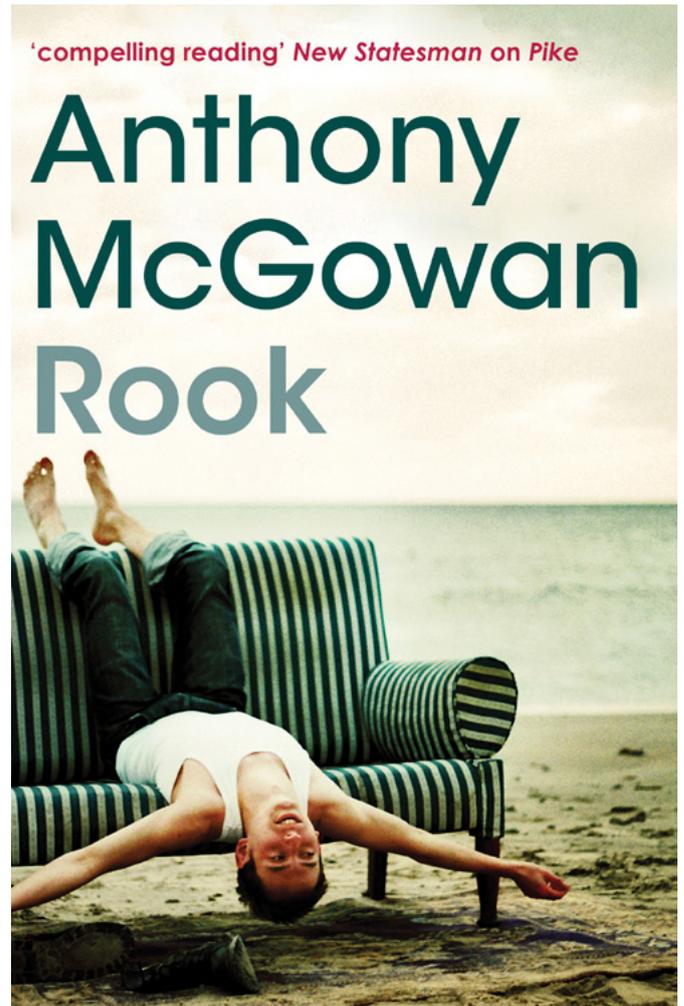
# ROOK

By Anthony McGowan

Barrington Stoke

2018 Carnegie Medal shortlist,  
eligible for Amnesty CILIP Honour

**'Every word used is apposite. The novel deals thoughtfully with themes of bullying, first love, faith and what it means to be part of a family. Undeniably gritty and authentic.'** *Judging panel*



## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**Article 5:** No one has the right to hurt us or to torture us

**Article 26:** Everyone has the right to education

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

Life has got better for teenager Nicky. His dad has a girlfriend, and his brother Kenny, who has learning difficulties, has made new friends. But after Nicky and Kenny rescue a rook left for dead, life starts to unravel. *Rook* is a story about coping with a bully, not bottling things up, kindness and looking after those closest to us. It enables us to see things from other people's perspectives and recognise that everyone has individual experiences and rights on an equal basis.

### HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS STORY

The right to education; to a good life with enough food, clothing, housing and healthcare; to equality; to safety; to freedom from cruel or degrading behaviour; to be treated fairly.

### YOU CAN TALK ABOUT...

#### The rook

- What does it symbolise?
- What are the parallels between Nicky and Rooky?

#### The right to education

- What do you think of the decision to expel Nicky?
- How would you feel if you went to Milton Park?
- Do you think the school's reputation is justified?
- Is it OK for students to be afraid to go to a particular school?
- Why is education so important that it is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

#### Money

- Nicky's family is short of money. What impact does this have?

## Family

- ‘My dad was in a bad way’ (Nicky). How does that make you feel?
- Why does Nicky hurt Kenny on purpose?
- What holds the family together?

## Communication and friendship

- Is Nicky a good friend? What do you like about him?
- Nicky struggles to communicate his true feelings. Kenny possesses no filters and says what is true. Discuss.
- Sarah is a great listener. Who can you talk to? How can we help people feel safe enough to talk about their experiences and feelings?

## Bullying and discrimination

- Derogatory language is used in the book. What is the impact?
- How can we stop this type of language being used?
- What lies beneath Stanno’s bullying? How does your opinion of him change by the end of the book?

## Doing the right thing

- Kenny says ‘You shouldn’t say things that you don’t know cos saying stuff you don’t know is lying’. Do you agree?
- At the point Nicky walks out of school, what advice would you give him?
- What does Nicky learn about doing the right thing?

## Equality and respect

- Why is it a surprise to Nicky that ‘Kenny existed all by himself’?
- Kenny has the right to be independent and treated with respect. Why is this overlooked?
- How can we ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against?

## ACTIVITY

*Rook* tells the story of Nicky’s bad week. Write the story from Kenny or Sarah’s perspective, in the first person.

## RESEARCH

Find out about the medical model of disability versus the social model. What do you learn about disability rights and how people campaign for them?

**‘I’d spent my whole life not talking about the things inside me, and now I’d spilled them all over the table, all over her, this girl that I didn’t even know.’ Nicky**

## WE ARE ALL BORN FREE AND EQUAL

The atrocities of World War II sparked a determination to protect the rights of all human beings everywhere. On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble says it must be shared, learned by children and be a part of all our lives.

When using these notes, you can download for reference:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights simplified version, especially useful for younger children [amnesty.org.uk/udhr](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [unicef.org/crc](https://www.unicef.org/crc)

For more free educational resources from Amnesty International go to [amnesty.org.uk/education](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)



The CILIP Carnegie  
& Kate Greenaway  
Children's Book  
Awards



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