

# SEPTEMBER 2022:

## Book of the Month is...

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping YA novel about one girl's struggle for justice.

*“What's the point of having a voice if you're gonna be silent in those moments you shouldn't be?” ...”*



# A bit about the author.. Angie Green

- + Angie Thomas was born and raised in Mississippi, but now calls Atlanta her home. She is a former teen rapper whose greatest accomplishment was an article about her in Right-On Magazine. She holds a BFA in Creative Writing from Belhaven University and an unofficial degree in Hip Hop.
- + Angie is a winner of the Walter Dean Myers Grant 2015, awarded by We Need Diverse Books. Her debut novel, THE HATE U GIVE, started as a senior project in college. It debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list, winning the ALA's William C. Morris Debut Award and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award (USA), the Waterstones Children's Book Prize (UK), and the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis (Germany).
- + THE HATE U GIVE was adapted into a critically acclaimed film from Fox 2000, starring Amandla Stenberg and directed by George Tillman, Jr.
- + Angie's second novel, ON THE COME UP, is a #1 New York Times bestseller as well, and a film is in development with Paramount Pictures with Angie acting as a producer.
- + In 2020, Angie released FIND YOUR VOICE: A Guided Journal to Writing Your Truth as a tool to help aspiring writers tell their stories. In 2021, Angie returned to the world of Garden Heights with CONCRETE ROSE, a prequel to THE HATE U GIVE focused on seventeen-year-old Maverick Carter that debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list.



***"I look at books as being a form of activism. Sometimes they'll show us a side of the world that we might not have known about."***

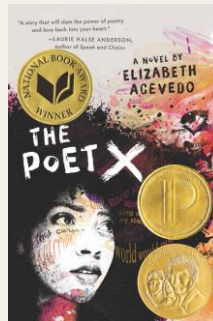
***- Angie Green.***

## If you enjoy 'The Hate U Give'...

Please check out these other fantastic books that have something positive to say about finding your voice...



Prequel to this book.



Finding your voice through poetry.



Justice in the face of racism.

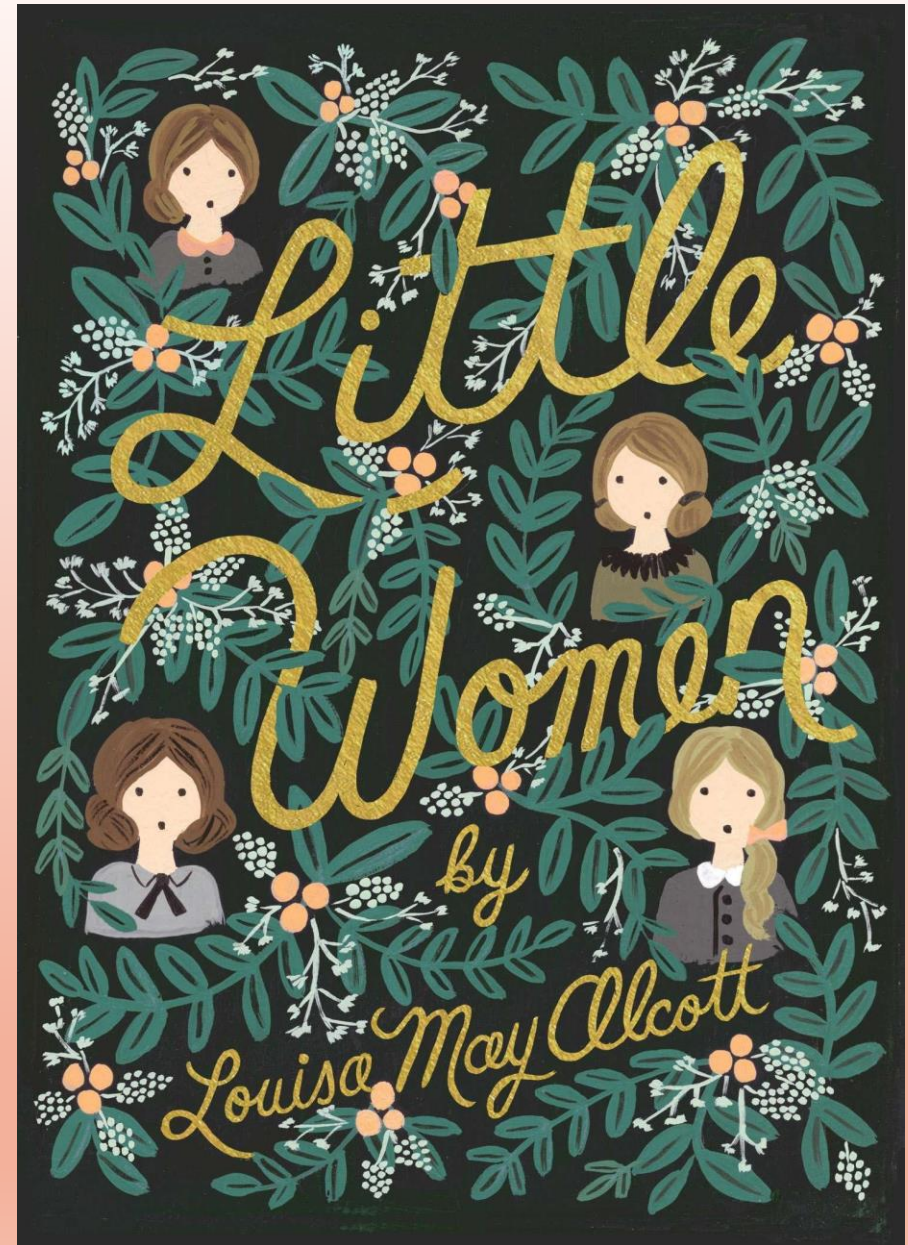


Being true to your identity.



# October 2022: Book of the Month is...

- + Little Women follows the mischief and adventures of the March sisters: Meg, Beth, Amy and Jo. The novel follows the sisters as they find their places in the world in their transition from girls to young women.
- + Set in 1868, the sisters live in humble but refined poverty with their mother, Marmee, in a rural town in Massachusetts, while their father is away serving as an army chaplain during the American Civil War. The sisters soon befriend their lonely neighbour, Laurie, grandson of the mysterious and old man next door.
- + Second-oldest sister Jo is at the heart of the family. Her vitality quickly catches Laurie's eye, and the pair become inseparable friends. This friendship blooms into a complicated love story, where Jo must navigate her dream to be a successful writer against her true feelings for Laurie.
- + The novel also follows the endeavours of the other sisters. Meg becomes infatuated with Laurie's tutor, John Brooke; Beth becomes ill with scarlet fever; and Amy becomes intertwined with Laurie after he is turned down by Jo.



*“I want to do something splendid...something heroic or wonderful that won't be forgotten after I'm dead”*

## A bit about the author... Louisa May Alcott



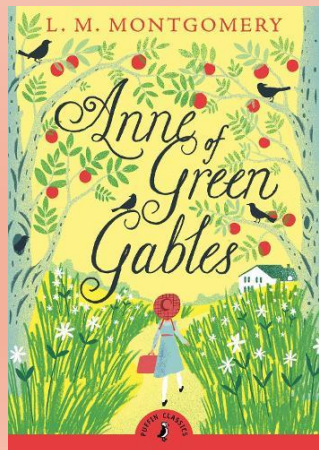
***“I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship.”***

***- Louisa May Alcott.***

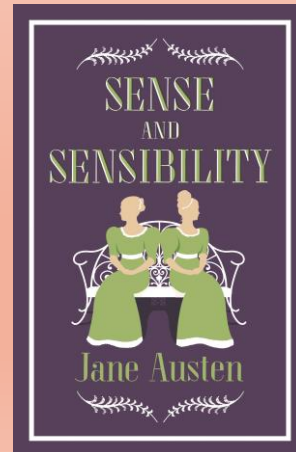
- + Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) was born in Pennsylvania but spent most of her life in Massachusetts. Most of her early works were written under the pseudonym A.M Barnard. These works were not popular for their presentation of women as strong, independent and self-sufficient. She is most famous for her classic novel ‘Little Women,’ published in 1868.
- + The beginning of her career as a writer was interrupted by the American Civil War. She volunteered as a nurse but became ill with typhoid, from which she never fully recovered. The letters she wrote to her family during her time as a nurse were later published as a book, ‘Hospital Sketches’ (1863). This brought Alcott her first taste of fame.
- + ‘Little Women’ has been adapted into television shows, plays and several films. Most recently Greta Gerwig adapted the novel into a critically acclaimed film in 2019, starring Florence Pugh, Emma Watson and Timothee Chalamet.
- + ‘Little Women’ was an immediate bestseller and has never been out of print since its publication. But one mystery remains about the book... Since its publication fans have been in the dark about how much of the novel is based on Alcott’s own friends and family. This is a mystery that can never be solved, but readers have long suspected parallels between the character Jo March and Alcott herself.

## If you enjoy ‘Little Women’...

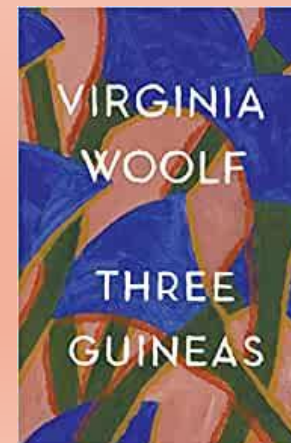
Please check out these other fantastic books that follow young people finding their place in the world...



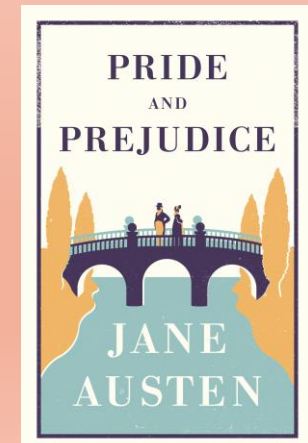
The highs and lows of growing up.



Balancing love with responsibility.



Women’s right to equality.



Why we should not judge others.



# November 2022:

## Book of the Month is...

***"Like, like, like. My confidence grew with each click."***

Could you last six whole weeks without your phone? Six weeks without sharing photos, without group messages, without being kept in the social-media loop?

An eccentric entrepreneur has challenged Esther's year group to do just that, and the winners will walk away with £1,000.

For Esther, whose dad and sister live thousands of miles away in New York, the prize might be her only chance to afford flights for a visit...

But can she really stay disconnected long enough to win?

*"This short, snappy and entertaining book has an irresistible premise which many teenagers will find relatable" - BookTrust*

*"An astute, thought-provoking look at the highs and lows of social media" - The Bookseller*





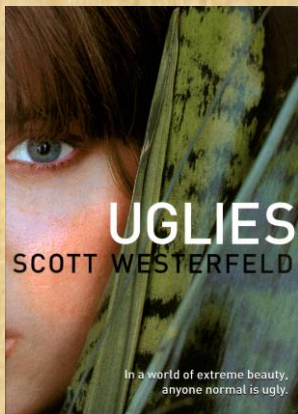
# A bit about the author... Keren David



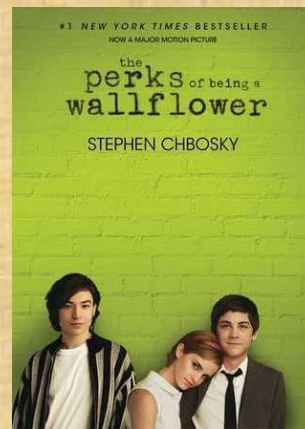
*“I knew I could never clean away this memory. We were stained and spoiled forever.”*  
- Keren David, *Salvage*.

- + Growing up in a small town in Hertfordshire, Keren David had two ambitions: to write a book and to live in London. Several decades on, she achieved both. She was distracted by journalism, starting out at 18 as a messenger girl, then working as a reporter, news editor, features editor and feature writer for national newspapers and magazines. She has lived in Glasgow and Amsterdam. She is now back in London and lives with her husband, two children and their insatiably hungry guinea pigs.
- + Keren David publishing her debut YA novel, 'When I Was Joe', while taking a course in Writing for Children at City University. It won six regional awards and was shortlisted for the Branford Boase and UKLA awards. Her books have been nominated for the Carnegie Medal five times. Her Barrington Stoke titles include 'The Liar's Handbook' and 'True Sisters'. She is also an associate editor at the Jewish Chronicle.

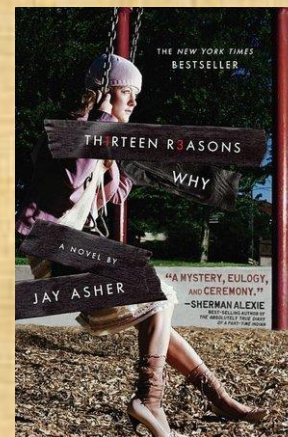
If you enjoy “The Disconnect”, you may also like...



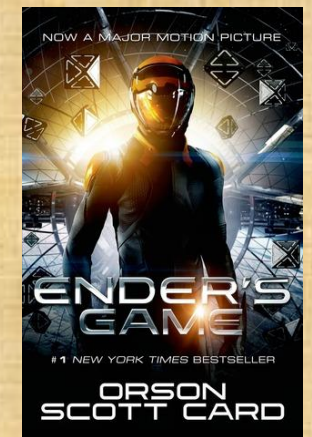
Appearance, dystopia, fantasy.



Teenage pressures.



Mental health.



Computer games, teen fiction, dystopia.



# December 2022: Book of the Month is...

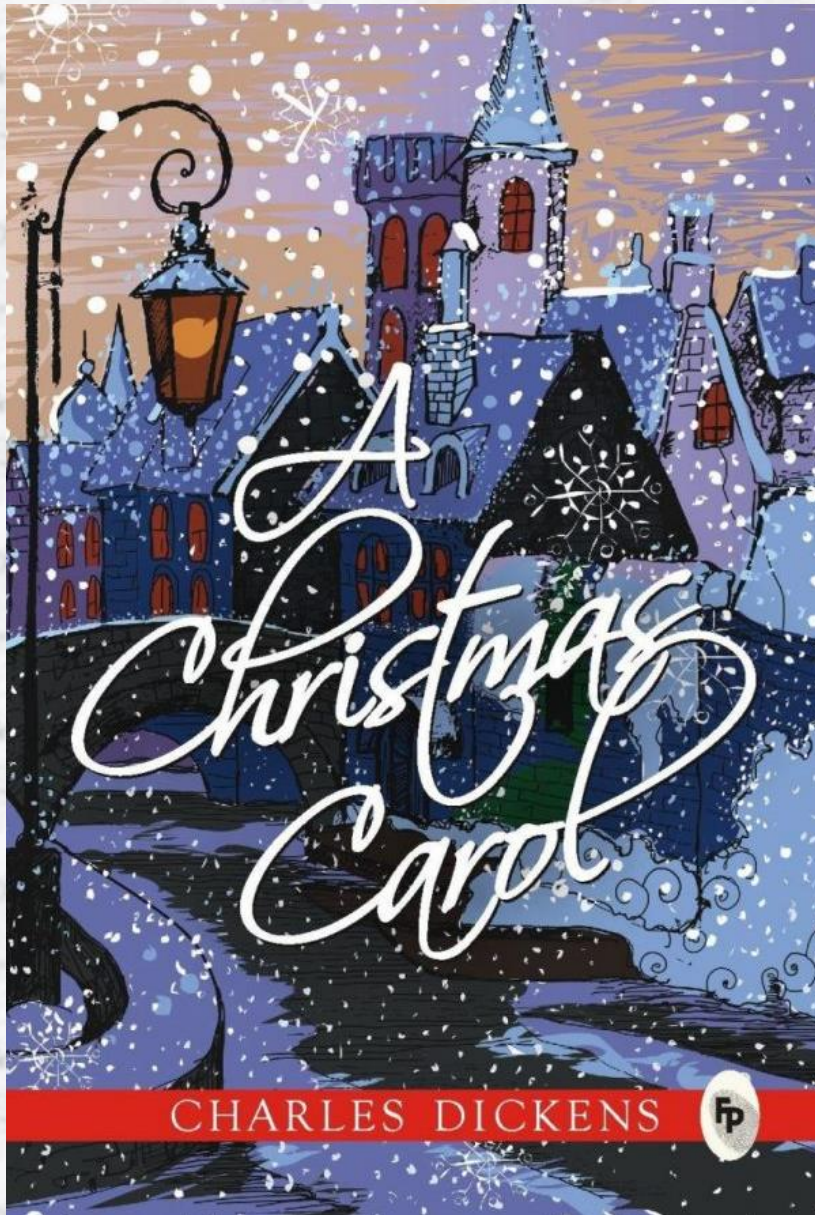
*A Christmas Carol* recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly miser who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come.

After their visits, Scrooge is transformed into a kinder, gentler man.

Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* during a period when the British were exploring and re-evaluating past Christmas traditions, including carols, and newer customs such as Christmas cards and Christmas trees. He was influenced by the experiences of his own youth and by the Christmas stories of other authors, including Washington Irving and Douglas Jerrold. Dickens had written three Christmas stories prior to the novella, and was inspired following a visit to the Field Lane Ragged School, one of several establishments for London's street children. The treatment of the poor and the ability of a selfish man to redeem himself by transforming into a more sympathetic character are the key themes of the story. There is discussion among academics as to whether this is a fully secular story, or if it is a Christian allegory.

Published on 19 December, the first edition sold out by Christmas Eve; by the end of 1844 thirteen editions had been released. Most critics reviewed the novella favourably. The story was illicitly copied in January 1844; Dickens took legal action against the publishers, who went bankrupt, further reducing Dickens's small profits from the publication. He went on to write four other Christmas stories in subsequent years. In 1849 he began public readings of the story, which proved so successful he undertook 127 further performances until 1870, the year of his death. *A Christmas Carol* has never been out of print and has been translated into several languages; the story has been adapted many times for film, stage, opera and other media.

*A Christmas Carol* captured the zeitgeist of the mid-Victorian revival of the Christmas holiday. Dickens had acknowledged the influence of the modern Western observance of Christmas and later inspired several aspects of Christmas, including family gatherings, seasonal food and drink, dancing, games and a festive generosity of spirit.





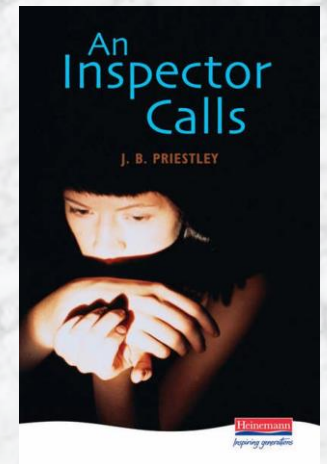
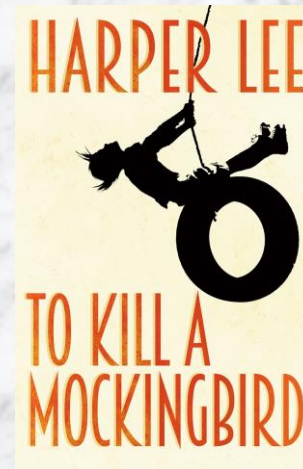
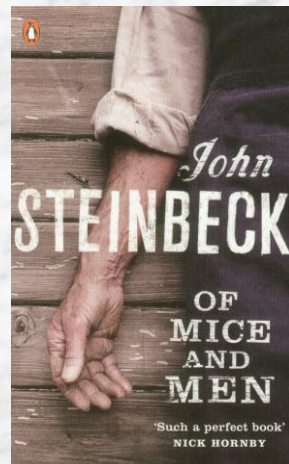
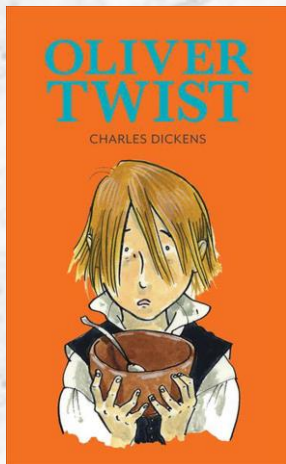
# A bit about the author: Charles Dickens

- Born 7<sup>th</sup> February 1812 in Portsmouth, England and died in 1870.
- The writer Charles Dickens was born to a middle-class family which got into financial difficulties as a result of the spendthrift nature of his father John. In 1824 John was committed to the Marshalsea, a debtors' prison in Southwark, London. Dickens, aged 12, was forced to pawn his collection of books, leave school and work at a dirty and rat-infested shoe-blacking factory. The change in circumstances gave him what his biographer, Michael Slater, describes as a "deep personal and social outrage", which heavily influenced his writing and outlook.
- By the end of 1842 Dickens was a well-established author, having written six major works, as well as several short stories, novellas and other pieces. On 31 December that year he began publishing his novel *Martin Chuzzlewit* as a monthly serial; the novel was his favourite work, but sales were disappointing and he faced temporary financial difficulties.
- Celebrating the Christmas season had been growing in popularity through the Victorian era. The Christmas tree had been introduced in Britain during the 18th century, and its use was popularised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Their practice was copied in many homes across the country. In the early 19th century there had been a revival of interest in Christmas carols, following a decline in popularity over the previous hundred years.



## If you enjoy 'A Christmas Carol'...

You'll also enjoy these titles!

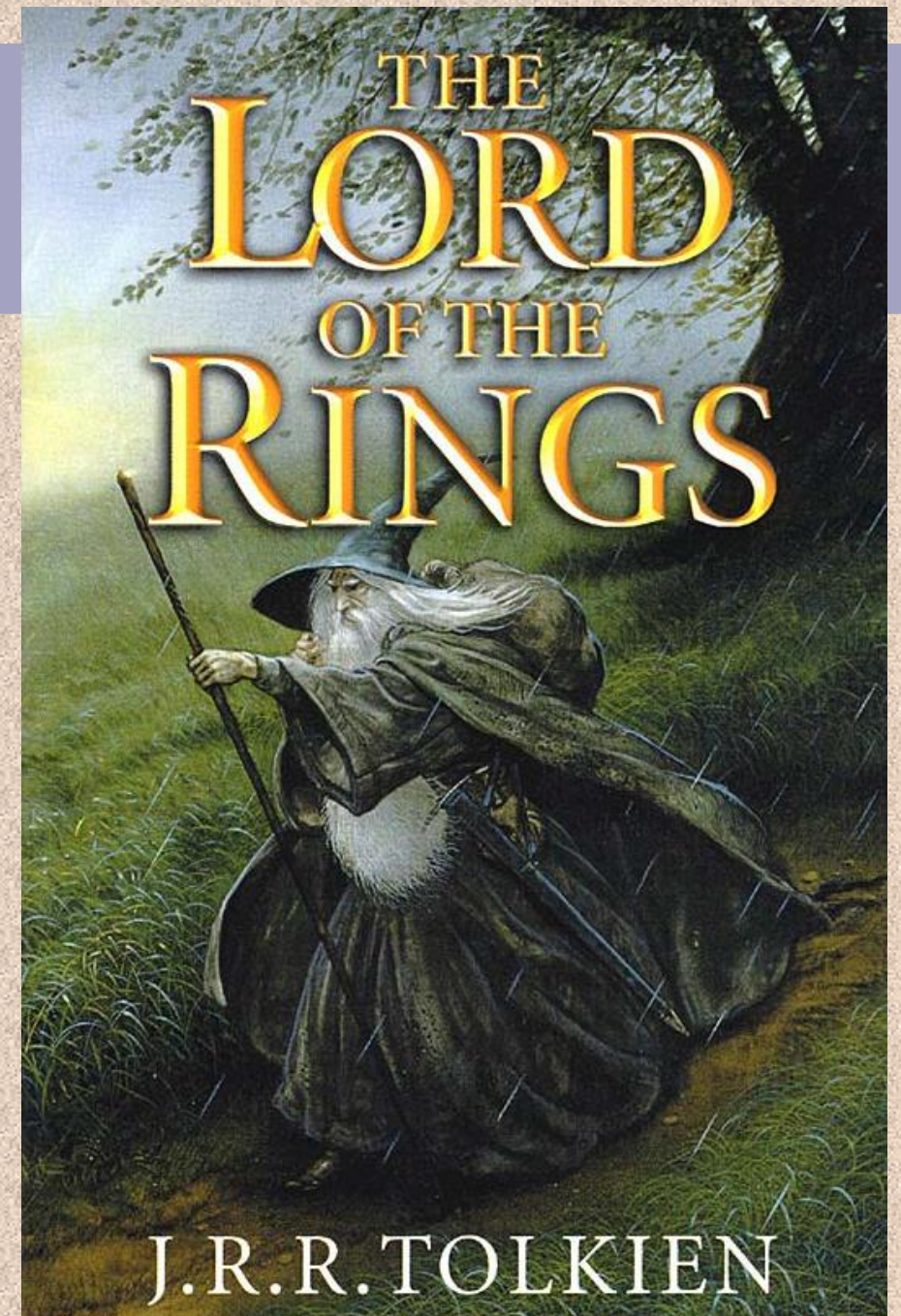




# JANUARY 2023:

## Book of the Month is...

- + ***The Lord of the Rings*** is an epic fantasy novel by English author and scholar J. R. R. Tolkien. Set in Middle-earth, intended to be Earth at some time in the distant past, the story began as a sequel to Tolkien's 1937 children's book *The Hobbit*, but eventually developed into a much larger work. Written in stages between 1937 and 1949, *The Lord of the Rings* is one of the best-selling books ever written, with over 150 million copies sold.
- + The title refers to the story's main antagonist, the Dark Lord Sauron, who in an earlier age created the One Ring to rule the other Rings of Power given to Men, Dwarves, and Elves, in his campaign to conquer all of Middle-earth. From homely beginnings in the Shire, a hobbit land reminiscent of the English countryside, the story ranges across Middle-earth, following the quest to destroy the One Ring mainly through the eyes of the hobbits Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin – guided by the wizard, Gandalf the Grey.





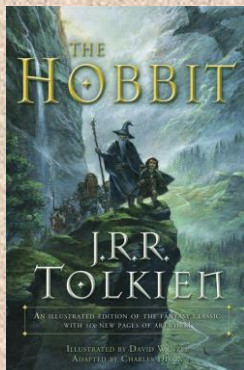
# A bit about the author...

# J.R.R Tolkien

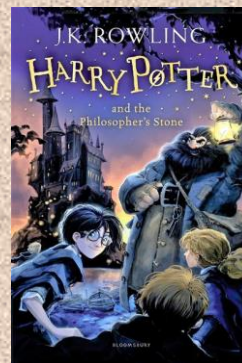


- + J.R.R. Tolkien was an English fantasy author and academic. Tolkien settled in England as a child, going on to study at Exeter College. While teaching at Oxford University, he published the popular fantasy novels *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The works have had a devoted international fan base and been adapted into award-winning blockbuster films.
- + John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa, on January 3, 1892, to Arthur Tolkien and Mabel Suffield Tolkien. After Arthur died from complications of rheumatic fever, Mabel settled with four-year-old Tolkien and his younger brother, Hilary, in the country hamlet of Sarehole, in Birmingham.
- + Mabel died in 1904, and the Tolkien brothers were sent to live with a relative and in boarding homes, with a Catholic priest assuming guardianship in Birmingham. Tolkien went on to get his first-class degree at Exeter College, specializing in Anglo-Saxon and Germanic languages and classic literature.
- + Tolkien enlisted as a lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers and served in World War I, making sure to continue writing as well. He fought in the Battle of the Somme, in which there were severe casualties, and was eventually released from duty due to illness. In the midst of his military service, he married Edith Bratt in 1916.
- + Continuing his linguistic studies, Tolkien joined the faculty of the University of Leeds in 1920 and a few years later became a professor at Oxford University. While there he started a writing group called The Inklings, which counted among its members C.S. Lewis and Owen Barfield. It was also at Oxford, while grading a paper, that he spontaneously wrote a short line about "a hobbit."
- + The award-winning fantasy novel *The Hobbit* — about the small, furry-footed Bilbo Baggins and his adventures — was published in 1937, and was regarded as a children's book, though Tolkien would state the book wasn't originally intended for children. He also created more than 100 drawings to support the narrative.

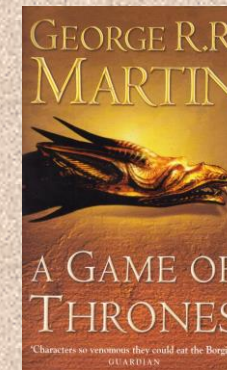
If you liked ***The Lord of the Rings***, you'll like these...



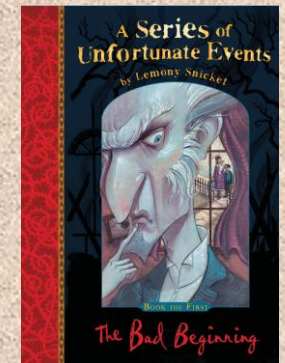
The beginning.



A boy's adventure in a school of magic.



Fantasy for mature readers.



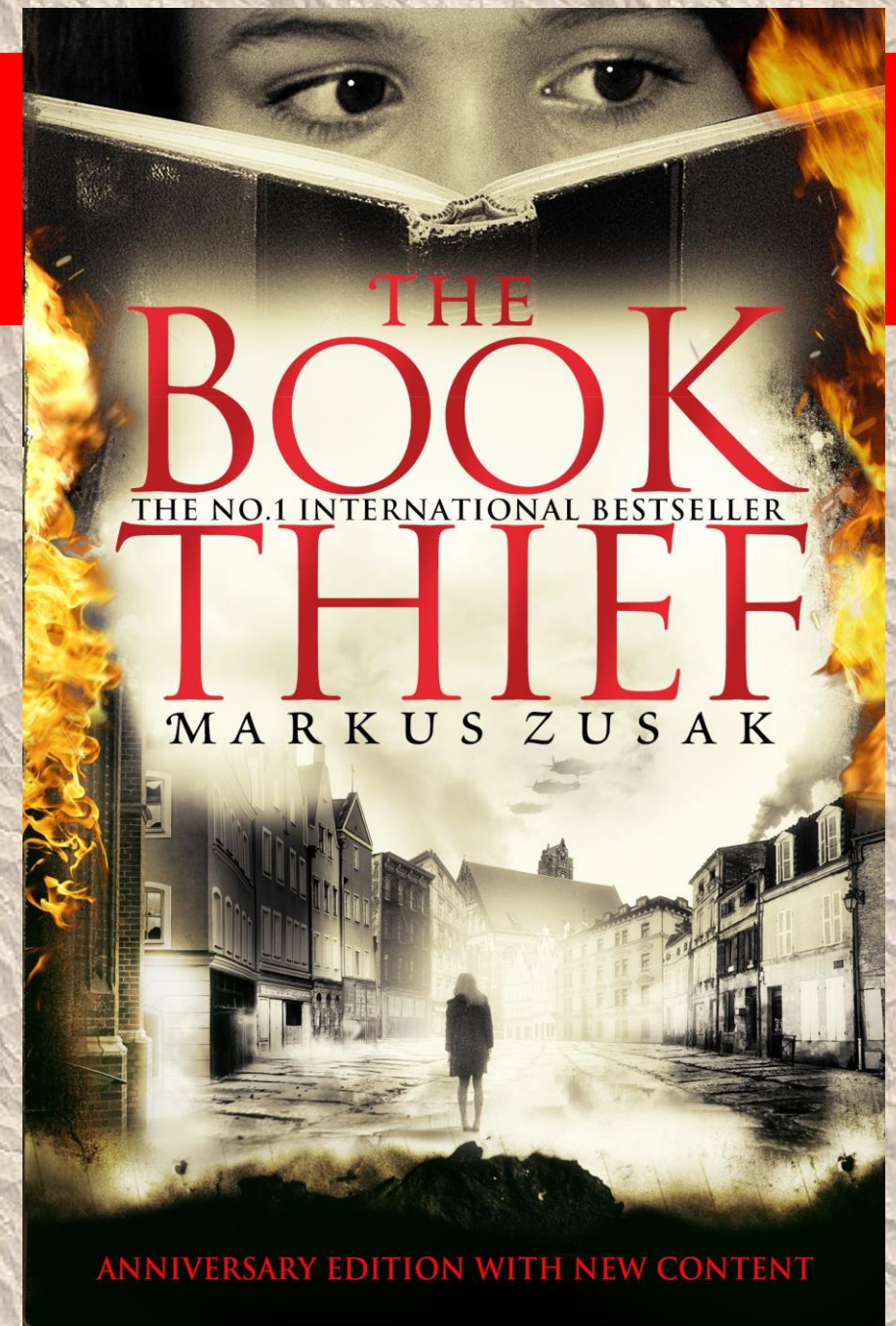
Fantasy and humour in this dark tale.



# FEBRUARY 2023:

## Book of the Month is...

- + *The Book Thief* is a historical fiction novel by the Australian author Markus Zusak and is his most popular book so far. Published in 2005, *The Book Thief* became an international bestseller and was translated into 63 languages and sold 16 million copies. It was adapted into the 2013 feature film, *The Book Thief*.
- + Narrated by the figure of "Death", the story follows Liesel Meminger, a young girl living with foster parents, Hans and Rosa Hubermann, in Nazi Germany during World War II. Liesel settles down into her new home and during her time there, she is exposed to the horrors of the war and politics. As the political situation in Germany deteriorates, her foster parents conceal a Jewish man named Max Vandenburg. Hans, who has developed a close relationship with Liesel, teaches her to read during this time. Recognizing the power of writing and sharing the written word, Liesel not only begins to steal books that the politicians are seeking to destroy, but also writes her own story, and shares the power of language with Max.
- + By personifying "Death" as a tangible being who narrates the story, the novel presents a unique view into the world of the victims of the Second World War. Exploring many themes throughout the entire story.





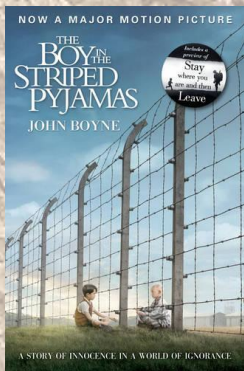
# A bit about the author...

# Markus Zusak



- + Zusak was born in Sydney, Australia. His mother Lisa is originally from Germany and his father Helmut is from Austria. They emigrated to Australia in the late 1950s. Markus is the youngest of four children and has two sisters and one brother. He attended Engadine High School and briefly returned there to teach English while writing. He studied English and history at the University of New South Wales, from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education.
- + Zusak is the author of six books. His first three books, *The Underdog*, *Fighting Ruben Wolfe*, and *When Dogs Cry*, released between 1999 and 2001, were all published internationally. *The Messenger*, published in 2002, won the 2003 CBC Book of the Year Award (Older Readers) and the 2003 NSW Premier's Literary Award (Ethel Turner Prize) in Australia and was a runner-up for the Printz Award in America.
- + *The Messenger* (*I Am the Messenger* in the United States) was published in 2002 and was one of Zusak's first novels. This novel has won awards such as the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards: Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's Literature.
- + *The Book Thief* was published in 2005 and has since been translated into more than 40 languages. *The Book Thief* was adapted as a film of the same name in 2013. In 2014, Zusak delivered a Ted Talk, called 'The Failurist' at the Sydney Opera House. It focused on his drafting process and journey to success through writing *The Book Thief*. The book was in the *New York Times* bestseller list for over 10 years.

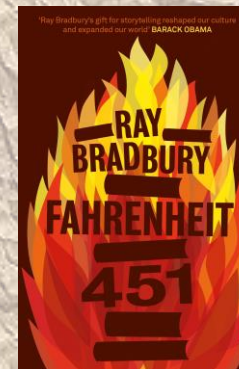
## If you liked ***The Book Thief***, you'll like these...



Set during WW2.



Another historical tale of childhood.



Another tale of burning books and oppression.



What if the Nazis had won the war?



# MARCH 2023: Book of the Month is...

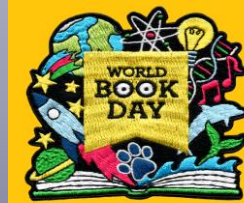
Set around events in March 2011, this book tells the story of Sami - a typical 13 year-old boy, who loves his friends, family, football, Playstation and iPad, as he grows up in Syria. But when civil war begins and a bombing in a shopping mall nearly kills his mother and sister, his family make a decision that will change Sami's life forever.

Fleeing their comfortable home in Damascus to make the perilous and painful journey towards a new life in the U.K, Sami and his family leave everything behind, discovering a world they had never encountered – harsh, dangerous, but also at times unexpectedly kind and hopeful.

*“A fantastically well-researched and empathetic story that gives humanity and respect to those seeking sanctuary, busting a number of stereotypes about refugees along the way.”*

National  
Literacy  
Trust

Thanks to the National Literacy Trust, your school library will be giving away 45 free copies of 'Boy, Everywhere' as part of *World Book Day* on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.



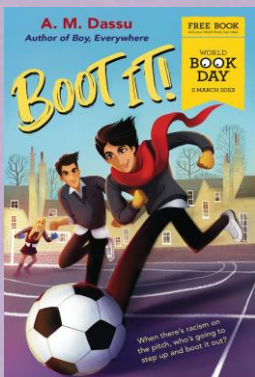
# A bit about the author...

# A.M. Dassu

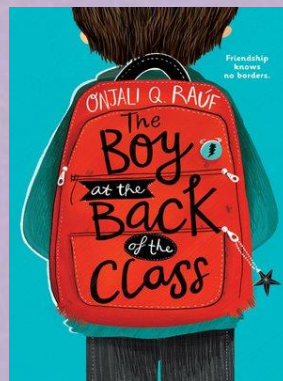


- + **A. M. Dassu** is an English writer of fiction and non-fiction, born and raised in the Midlands and has a mixed heritage originally from Iraq's Baghdad, India, Burma and Pakistan – her father was born in Tanzania.
- + Her first novel, 'Boy, Everywhere', featured as one of *The Guardian's* Children's Best New Novels on publication in October 2020, and is on Amnesty's 'Books That Inspire Activism' list, as well as being nominated for 25 awards including the Waterstones Children's Book Prize and Carnegie Medal, and is the 2021 winner of The Little Rebels Award for Radical Fiction.
- + Dassu campaigns in support of refugees; she used the advance payments for *Boy, Everywhere* to help Syrian refugees in the UK. She also set up a 'We Need Diverse Books' grant for supporting an unpublished refugee or immigrant writer. Dassu is patron of *The Other Side Of Hope: Journeys in Refugee and Immigrant Literature*, a literary magazine edited by immigrants and refugees which aims to celebrate refugee and immigrant communities around the world.
- + Her new book, 'Fight Back' is currently nominated for the 'Book of the Year 2023' by Archway Learning Trust.
- + **A.M. Dassu is also the author of 'BOOT IT', which is one of the free World Book Day titles available this year!**

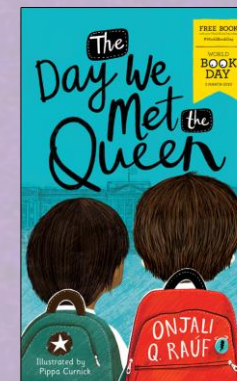
If you liked '*Boy, Everywhere*', you will also like these...



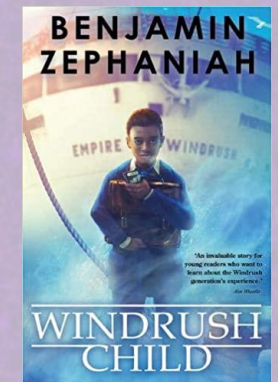
Also by A.M. Dassu – free WBD book this year.



Another great tale about being a child refugee (Ahmet).



Continuing Ahmet's story – World Book Day 2020



A historical tale of moving to another country.

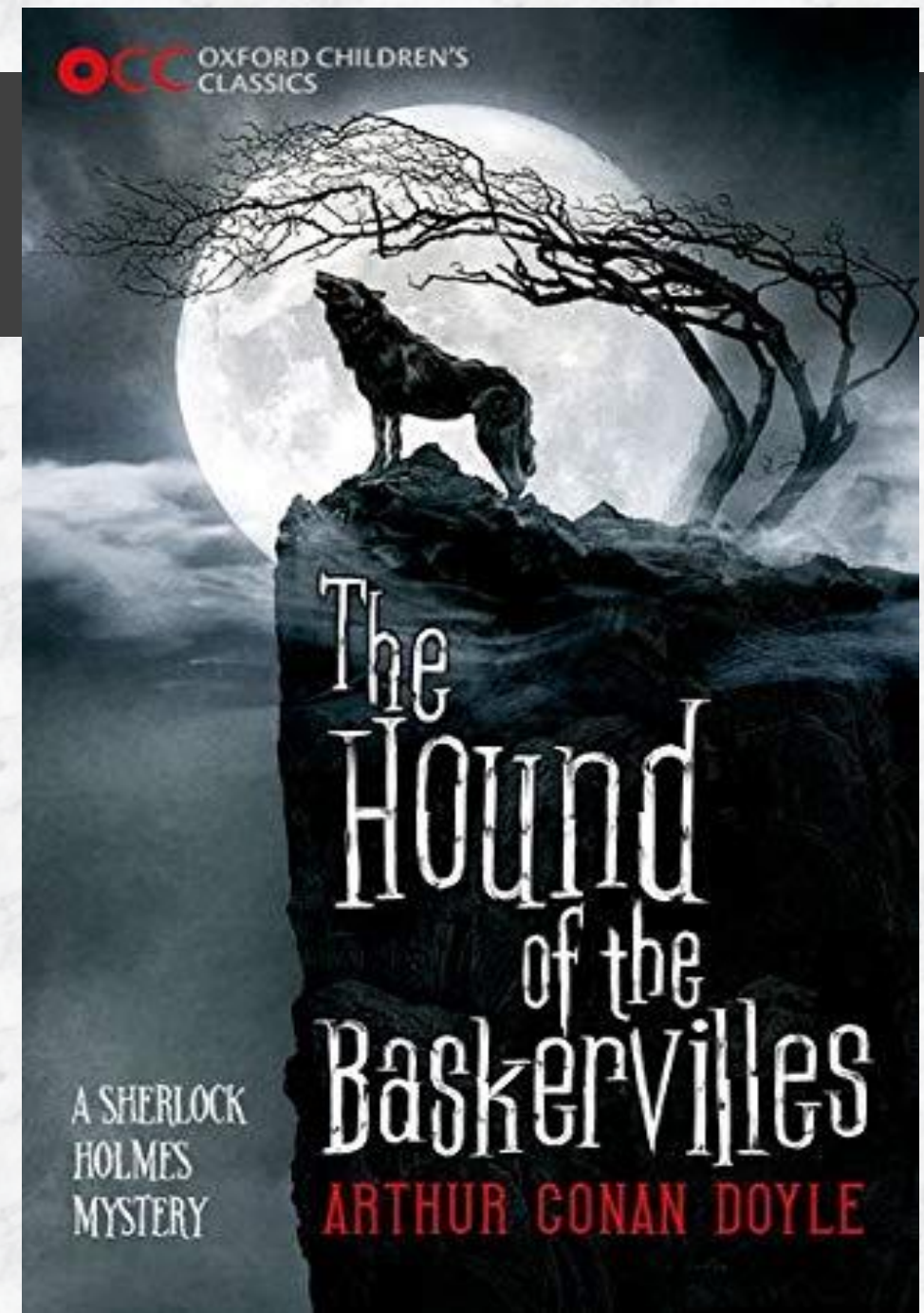


# APRIL 2023:

## Book of the Month is...

- + ***The Hound of the Baskervilles*** is the third of the four crime novels by British writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle featuring the great detective, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.
- + Originally released in parts in *The Strand Magazine* from August 1901 to April 1902, it is set in 1889 largely on Dartmoor in Devon, in England's West Country.
- + It tells the story of an attempted murder inspired by the legend of a fearsome, diabolical hound (wolf-dog) of supernatural origin. Holmes and Watson investigate the case after the suspicious death of a member of the Baskerville (Sir Charles) family and a threat to the next Lord in line.
- + This was the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes since his apparent death in "The Final Problem". Although it was set before Holmes' death, the success of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* led to the character's eventual return.
- + It is considered to be one of the most famous stories ever written, in 2003, the book was listed as number 128 of 200 on the BBC's The Big Read poll of the UK's "best-loved novel". In 1999, a poll of "Sherlockians" ranked it as the best of the four Holmes novels.

This book has been selected by the English Department at Arena Academy – linking to the Year 9 Reading Curriculum, as part of further 'recommended reading'.





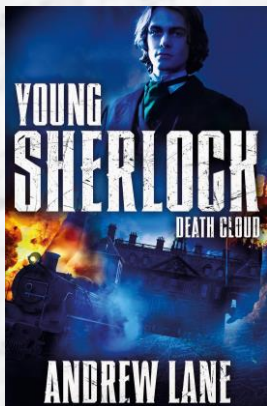
# A bit about the author...

# Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

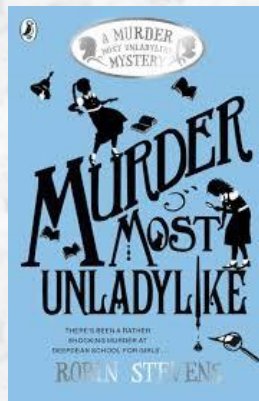


- + **Arthur Conan Doyle**, in full **Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle**, (born May 22, 1859, Edinburgh, Scotland—died July 7, 1930, Crowborough, Sussex, England), Scottish writer best known for his creation of the detective Sherlock Holmes—one of the most popular characters in English fiction).
- + He attended University of Edinburgh's Medical School. He received Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery qualifications from Edinburgh in 1881 and an M.D. in 1885.
- + While a medical student, Conan Doyle was deeply impressed by the skill of his professor, Dr. Joseph Bell, in observing the most minute detail regarding a patient's condition. This mastery of observation and deduction became the model for Conan Doyle's literary creation, Sherlock Holmes.
- + Sherlock Holmes first appeared in 'A Study in Scarlet', a novel-length story published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* of 1887.
- + At one point, Doyle became so tired of the public pressure to write more Holmes mysteries that he eventually killed off the character in 'The Final Problem' – but eventually brought him back due to public pressure and when his mother refused to speak to him!

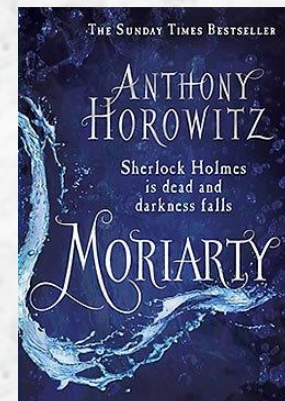
If you liked '**Hound of the Baskervilles**', you will also like these...



Stories of the Young Holmes.



More mysteries from the Victorian era.



The tale of Sherlock's greatest enemy.



Modern crime drama from a modern master.

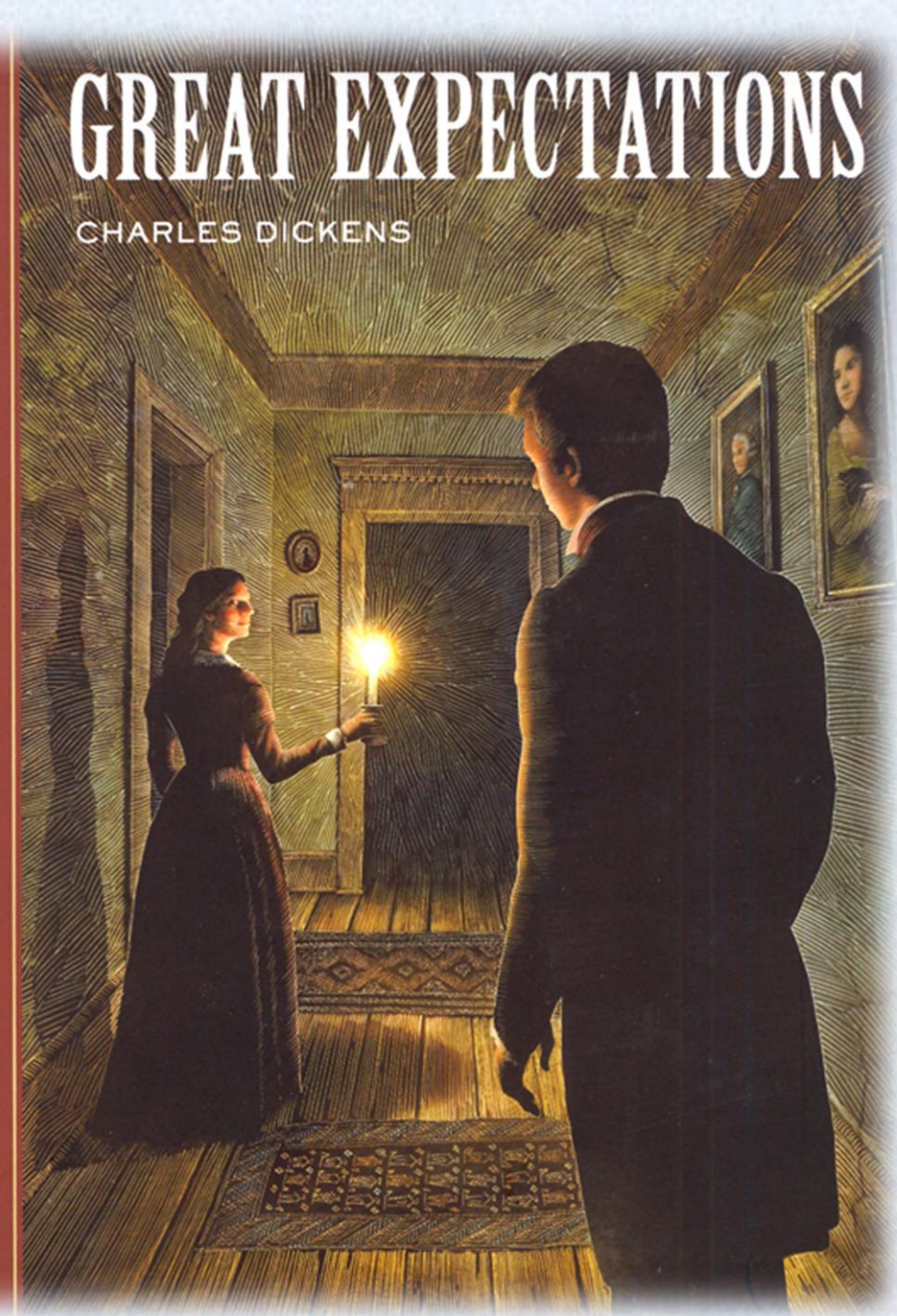


# May:

## Book of the Month is...

- + *Great Expectations* was written by Charles Dickens in 1860 and 1861.
- + The novel follows the childhood and young adult years of Pip, a blacksmith's apprentice in a country village.
- + He suddenly comes into a large fortune (his great expectations) from a mysterious **benefactor** and moves to London where he enters high society. He thinks he knows where the money has come from, but he turns out to be sadly mistaken.
- + The story also follows Pip's dealings with Estella, a young woman he adores but who cannot return his love.
- + The mid-19th century was a time of great social change in Britain. There was increasing movement from the countryside to the towns, education was slowly improving, and the legal system was being changed. The novel reflects such changes.
- + *Great Expectations* is about Pip's journey from a poor childhood into privileged adulthood and the power that money and social class have to change him as he grows

This book has been selected by the English Department at JQA – linking to the Year 11 Reading Curriculum, as part of further 'recommended reading'.





# A bit about the author... **Charles Dickens**

- Charles Dickens was a famous English writer. He wrote many books, including **Oliver Twist** and **A Christmas Carol**.
- He was born in 1812 and lived during the **Victorian age** and is generally considered the greatest writer of the Victorian Era.
- When Dickens was a child his family were very poor.
- When he became famous, only rich people could afford to buy books. Dickens published his stories in sections in (cheaper) magazines so poorer people could read them.
- The good fortune of being sent to school at the age of nine was short-lived because his father, inspiration for the character of Mr Micawber in 'David Copperfield', was **imprisoned for bad debt**. The entire family, apart from Charles, were sent to **Marshalsea prison** along with their patriarch.
- Charles was sent to work in Warren's blacking factory and endured **appalling conditions** as well as loneliness and despair.
- After three years he was returned to school, but the experience was never forgotten and became fictionalised in two of his better-known novels '**David Copperfield**' and '**Great Expectations**'.



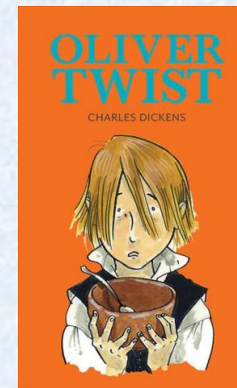
If you liked '**Great Expectations**', you will also like these...



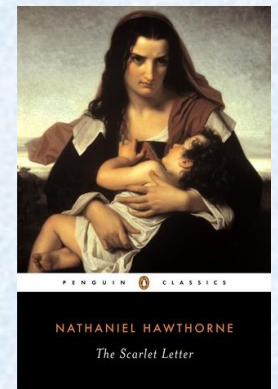
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte.



The Kite Runner by Khaled Hussein



Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens



The Scarlett Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne.



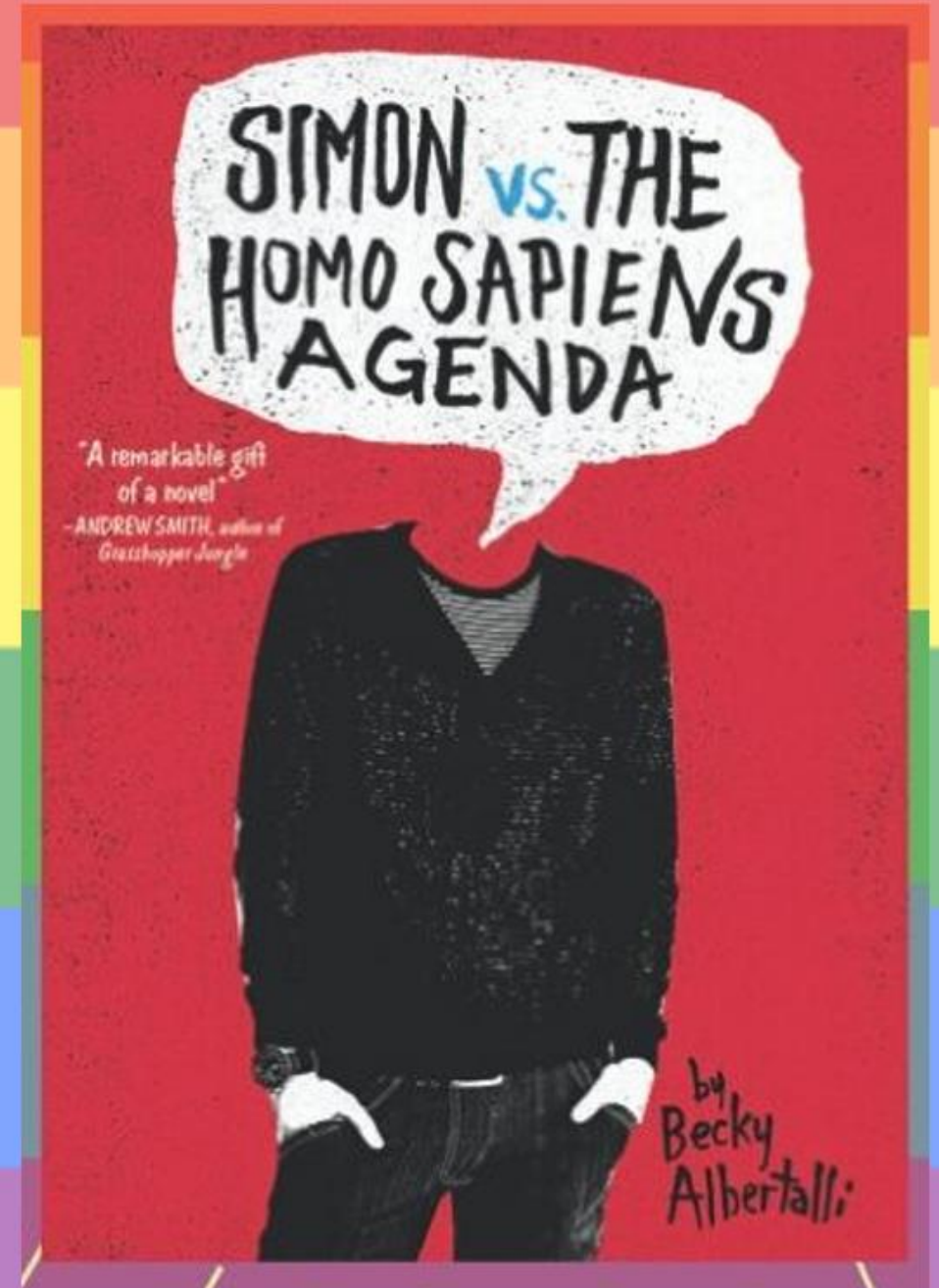
# JUNE 2023 ('PRIDE' month):

## Book of the Month is...

Sixteen-year-old and not-so-openly gay Simon Spier prefers to save his drama for the school musical. But when an email falls into the wrong hands, his secret is at risk of being thrust into the spotlight. Now, Simon is actually being blackmailed: if he doesn't play wingman for class clown Martin, his sexual identity will become everyone's business. Worse, the privacy of Blue, the pen name of the boy he's been emailing, will be compromised.

With some messy dynamics emerging in his once tight-knit group of friends, and his email correspondence with Blue growing more flirtatious every day, Simon's junior year has suddenly gotten all kinds of complicated. Now, change-averse Simon has to find a way to step out of his comfort zone before he's pushed out—without alienating his friends, compromising himself, or ruining a chance at happiness with the most confusing, adorable guy he's never met.

This book has been selected as part of 'PRIDE' month in June - dedicated to the celebration and commemoration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) pride. Pride Month began after the Stonewall riots, a series of gay liberation protests in 1969, and has since spread outside of the United States. Modern-day Pride Month both honors the movement for LGBT rights and celebrates LGBT culture.





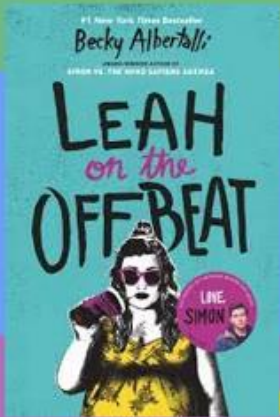
# A bit about the author...

# Becky Albertalli



- **Rebecca Albertalli** is an American author of young adult fiction and former psychologist.
- She is best known for her 2015 debut novel, *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, which was adapted into the 2018 film *Love, Simon* and inspired the spin-off television series *Love, Victor*.
- Before beginning her career as an author, she worked as a Psychologist in Washington D.C, until 2012 when her first son was born and she turned to writing.
- In August 2020, Albertalli came out as bisexual in an essay responding to people who had criticized her for writing about gay characters as a presumed heterosexual. She stated that coming out was not an "attempt to neutralize criticism of [her] books" and asked her critics to acknowledge that "*carelessness in these discussions has caused real harm*".
- A sequel, titled *Leah on the Offbeat* was released in 2018 and won the Goodreads Choice Award for Best Young Adult Fiction. In 2020, Albertalli released the third installment of the series with *Love, Creekwood*.

If you liked '*Simon vs...*', you will also like these...



'Leah on the Offbeat'  
By Becky Albertalli



Heartstopper  
by Alice Oseman



The Black Flamingo  
by Dean Atta



Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit  
by Jeanette Winterson.



# July 2023:

## Book of the Month is...

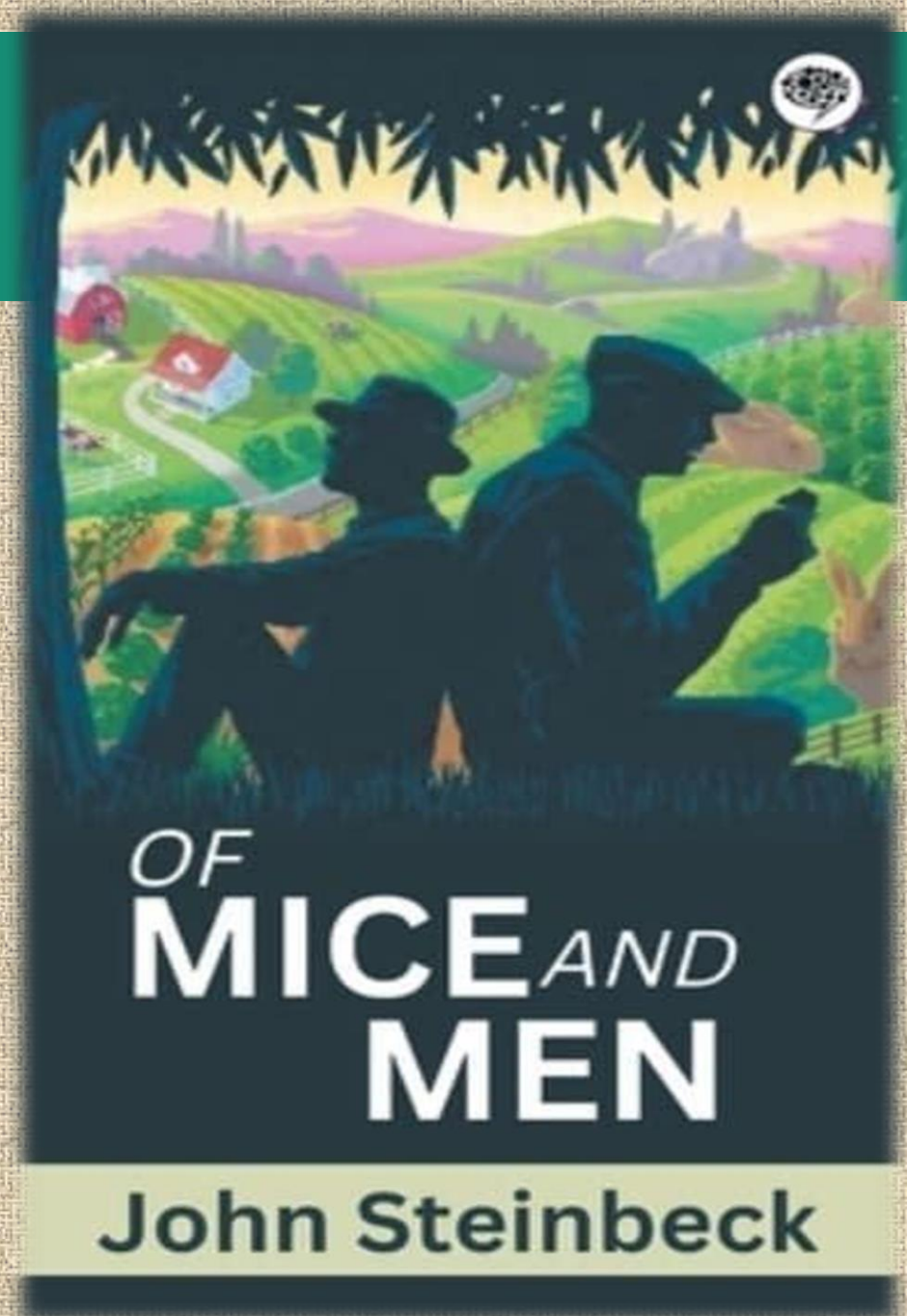
- + *Of Mice and Men* was written by John Steinbeck in 1937.
- + The novella narrates the experiences of George Milton and Lennie Small, two travelling ranch workers, who move from place to place in California in search of new job opportunities during the *Great Depression* (a period of national financial difficulty) in the United States of America.
- + Steinbeck based the novella on his own experiences working alongside migrant farm workers as a teenager in the 1910s.
- + The title is taken from Robert Burns' Scots language poem "To a Mouse":

*"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men / Gang aft agley".*

(English "The best laid plans of mice and men / Often go awry [wrong].")

- + *Of Mice and Men* was Steinbeck's first attempt at writing in the form of novel-play termed a "play-novelette" by one critic. Structured in three acts of two chapters each, it is intended to be both a novella and a script for a play. It is only 30,000 words in length. Steinbeck wanted to write a novel that could be played from its lines, or a play that could be read like a novel.

This book has been selected by the English Department at Rockwood Academy – linking to the Year 9 Reading Curriculum, as part of the Summer Term.



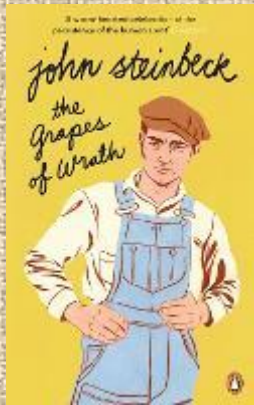


# A bit about the author... **John Steinbeck**

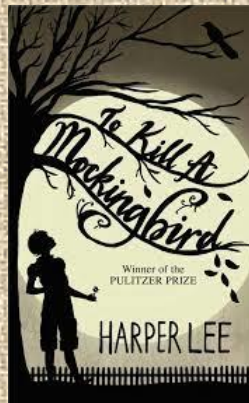
- John Ernst Steinbeck Jr. was an American author – born February 27<sup>th</sup> 1902, died December 20<sup>th</sup> 1963.
- During WW2, he worked as a war correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune newspaper, following American troops into battle, before being sent home due to shrapnel injuries.
- He won the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humor and keen social perception".
- In his lifetime, he authored 33 books; 16 novels, 6 non-fiction books and 2 collections of short stories as well as writing scripts for films.
- As well as writing 'Of Mice and Men', he is also known for writing 'East of Eden' (1952) and 'The Grapes of Wrath' (1939) – for which he won a Pulitzer Prize.
- Most of Steinbeck's stories are in or around the state of California, with his stories often focusing on the themes of fate and injustice and the lives of the working class.



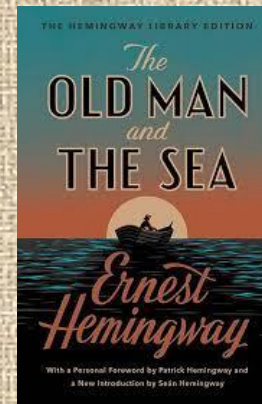
If you liked **'Of Mice & Men'**, you will also like these...



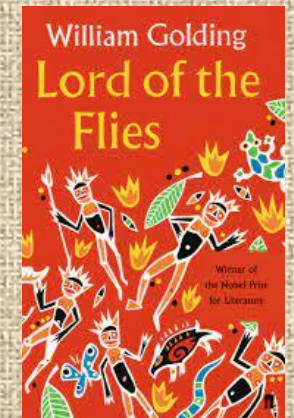
Steinbeck's award-winning novel.



'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee



'The Old Man and the Sea' By Ernest Hemmingway

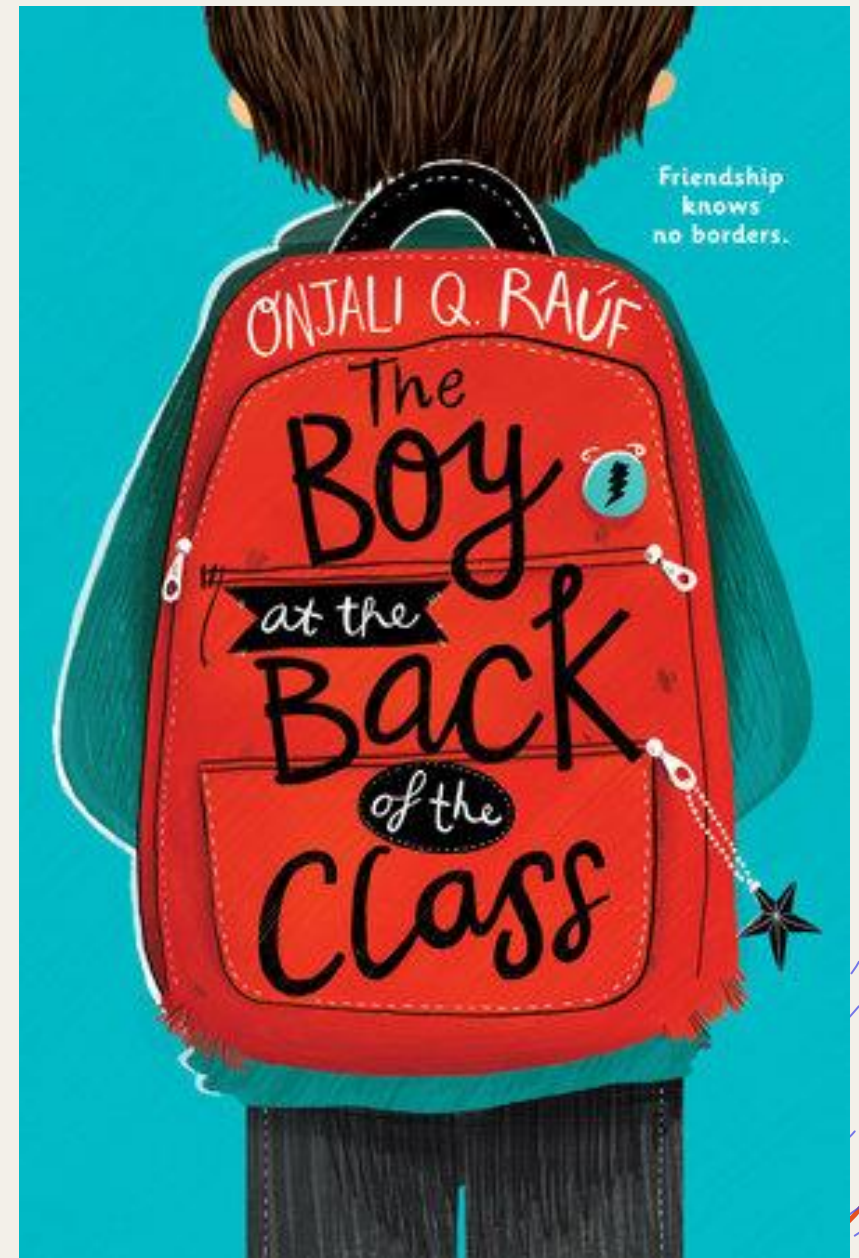


'Lord of the Flies' By William Golding.



# September 2023: Book of the Month is...

- + This is a story about how one ordinary boy and his three classmates befriend a new student - *'the boy at the back of the class'*.
- + When Ahmet joins their class, a group of children try to befriend him. They soon learn that he is a refugee and has been separated from his family. None of the grown-ups seem to be able to help him, so the friends come up with a daring plan, embarking on an extraordinary adventure.
- + This is an inspiring tale that encourages the reader to think about what it is to be a good person, whatever your circumstances (as the narrator is from a caring but challenging background, with a single parent who works hard to make ends meet).
- + Written from a child's perspective, the author challenges prejudice and pushes for fairness, whenever possible – addressing relevant themes for our current society.



**WINNER OF THE BLUE PETER 'BEST STORY' AWARD 2019.**



# A bit about the author... Onjali Q. Rauf

*The Boy at the Back of the Class* was the debut novel by Onjali Q Rauf.

In 2019, the book won both the Blue Peter 'Best Story' award and the Waterstones 'Children's Book Prize'.

Rauf is of British Bangladeshi heritage. Her work is informed in part by her experience of racism in her childhood.

She has also set up two aid organizations; Making Herstory, tackling the abuse and trafficking of women in the UK; and O's Refugee Aid Team, which raises awareness and funds to support refugee frontline aid organizations.

She has currently written five further novels, as well as 'The Day we met the Queen' for World Book Day 2020 – a sequel story to 'The Boy at the Back of the Class'.



*"The entire world is full of hearts searching for a place to call home. But refugees are different, because they don't just look for a home. They look for peace too. And because of that, they possess the most special hearts anyone could ever have."*

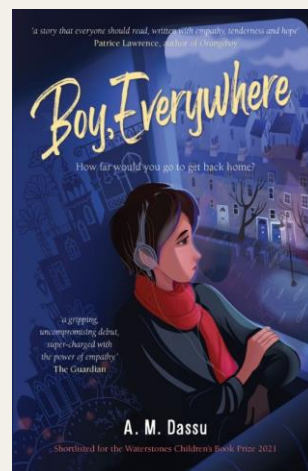
**- Onjali Q. Rauf**

## If you enjoy 'The Boy at the Back of the Class'...

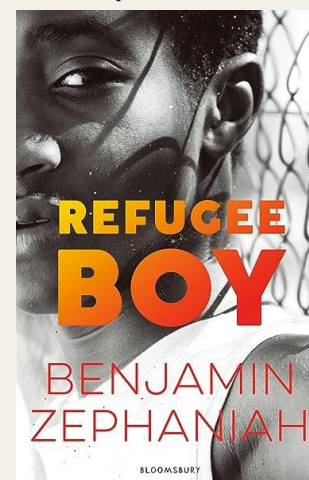
Please check out these other fantastic books that explore similar themes and issues...



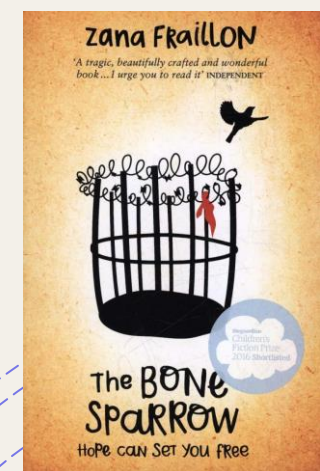
The WBD sequel to this book.



A powerful tale of being a refugee.



Benjamin Zephaniah's refugee tale.



Refugee life in a detention centre.



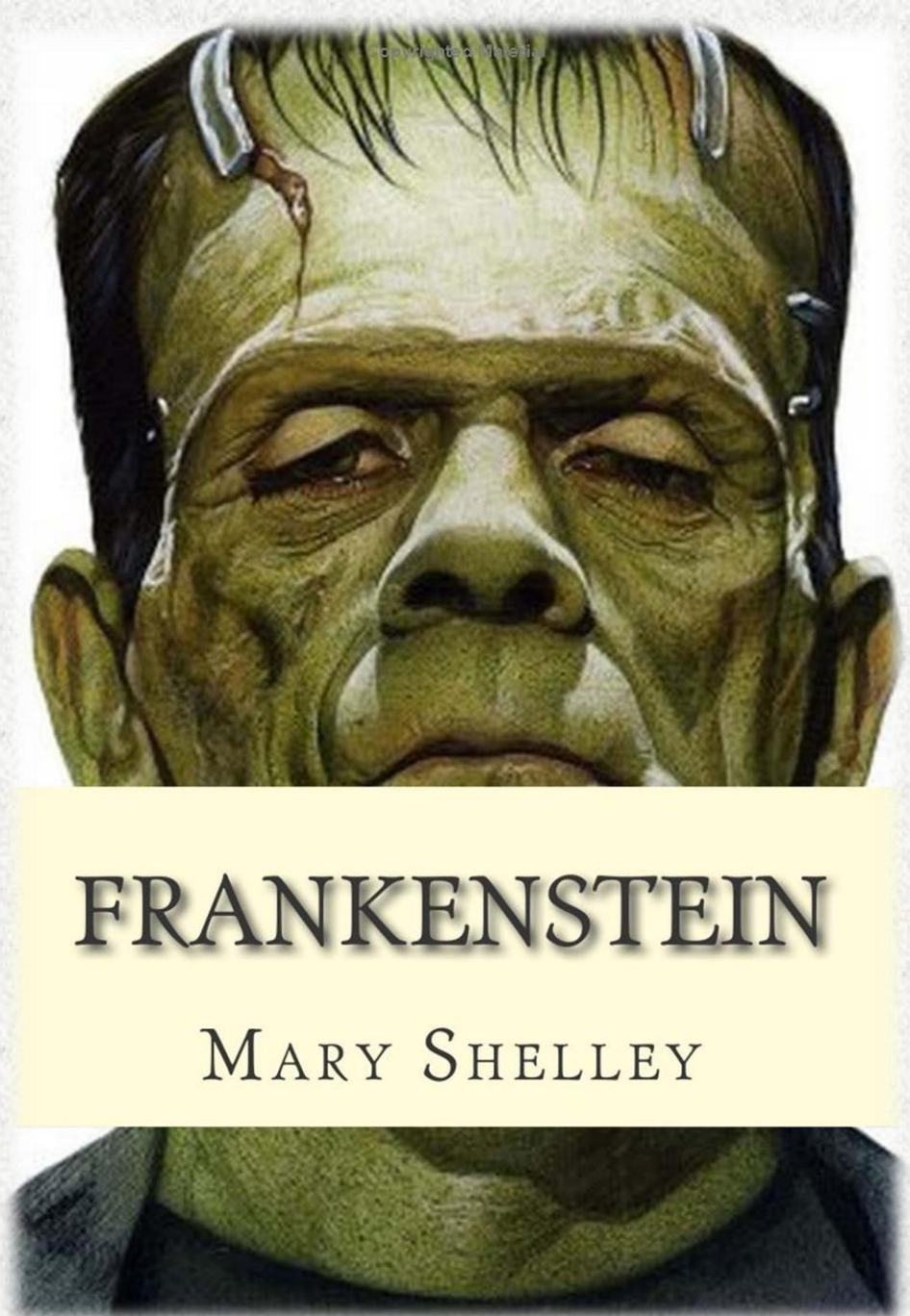
# October 2023

## Book of the Month is...

# Frankenstein

by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

- Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1797–1851), later Mary Shelley, devised this Gothic novel in 1816 while staying at Lake Geneva with Lord Byron and her future husband Percy Bysshe Shelley.
- Byron proposed that the group should write ghost stories. The text was penned at a time when scientists were investigating the possibility of regenerating corpses with electricity.
- Shelley started writing the story when she was 18, and the first edition was published anonymously in London on 1 January 1818, when she was 20.
- Frankenstein is a Gothic horror novel by Mary Shelley. It tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist who creates a living creature from dead body parts. However, the creature is not the perfect specimen he imagined, but a hideous and lonely being who is rejected by his creator and society. The novel explores the themes of ambition, responsibility, and the consequences of playing God.
- Over the years there have been numerous adaptations for theatre and film, and the work has achieved iconic status.





# About the author...

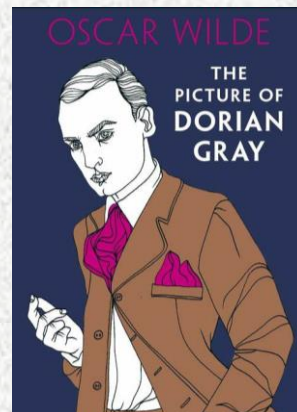
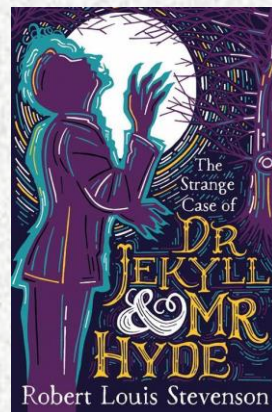
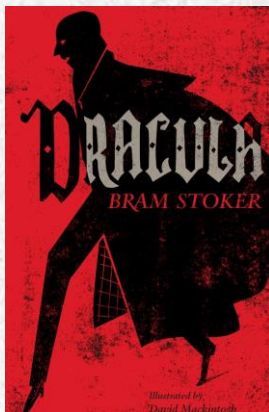
## Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

- **Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley** was born 30<sup>th</sup> of August **1797**, London, England.
- She was an English Romantic novelist best known as the author of ***Frankenstein***.
- The only daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, she met the young poet **Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1812** and eloped with him to France in July 1814.
- Mary Shelley was taken seriously as a writer in her own lifetime, though reviewers often missed the political edge to her novels. After her death, however, she was chiefly remembered only as the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley and as the author of *Frankenstein*. It was not until 1989, when Emily Sunstein published her prizewinning biography *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality*, that a full-length scholarly biography analyzing all of Shelley's letters, journals, and works within their historical context was published.
- Mary Shelley's best-known book is *Frankenstein*, a text that is part Gothic novel and part philosophical novel; it is also often considered an early example of science fiction.



If you enjoy '**Frankenstein**'...

Please check out these other fantastic books that explore similar themes and issues...



Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change.

Mary Shelley