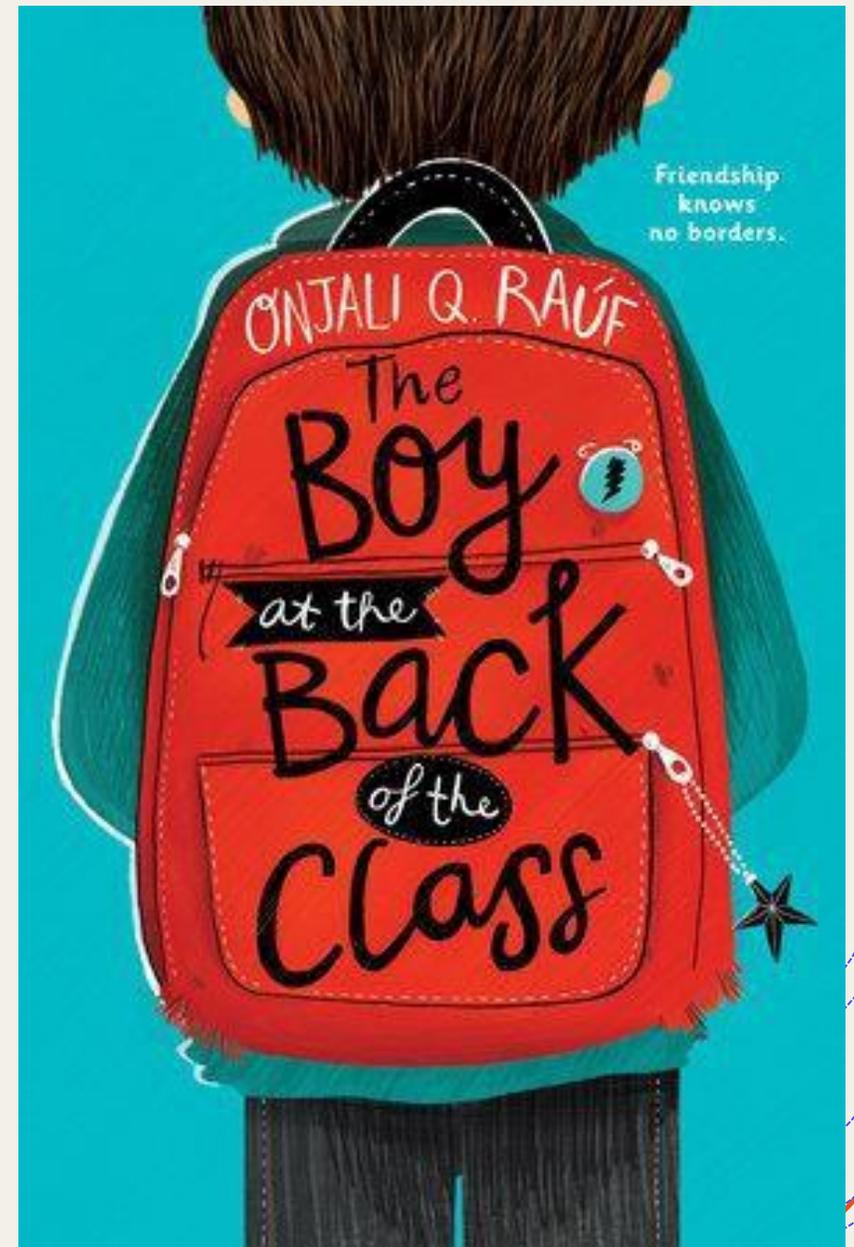


# September 2023: Book of the Month is...

- + 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'.

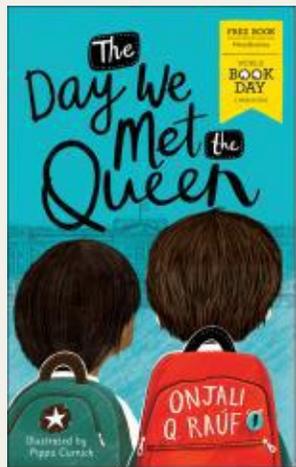


*"The entire world is full of hearts searching for a place to call home. But refugees are different, because they don't just look for a home. They look for peace too. And because of that, they possess the most special hearts anyone could ever have."*

*- Onjali Q. Rauf*

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

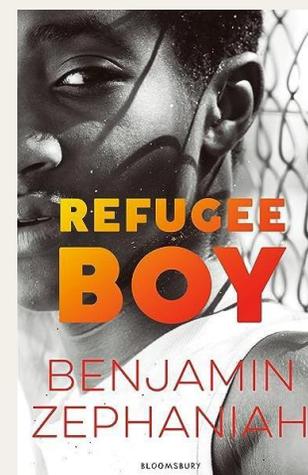
Please check out these other fantastic books that explore similar themes and issues...



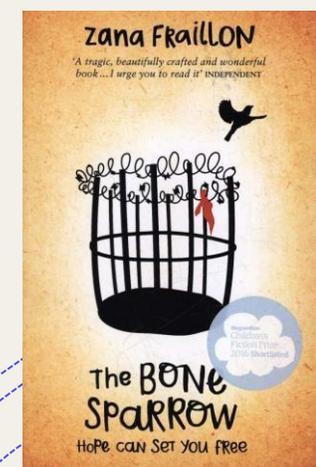
The WBD sequel to this book.



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.



# FRANKENSTEIN

MARY SHELLEY

# About the author...

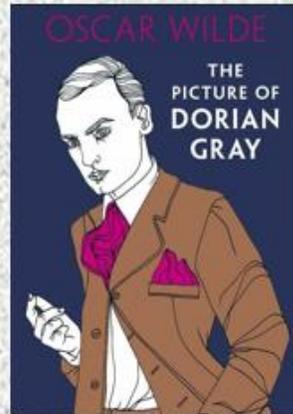
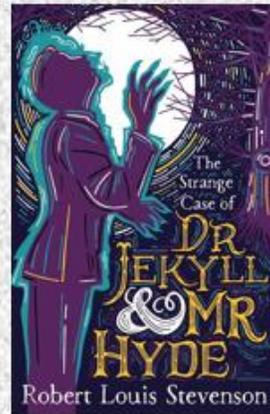
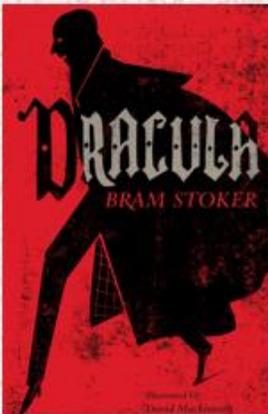
## Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

- **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

# NOVEMBER 2023:

## Book of the Month is...

- *The Hunger Games* is a 2008 dystopian novel by the American writer Suzanne Collins. It is written in the perspective of 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives in the future, post-apocalyptic nation of Panem in North America. The Capitol, a highly advanced metropolis, exercises political control over the rest of the nation. The Hunger Games is an annual event in which one boy and one girl aged 12–18 from each of the twelve districts surrounding the Capitol are selected by lottery to compete in a televised battle to the death.
- The book received critical acclaim on initial release - praised for its plot and character development. In writing *The Hunger Games*, Collins drew upon Greek mythology, Roman gladiatorial games, and contemporary reality television for thematic content. The novel won many awards, including the California Young Reader Medal, and was named one of *Publishers Weekly's* "Best Books of the Year" in 2008.
- Collins has said that the inspiration for *The Hunger Games* came from channel surfing on television. On one channel she observed people competing on a reality show and on another she saw footage of the invasion of Iraq. The two "*began to blur in this very unsettling way*" and the idea for the book was formed.

With its themes of rebellion and liberation, this month's book has been chosen to link in with Bonfire Night (5<sup>th</sup> November) and the attempted uprising of Guy Fawkes in 1605.

'The Hunger Games' is book number 26 on the CORE Canon recommendation list.

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE  
**THE HUNGER GAMES**



New York Times Bestselling Author

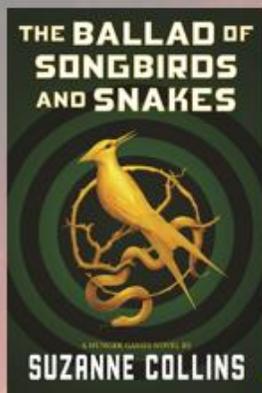
**SUZANNE COLLINS**

# A bit about the author... Suzanne Collins

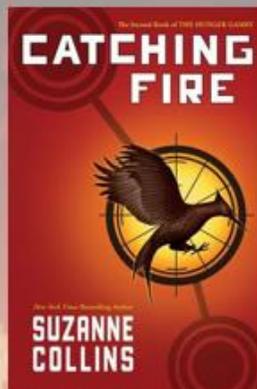


- Suzanne Collins (born August 10, 1962) is an American author and television writer. She is best known as the author of the young adult dystopian book series *The Hunger Games*.
- She is the youngest of four children, who include Kathryn (born 1957), Andrew (born 1958), and Joan (born 1960). As the daughter of a military officer, she and her family were constantly moving. She spent her childhood in the eastern United States.
- Her father, Lieutenant Colonel Michael John Collins (1931–2003), a U.S. Air Force officer who served in the Korean and the Vietnam War.
- She began her career in 1991 as a writer for children's television shows. She worked on several shows for Nickelodeon and Warner Bros.
- After meeting children's author James Proimos while working on the Warner Bros. kids show *Generation O!*, Collins felt inspired to write children's books herself.

If you liked *'The Hunger Games'*, you will also like these...



The prequel.



The sequel.



Another reality TV show in a dark dystopian future.



"Remember, remember the 5<sup>th</sup> of November..."

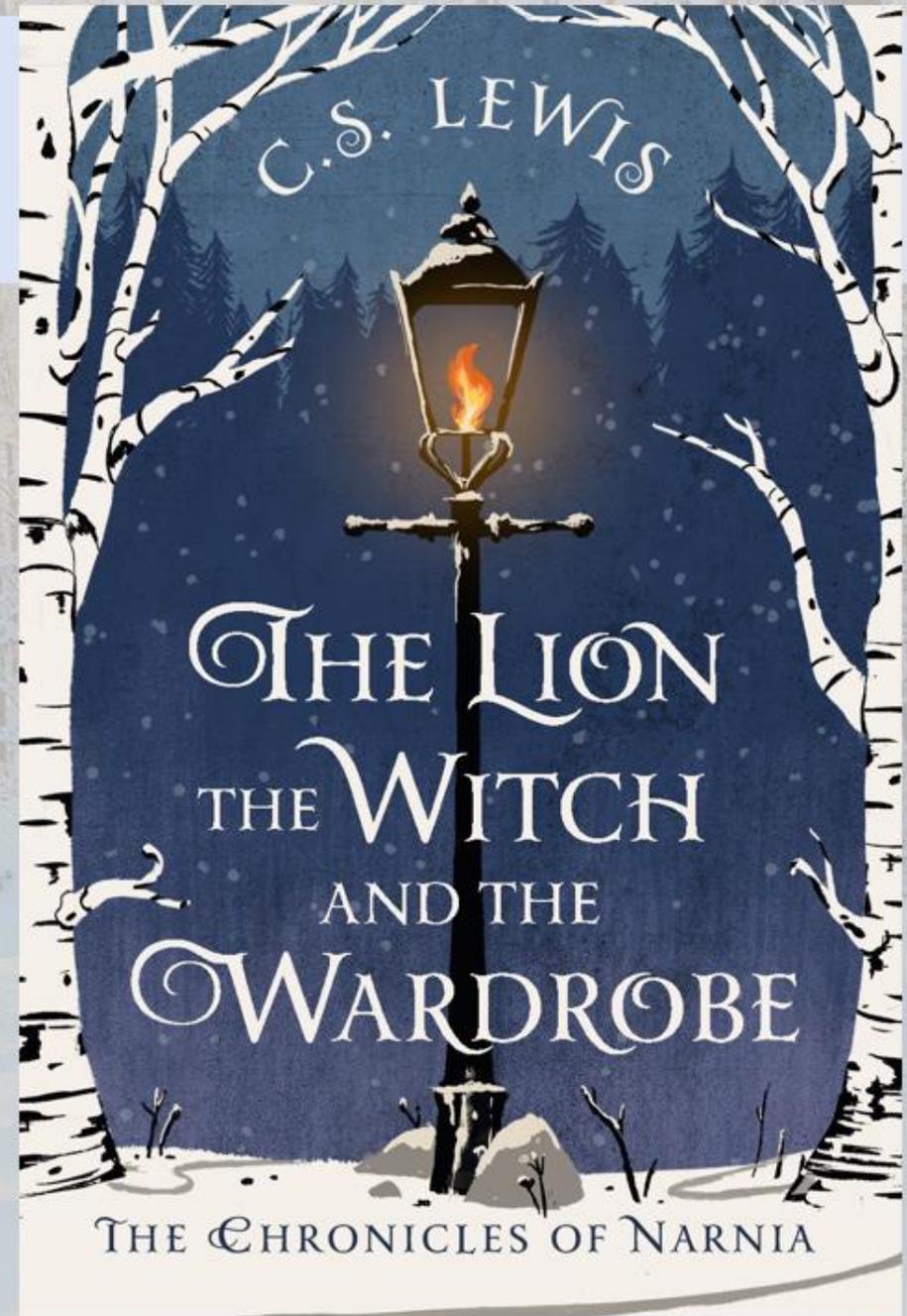
# DECEMBER 2023:

## Book of the Month is....

- 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' is a 1950s novel written by British writer C.S. Lewis. It revolves around four siblings, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy who are sent to live with Professor Digory Kirke to escape the Blitz in 1940. The four siblings discover the magical, mystical world of Narnia through an ordinary wardrobe. They meet Mr. Tumnus, The White Witch and Aslan, a powerful lion and the true ruler of Narnia. Through many trials and tribulations, the four siblings must defeat the White Witch before it's too late.
- 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' was the first published and highly successful novel among young readers; leading to the publication of more books in 'The Chronicles of Narnia' series. It became one of the best-selling novels and widely held in libraries across the world. It was included on TIME magazine's unranked list of 100 best English-language novels of the last 100 years. It has been published in multiple languages and adapted into movies, television and even theatre.
- C. S. Lewis' inspiration for 'The Chronicles of Narnia' came from many influences in his life. From the age of 16, he imagined a mystical land he created with his brother which was inspired from the name of an Italian town called 'Narni' and drew influence from his conversion to Christianity.



*'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe'* is also being performed at The Birmingham Rep Theatre from November 15<sup>th</sup> – January 28<sup>th</sup>. Worth a look, if you enjoy the book!

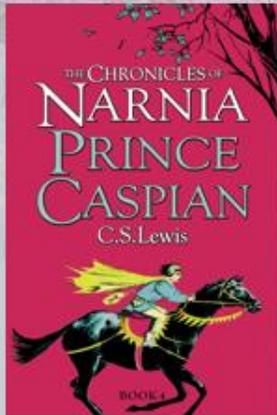


# A bit about the author... C.S. Lewis

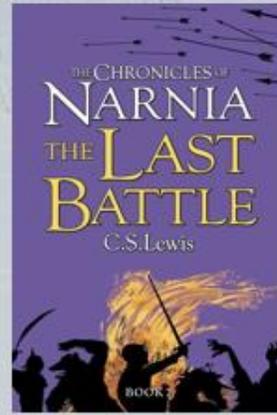
- Clive Staples Lewis (born on November 29, 1898, to November 22, 1963) is a British writer and literary scholar. He is best known as the writer of *'The Chronicles of Narnia' series*.
- C. S. Lewis was born in Belfast, Ireland. His father, Albert James Lewis (1839-1929), a solicitor and his mother, Florence Augusta Lewis (1862-1908), daughter of the Church of Ireland priest. Lewis had an older brother, Warren Hamilton Lewis (1895-1973). Lewis was very interested in Anthropomorphism (giving human traits to non-human things, like animals or objects,) and animals, and would often write and illustrate his own animal tales.
- He would also imagine a world run by animals and through his interest with Norse mythology, religion and the natural world, the series *'The Chronicles of Narnia'* was created.
- Between 1950 to 1956, Lewis wrote a total of seven Narnia novels.



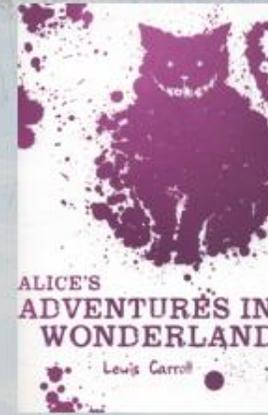
If you liked *'The Chronicles of Narnia'* you will also like these...



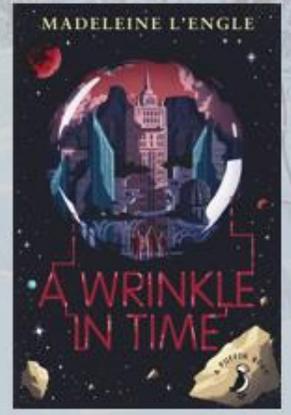
Another great adventure in Narnia.



The final great adventure in Lewis' Narnia series.



Another great adventure in a fantasy land.



A fantasy adventure Through time and space.

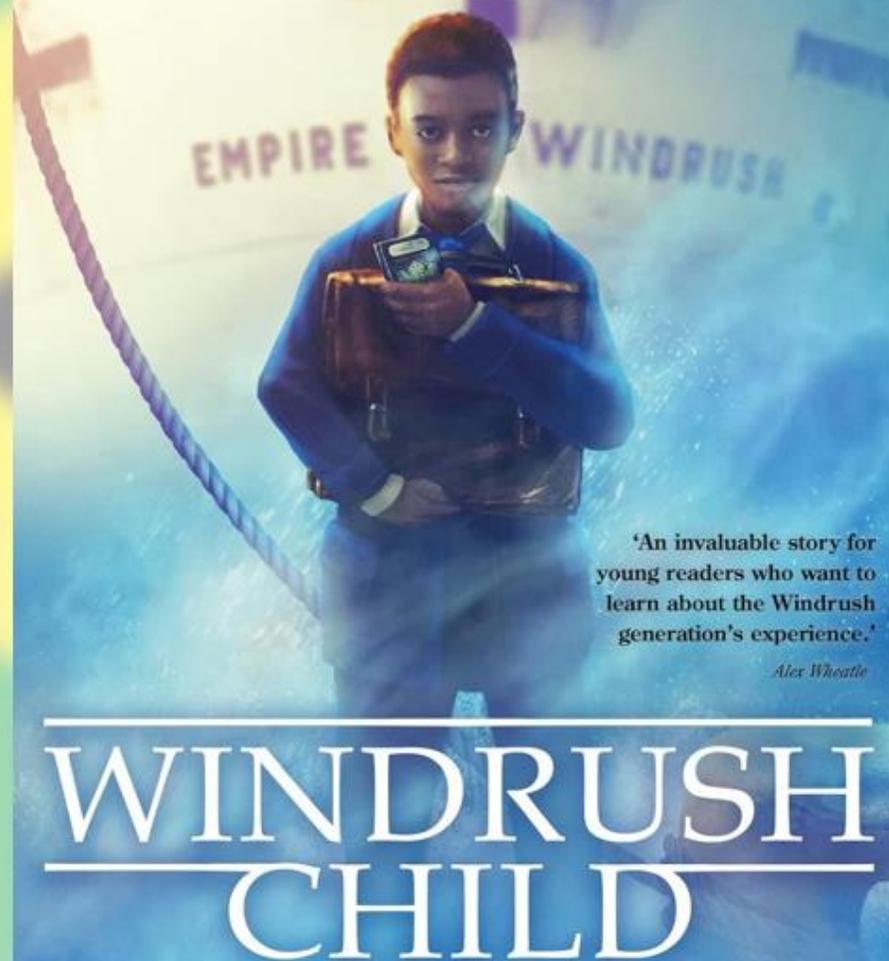
# JANUARY 2024:

## Book of the Month is....

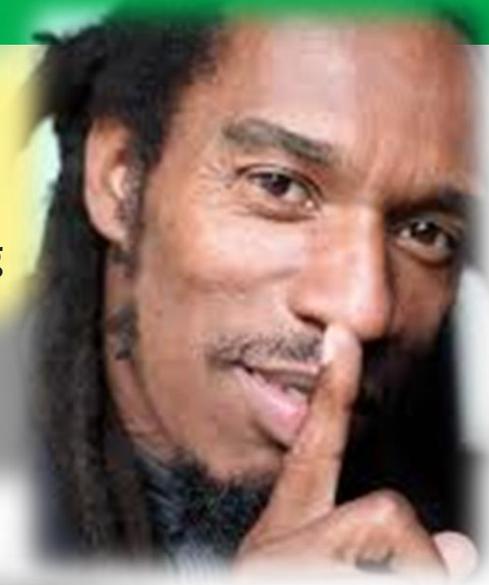
- Benjamin Zephaniah's novel tells the story of a 10-year-old boy called Leonard.
- In 1958, Leonard travels with his mother from Jamaica to England to join his father. The novel follows Leonard as he struggles to adapt to life in Britain.
- The title, 'Windrush child', refers to any child who was born in the Caribbean and came to Britain between 1948 and 1971.
- In 1948, Caribbean families were invited to move to Britain by the British government to help with rebuilding the country after World War Two.
- These families arrived on ships. One of the first ships to arrive was called '*The Empire Windrush*'.
- Although *Windrush Child* is a fictional story, Benjamin Zephaniah was inspired by historical events when he wrote the book. He also drew on his own experience of growing up in Britain in the 1960s.
- In this book, Zephaniah explores themes of 'racism' and 'injustice' as well as 'UK History' – areas that the author explored in other aspects of his writing.

*This book has been selected by the CORE Trust, in memory of Benjamin Zephaniah – who was born in Handsworth Birmingham and who passed away on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023.*

# BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

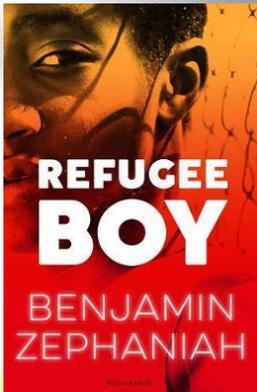


# A bit about the author... Benjamin Zephaniah

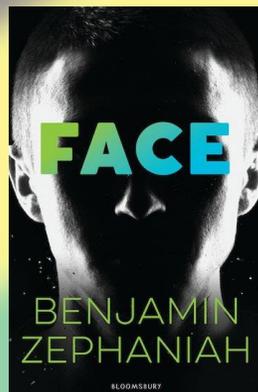


- Zephaniah was born 15<sup>th</sup> April 1958 in Handsworth, Birmingham, which he thought of as a “cold suburb of Kingston, Jamaica”.
- He began performing poetry locally in his early teenage years. He had dyslexia, and he left school aged 14.
- In 1979, he moved to London, and his first poetry collection, Pen Rhythm, was published. He began performing at demonstrations, youth gatherings and outside police stations. “I was a big protester, not just against racism but also apartheid. We are a multicultural society, but the institutions have to catch up with us.”
- Benjamin appeared in the hit Birmingham-based drama ‘Peaky Blinders’ – playing real-life street preacher ‘Jimmy Jesus’.
- In 2003, Zephaniah rejected his OBE from the Queen. “Me? I thought, OBE me? Up yours, I thought. I get angry when I hear that word ‘empire’; it reminds me of slavery, it reminds of thousands of years of brutality, it reminds me of how my forefathers were brutalized.”
- His work was heavily influenced by Jamaican music and poetry – he was referred to as a ‘dub poet’ (improvised Jamaican rap in the 1970s).

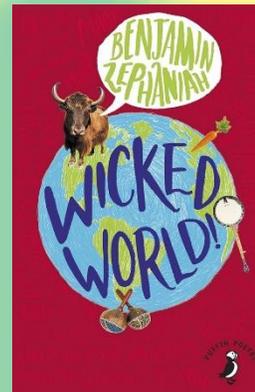
If you liked ‘Refugee Boy’ you may also like these...



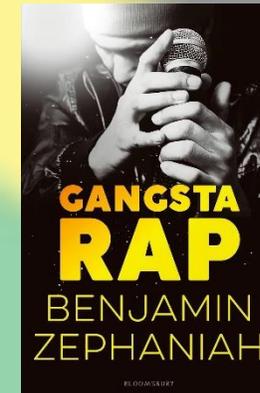
Another powerful refugee story from the author.



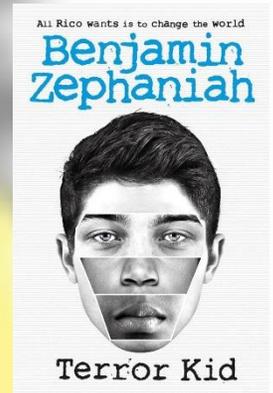
Zephaniah’s debut (1<sup>st</sup>) novel



A collection of Zephaniah’s poetry work.



A story about music and Identity.

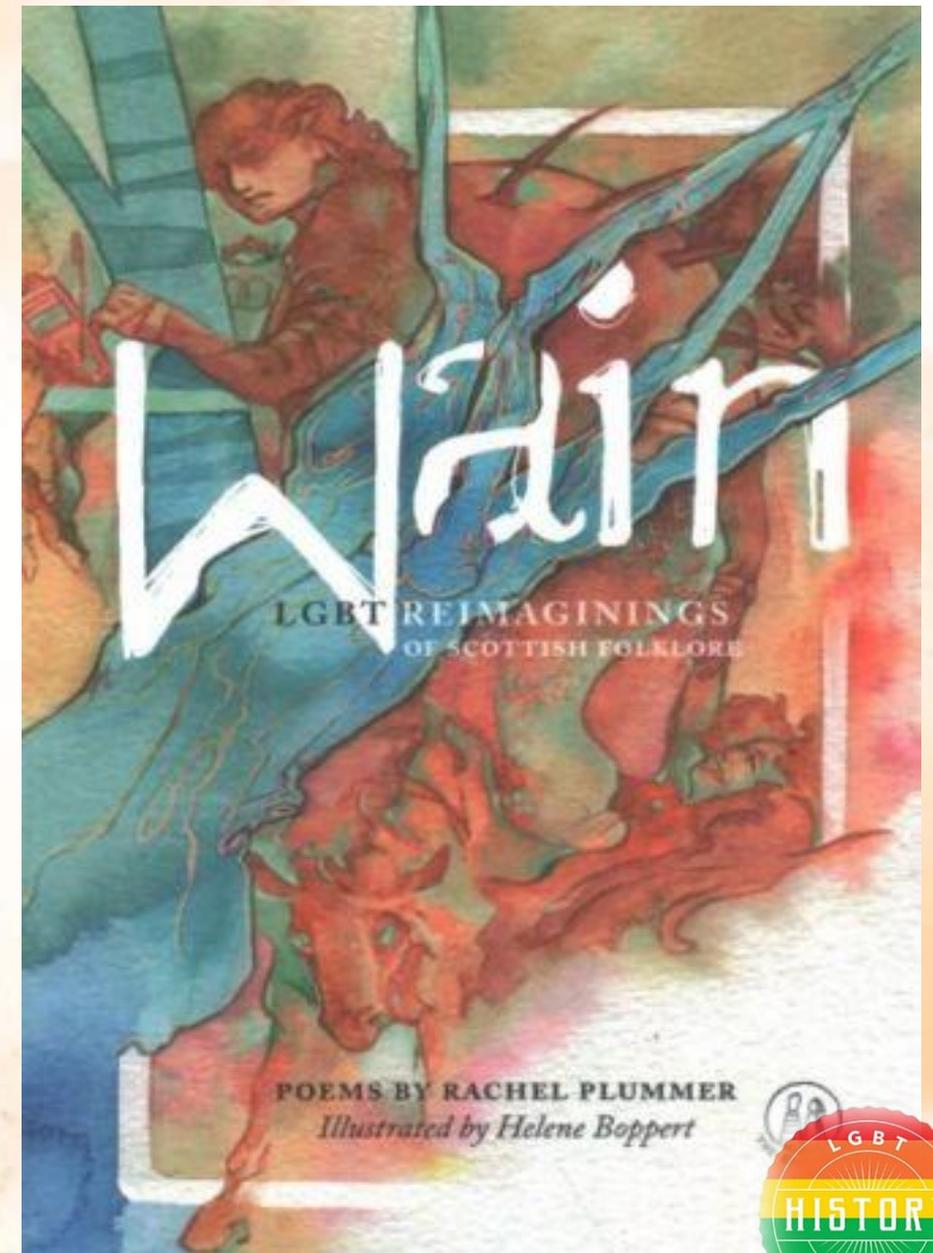


A story of injustice.

# February 2024: Book of the Month is...



- ‘A boy selkie who takes his girlness off like a sealskin, an untamable kelpie, the warrior-wife of a princess, and a Loch Ness monster who is too busy having fun to worry about words like “girl” or “boy”.’
- An enchanting vision of contemporary life portrayed through poetic re-imaginings of Scottish legends. Rachel Plummer’s *Wain* intends to comfort through magic and myth, specifically aimed towards the LGBTQ+ community, but accessible for all.
- A fun, immersive and mystical collection of poems alongside otherworldly, fantastical illustrations from Helene Boppert.
- ‘This is the way the world is – with just a bit of Scottish myth and magic thrown in.’ This collection of poems allows readers to transport themselves upon an illuminating world of magical expression, to welcome sexualities and to maintain enchantment in the modern world through poetic prose.
- Winner of the Scottish Book Trust ‘New Writer’s Award’ 2016.



BOOK RECOMMENDATION AS PART OF LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH.

# About the author... Rachel Plummer

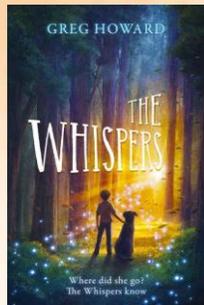
Rachel Plummer has been published widely in anthologies and magazines; she has also created poems within the genre of science-fiction.

Her poetry collection, *Wain*, was commissioned by **LGBT Youth Scotland**; an organization which provides youth work to members of the LGBTQ+ community and works towards LGBTQ+ equality and human rights. She noticed when reading aloud traditional Scottish tales to her daughter that fairytales are often quite gender stereotyped, with no representation of the LGBTQ+ community. Identifying as a queer parent, she strove to see families like her own represented in traditional stories such as these. And so, she began her creation of '*Selkie*', the very first poem of the collection.

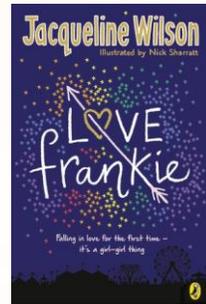
In 2016, Rachel Plummer won the Book Trust New Writer's Award and has also won or been placed in various other competitions and awards such as: the Flambard Prize and Canterbury's Festival Poet of the Year Award.



If you enjoyed *Wain*, you might also like...



A touching and heartfelt adventure of mystery



A realistic, coming-of-age story of first love



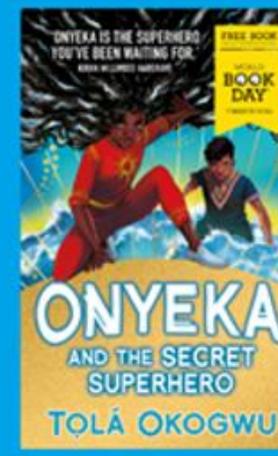
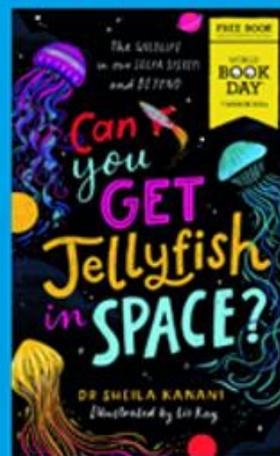
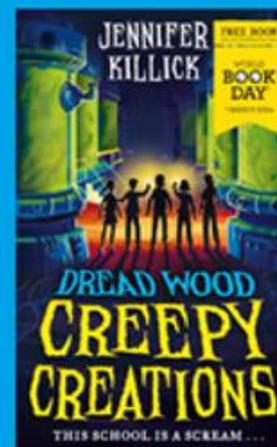
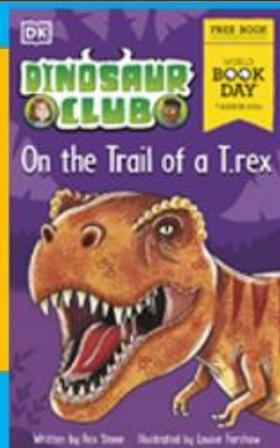
A mythological tale mixed with urban fantasy



A magical, LGBT story with a furry fox cub

WORLD  
**BOOK  
DAY**  
7 MARCH 2024

# MARCH 2024 BOOK OF THE MONTH...



This month sees the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 'World Book Day' in the UK.

Instead of recommending one book title this month, here is the selection of the 2024 free book titles, which are available for you from your local bookshop or selected supermarket stores:

- *'Investigators: High-Rise Hijinks'* by John Patrick Green (Early Readers)
- *'Dinosaur Club: Trail of a T. Rex'* by Rex Sone (Early Readers)
- *'Marv and the Ultimate Superpower'* by Alex Falase-Koye (Early Readers)
  
- *'Loki – Tales of a Bad God'* by Louie Stowell (Fluent Readers)
- *'Can you get Jellyfish in Space'* by Dr. Sheila Kanani (Fluent Readers)
- *'The Amazing Edie Eckhart: Friend Mission'* by Rosie Jones (Fluent Readers)
- *'Onyeka and the Secret Superhero'* by Tola Okogwu (Fluent Readers)
  
- *'Dread Wood: Creepy Creations'* by Jennifer Killick (Independent Readers)
- *'The Doomsday Date'* by Faridah Abike-Iyimide (Independent 'Teen' Readers)

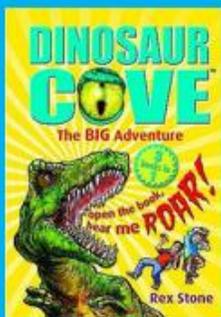
To claim your free book, you will need to collect your '£1 Book Token'...

COLLECT YOUR FREE '£1 BOOK TOKEN'  
FROM YOUR LIBRARY OR IN YOUR FORM  
ON THURSDAY 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024.



- World Book Day was created by UNESCO\* (\*United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization) on 23rd April 1995 as a worldwide celebration of books and reading. World Book Day is marked in over 100 countries around the globe. The first World Book Day in the UK and Ireland took place in 1997 to encourage young people to discover the pleasure of reading.
- Traditionally celebrated on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, this date was selected to honor the deaths of William Shakespeare. However, in the UK, celebrations for World Book Day take place on the first Thursday in March so that it can take place in school term time.
- Since World Book Day first began in the UK, it has published over 200 exclusive book titles, with nearly 20 million free books being issued to children over the last 27 years.

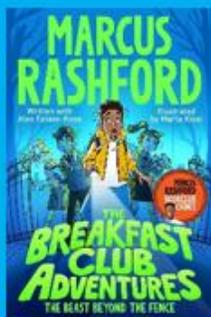
## MORE BOOKS FROM WBD 2024 AUTHORS FOR YOU TO ENJOY...



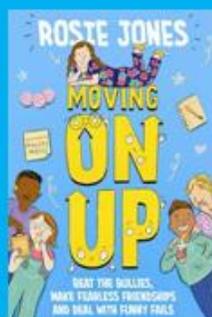
By  
Rex Stone.



By  
John Green.



By  
Alex Koya.



By  
Rosie Jones.



By  
Dr. Kanani.



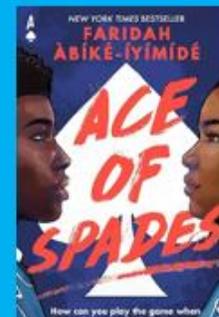
By  
Louie Stowell.



By  
Tola Okogwu.



By  
Jennifer Killick.

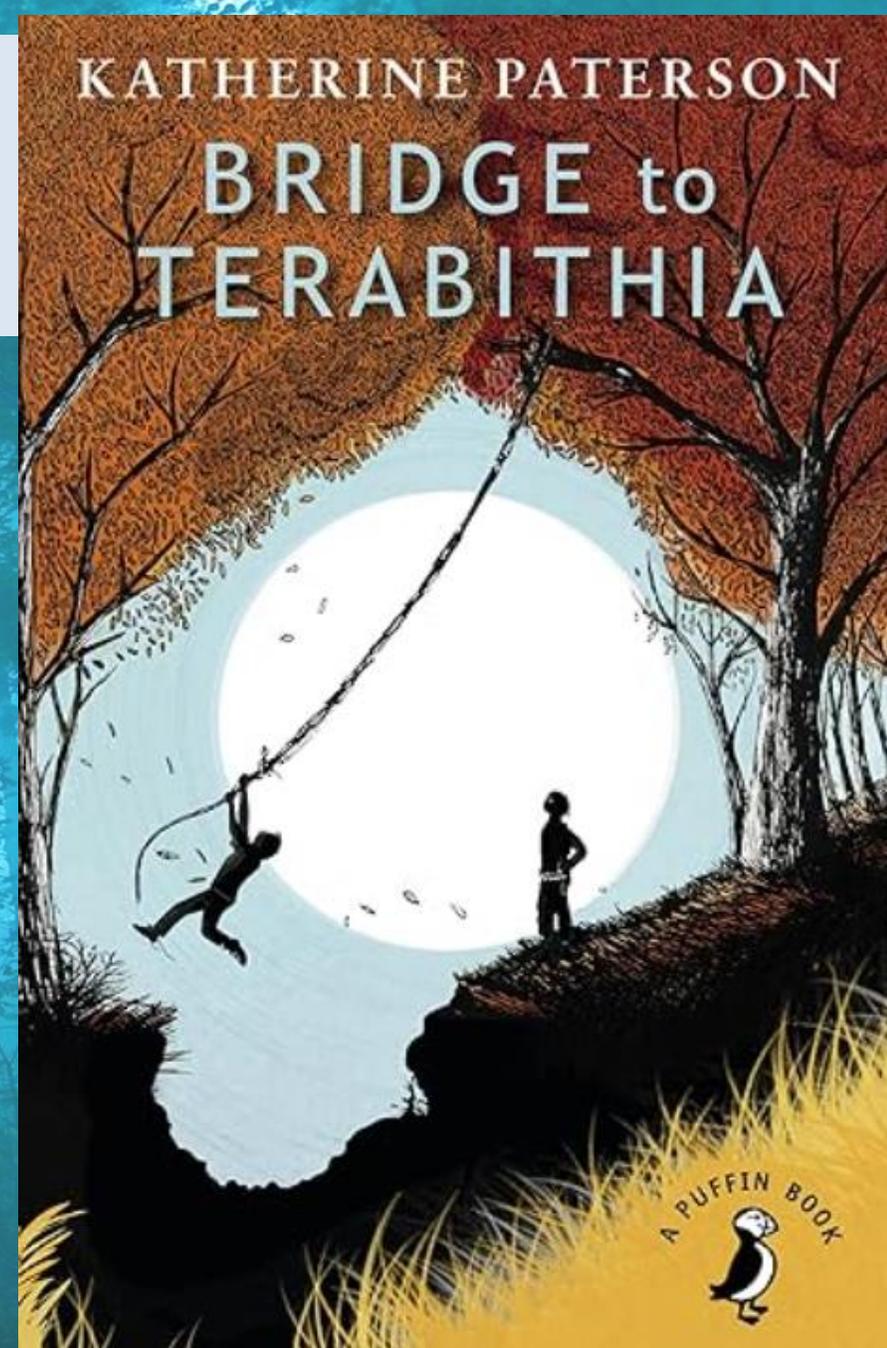


By  
Faridah Abike-Iyimide

# April 2024: Book of the month is...

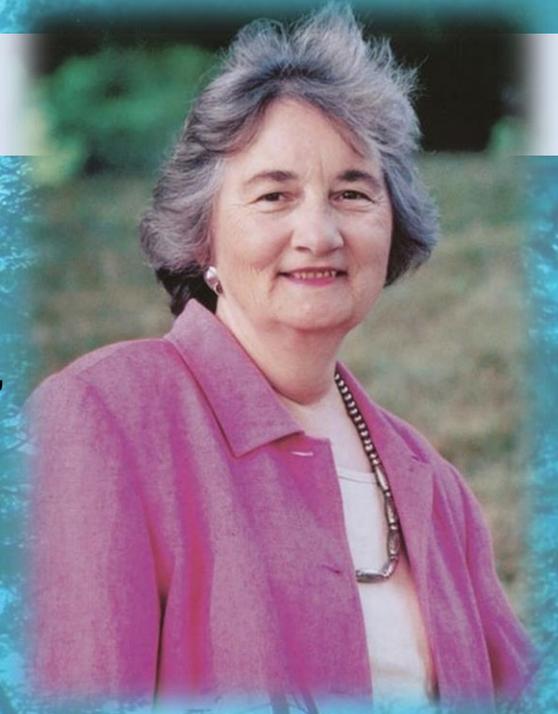
*Bridge to Terabithia* is a sensitive, emotionally honest novel about characters who rise above their weaknesses through emotional strength and generosity. Both Jess and Leslie have specific needs; he for athletic recognition to appease a father disgusted by Jess's true interest, art, and she for acceptance from a new school whose students regard her an outsider. In the woods near their homes, the children create an imaginary land in which their friendship flourishes away from social prejudice and familial pressure. However, terrible events shatter the peace of Terabithia, forcing Jess to seek friendship and understanding in the real world.

To readers, '*Bridge to Terabithia*' can be a powerful book, in that it touches deeply on the inner child in all of us by perfectly describing the feelings and events those moments of childhood presented. One immediately gets on the same page as the book from the very first Katherine Paterson's '*Bridge to Terabithia*' is one of the easiest, simple-to-read books I've read. With a little over 200 pages and the choice of words used, '*Bridge to Terabithia*' is one novel anyone who loves a good story can grab and finish within a few hours.



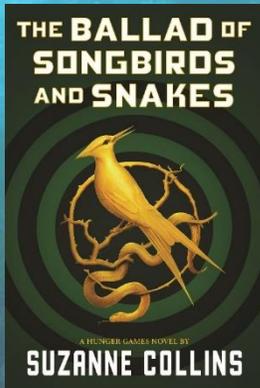
# A bit about the author... Katherine Paterson

- Katherine Womeldorf Paterson (born October 31, 1932) is an American writer best known for children's novels, including *Bridge to Terabithia*.
- Katherine Womeldorf was born in Huai'an, China, to Presbyterian (\*) missionaries G. (George) Raymond and Mary Womeldorf. Her father supported her family by preaching and heading Sutton 690, a boys' school.
- Paterson's first language was Chinese, and she initially experienced difficulties reading and writing English.
- She lives in Barre, Vermont. Her husband John Barstow Paterson, a retired Presbyterian (\*) pastor, died in 2013. She has four children and seven grandchildren.



(\* Presbyterian is a branch of Christianity that believes in democratic rule, under the Word of God).

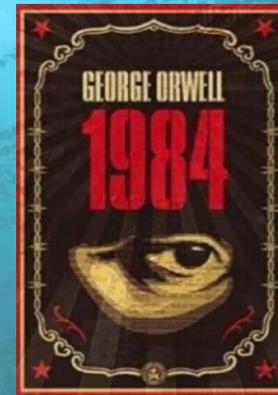
If you liked *'Bridge to Terabithia'*, you will also like these...



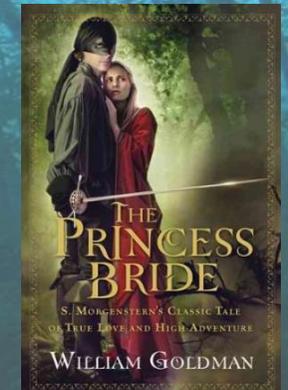
The prequel.



The Handmaid's tale.



1984



The Princess Bride

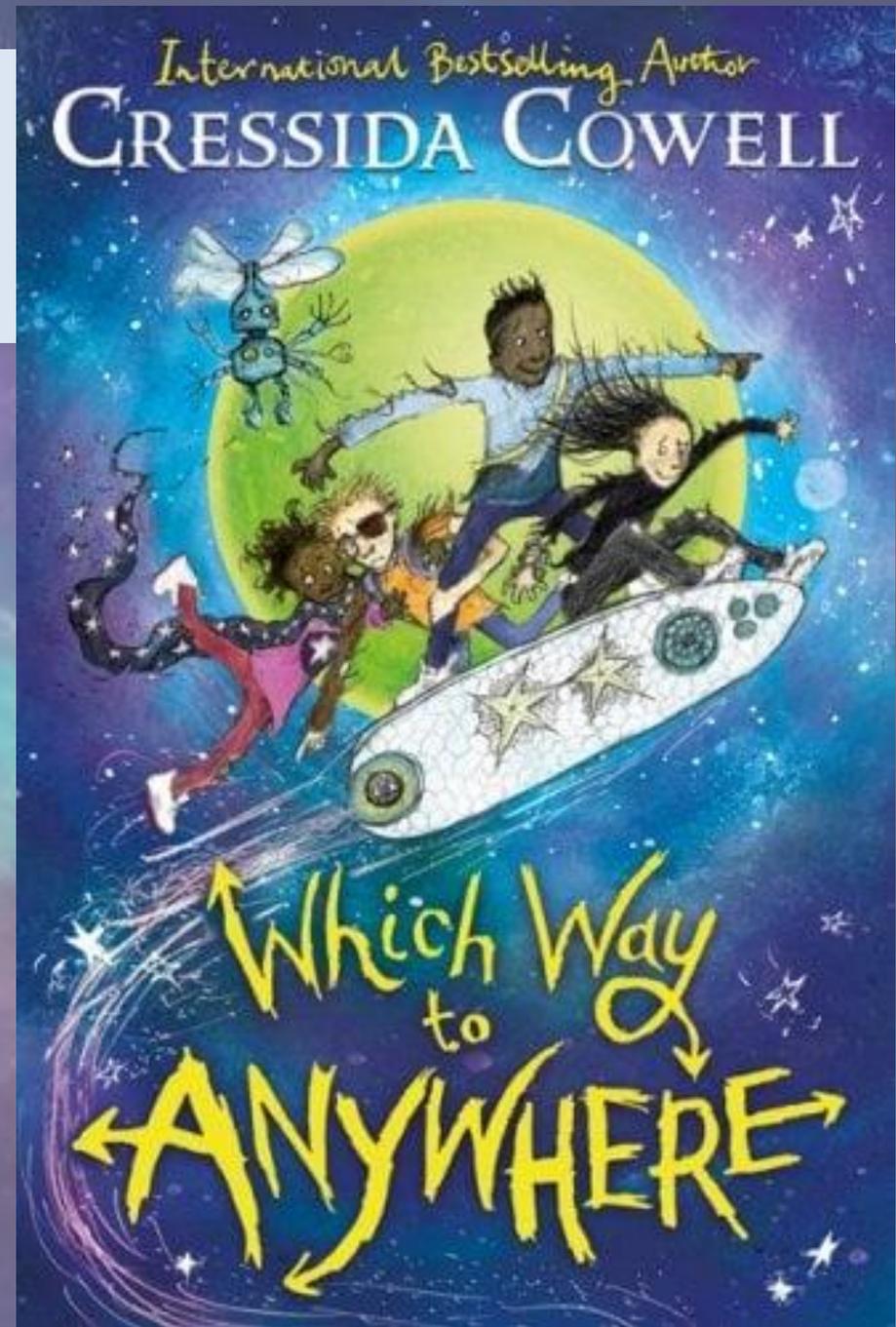
# May 2024:

## Book of the month is...

This is the first book in a brand-new series by Cressida Cowell – the award-winning author of the ‘How to train your dragon’ and ‘Wizard of once’ series.

This is a story about a family. There are five child characters: K2 and his twin sister Izzabird O’Hero, Theo and Mabel Smith and little Annipeck O’Hero-Smith. They are fairly-ordinary children (although K2 and Izzabird have some odd magical relatives) living normal lives on Earth in the present day. The O’Hero mum and the Smith dad fell in love and got together to make a new family and none of the older siblings are very happy about it and don’t get on well with each other - although they all adore their younger sister Annipeck.

The story starts with K2 in a terrifying alternate world where humans have been hunted to extinction, he’s as thin as a twig, with broken glasses. Then the narrator of the story (we find out who this is at the end) takes us back in time to how this came to be, and it’s a totally thrilling tale which centres on what happens if the fantasy worlds children draw become real? The child heroes in this story seem at first like rather unremarkable people but when faced with the huge challenges of having to save their parents and world ending threats, they become incredibly creative and brave.

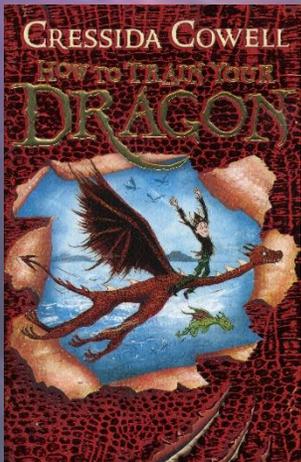


# A bit about the author... Cressida Cowell

- Cressida Cowell is a British children's author, popularly known for the book series, *How to Train Your Dragon*, which has subsequently become an award-winning film franchise. To-date, she has sold over 11 million books worldwide.
- Cressida Cowell was born on 15 April 1966 in London. She is the daughter of Michael Hare, 2nd Viscount\*of Blakenham (\* A Viscount is a royal title of nobility – it is above a Baron, but below an Earl).
- As a child, Cowell states she "grew up in London and on a small, uninhabited island off the west coast of Scotland," and that it was during summers spent on the Inner Hebrides, where she first began to develop her writing and drawing skills – inspiring her to write the 'How to Train Your Dragon' series.
- In 2020 Cowell was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to children's literature.



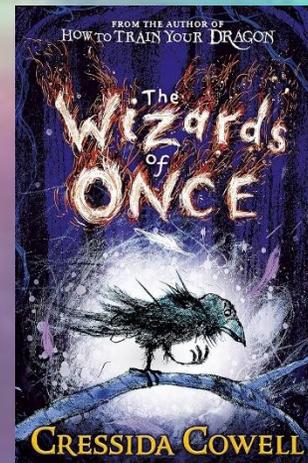
If you liked **'Which Way To Anywhere'**, you will also like these...



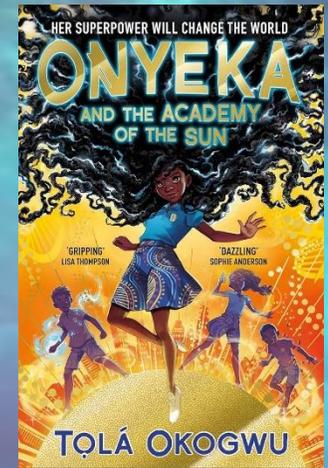
How to train your Dragon.



Skandar and the Unicorn Thief



Wizard of Once.



Onyeka and the Academy of the Sun

# JUNE 2024: BOOK OF THE MONTH IS...

An engaging read where the reader is transported to a farm where a dragon Kazimir is employed to work the farm. At first, Kazimir is not allowed to be interacted with and spends a lot of time alone. However, this all changes when he saves Sarah from the clutches of an unwanted visitor.

Somehow, we end up traversing another realm whereby everything seems back to front.

One thing is for certain, Kazimir was convinced that Sarah was his savior, but she isn't the girl who saves him in the end.

'A fire-breathing adventure' with romance and action intertwined throughout the book. Ness shows that although monsters exist in every world, there are many more who wish to overcome them; and that even in the smoking ruins of civilization, there is room for hope.

Burn

PATRICK  
NESS

TWICE CARNEGIE MEDAL WINNER

About the author...

# Patrick Ness

Patrick Ness is an American-British author, journalist, lecturer and screenwriter. He has won the Carnegie Medal twice, The Guardian Children's Fiction Price, and the Costa Children's Book Award.

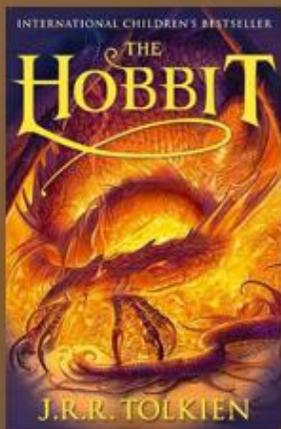
Ness taught creative writing at University of Oxford and has written and reviewed for The Daily Telegraph, The Times Literary Supplement, The Sunday Telegraph and The Guardian.

He has been a Fellow of the Royal Literary Fund and was the first Writer in Residence for BookTrust.

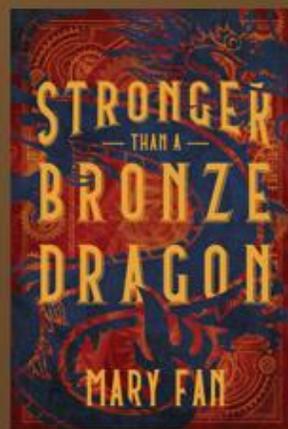
His book, '*A Monster Calls*' (2011), was released as a film in 2016, which Ness wrote the screenplay for.



If you liked 'Burn' you will also like these...



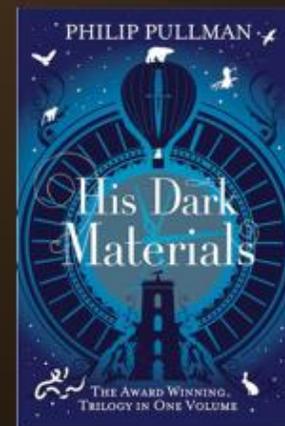
The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien



Stronger than a Bronze Dragon by Mary Fan



Eragon by Christopher Paolini



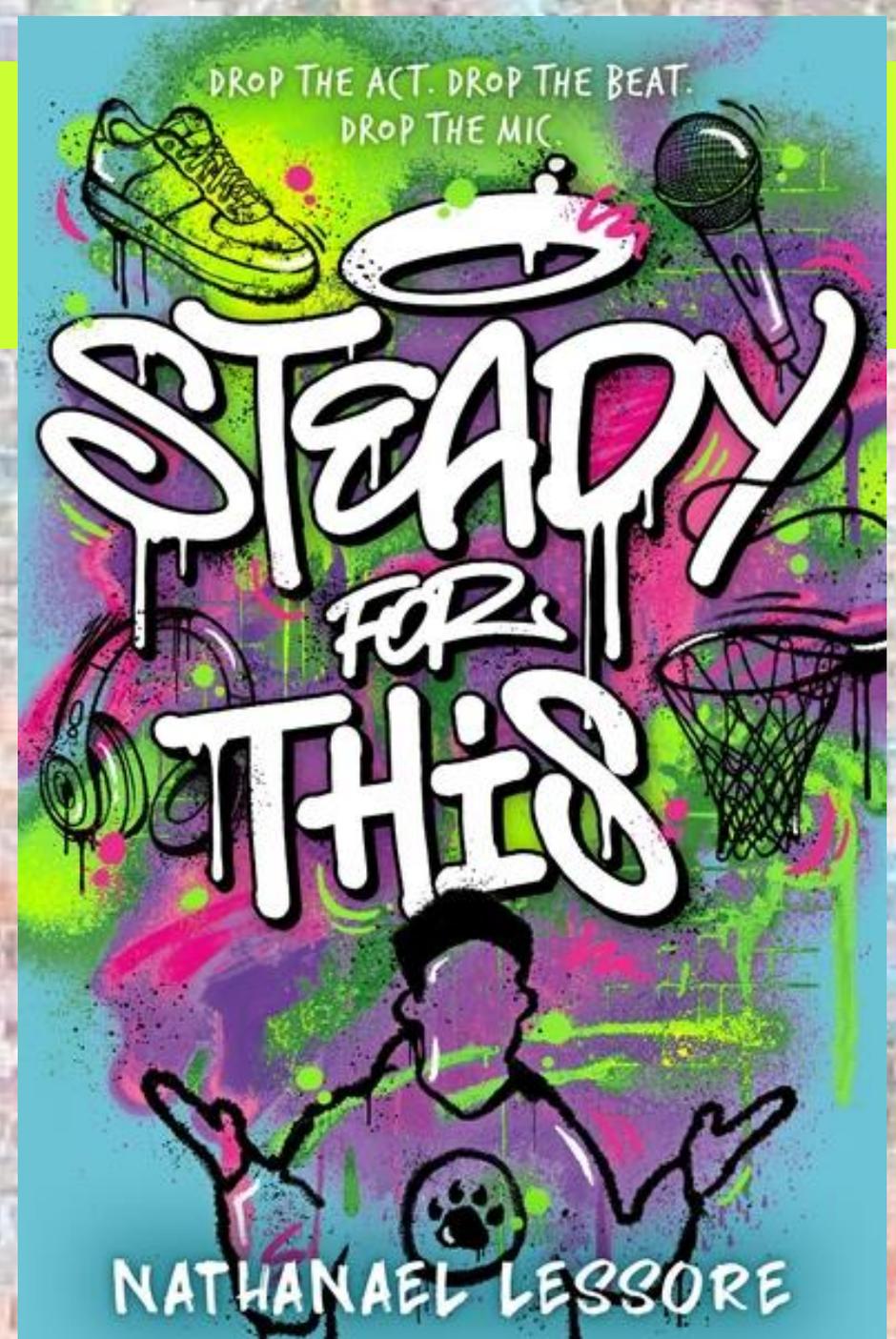
His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman

# July 2024: Book of the month is...



‘Steady For This’ is a hilarious story with laugh-out-loud moments. Wannabe rapper Shaun, aka MC Growls, takes part in a live-stream performance intended to platform him and his friends during an MC Battle. However, he is left humiliated after it goes viral for all the wrong reasons. There is a wonderful friendship between Shaun and his best friend Shanks. There are hilariously awkward set pieces which are underpinned by deep themes around peer pressure, young carers and social inequality that make this a stand-out, highly empathic read.

Fresh and original use of language and slang gives Shaun a real sense of voice and identity. This is an engaging, pacy read with likeable and relatable characters. There is realistic representation of working-class London, characters that are developed throughout the story and showcase positive relationships. Sophisticated issues around mental health, bullying and poverty are explored with a lightness of touch and in ways that challenge stereotypes. Serious issues are balanced with humorous moments. A quirky rite of passage novel that is clever, authentic and oh-so-realistic. Growls is a character unlike any other!

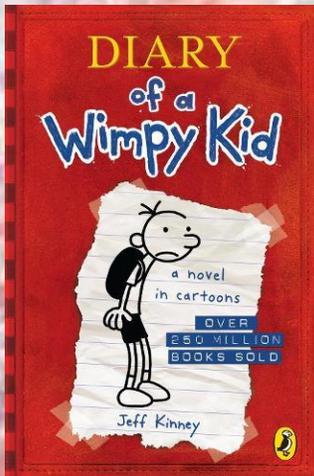


# A bit about the author... Nathanael Lessore



- Nathanael Lessore was born in Camberwell, South-East London, as one of eight children to French and Madagascan parents.
- Although he spent most of his life in Peckham, Nathanael has also lived in Paris, Strasbourg and Singapore.
- Nathanael became a marketing executive after graduating from the University of East London, believing at the time that a Creative Writing degree destined him for a career in marketing.
- STEADY FOR THIS is his debut novel and it gave him the opportunity to show his South-East London childhood as the funny, warm, adventurous world that wasn't always represented as such.
- Nathanael wrote the first three chapters of STEADY FOR THIS while at university but finished the whole book during Covid lockdown in 2022.
- This book was shortlisted for the Yoto Carnegie Writing Award for 2024.

If you liked *'Steady For This'*, you will also like these...



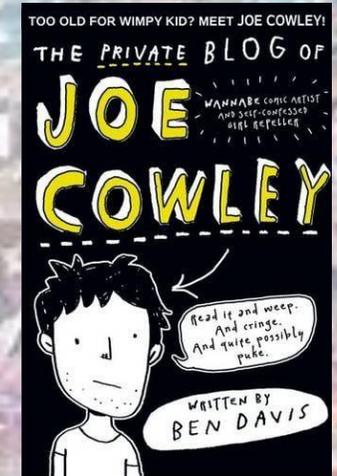
Diary of a Wimpy Kid.



On The Come Up.



The Story of Tracy Beaker.



The Private Blog of Joe Cowley.