

Praise for
THE RIVER SINGERS

‘A hymn to nature, written with compassion and flair.’

Lauren St John, author of *The White Giraffe*

‘Just the sort of book I would have loved to have picked up as a child. I love the way Tom weaves in the natural history of the riverbank with a fast paced adventure.’

Gill Lewis, author of *Sky Hawk*

‘This book became one of my favourites. I was worried what Sylvan, his brothers and sisters would do next! There was a lot of danger in their long journey. I couldn’t wait to turn over the next page because I was full of excitement.’

Momo, age 8

‘The book was amazing—it was the best book that I have ever read. I felt like I was in the book. My eyes would just not stop reading. I will recommend it to lots of people.’

Lulu, age 9

‘With echoes of *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame and *Watership Down* this is a wonderful story with a classic, traditional feel. The writing style is lovely and the descriptions vividly conjure up the animals’ world on the riverbank. The setting in an English countryside, together with the absence of people and the modern world, give this book a timeless quality . . . An utterly lovely book and highly recommended.’

The Bookbag



THE RIVER SINGERS

Tom Moorhouse



Illustrated by Simon Mendez

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PROLOGUE

The rumour spread from burrow to burrow down the length of the Great River. The females, eyeing each other over their boundaries, commented on it in hushed tones. The males spoke of it with raised chins and defiant looks, before moving on and away to their own business. The rumour told of a new danger to the Folk. It told of a horror which came in the night. It told of the Great River stripped bare of her people, of entire colonies gone. It told of the end of their world.

But perhaps, they thought, a rumour is all it was. The ancient enemies—the fox, heron, weasel—had always been there, awaiting the unwary or unlucky. And still the Folk prospered. The Great River sang, her grasses were plentiful, and her waters were warm and bustling with life. No, perhaps rumours were only rumours and the lives of the Folk would continue as before. But even so the mothers turned an eye to their young, and slept more lightly than they had. And the males scented the breeze more carefully before straying into the open, ran more quickly, fed more watchfully.

Sylvan and the others, nestling in their chamber, knew nothing of the rumours. They knew nothing of the outside. They knew their mother, the scents of their home, and the rhythms of the Great River. They knew hunger which could be quenched with milk. But one day they would learn that sometimes a rumour is more than a rumour. Sometimes a rumour is a life which has yet to come.

