KPMG

Children's Books Ireland Awards 2022

Junior Juries
RESOURCE PACK

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KPMG

ecclesiastical

LOTTERY FUNDED

arts council of Northern Ireland

children's books ireland
every child a reader

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KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2022

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kpmg.ie

Children's Books Ireland is the national organisation for children's books in Ireland. Through our many activities and events we aim to engage young people with books, foster a greater understanding of the importance of books for young people and act as a core resource for those with an interest in books for children in Ireland. Our vision is an Ireland in which books are central to every child's life and where meaningful engagement with books is supported by passionate and informed adults in families, schools, libraries and communities all across the island. Children's Books Ireland is an arts organisation with charitable status.
childrensbooksireland.ie

Ecclesiastical is a specialist financial services group with insurance, investment management and broking and advisory businesses. Charitable giving is the reason they exist: their sole purpose is to contribute to the greater good of society. A significant proportion of their profits are channelled towards funding good causes, through independent grants from their charitable owner or their considerable donations to the communities they serve. In 2019 Children's Books Ireland was the only Irish charity selected as a recipient of a Movement For Good Award for a three-year period.
ecclesiastical.ie

The Arts Council of Ireland is the Irish government agency for developing the arts. They work in partnership with artists, arts organisations, public policy-makers and others to build a central place for the arts in Irish life. Established in 1951, to stimulate public interest in and promote the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, the council is an autonomous body, which is under the aegis of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.
artscouncil.ie

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the development and funding agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. They distribute public money and National Lottery funds to develop and deliver a wide variety of arts projects, events and initiatives across Northern Ireland. From theatre and literature to art in the community, they work in partnership with hundreds of artists, arts organisations and venues. Art has the ability to reach across boundaries, inspiring, teaching and bringing people together.
artscouncil-ni.org

We are very grateful to all our funders and partners/Táimid an-bhuíoch dár n-urraitheoirí go léir

LOTTERY FUNDED

Welcome, Junior Jurors!

A very warm welcome to this year's KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Junior Juries resource pack. In 2022 the pandemic has continued to impact children and adults of all ages. As always, books provide solace for readers of all ages, providing an opportunity to see the world through the eyes of others. With this year's KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards we are delighted to bring you books that we believe will whisk you away.

Once again, we see the return of the KPMG Reading Hero Award, to encourage involvement from young readers across Ireland. You will find further details in this pack and we are excited to read your nominations!

The highly anticipated 2022 shortlist has been announced and it is time for the Junior Juries to get reading! Over the coming weeks thousands of young readers across the country will be reading, reviewing and debating their chosen books, before finally deciding on their overall favourite. Once again, the judging panel's selection serves to showcase the strength and vitality of contemporary Irish children's literature across a variety of styles and reading levels.

It is really exciting to see such a variety of books on the list, beautifully illustrated picturebooks in both Irish and English, folklore retellings and so much more. This pack is designed to help you and your group get the most out of the Junior Juries programme – from selecting and sourcing suitable titles to choosing and nominating your winner. Children's Books Ireland recognises that every group is different and will tackle the activities in their own way. The suggestions made on these pages are therefore designed merely as a guide for you to use and modify as you see fit. We will also have plenty of online content to give your groups more opportunities to engage with the books, authors and illustrators.

Remember, your group is being asking to choose the Junior Juries' Award by identifying the title you consider to be most excellent. The winner of the Junior Juries' Award will receive a beautiful trophy and a prize of €2,000 so every vote counts!

Junior Juries must submit their votes by Tuesday 10 May and you are all invited to join us for the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards prize-giving online ceremony on Tuesday 24 May as part of International Literature Festival Dublin!

We have had a lot of fun compiling this year's resource pack and really hope you find it useful and enjoyable too. As always, we love to hear from our Junior Juries nationwide, so why not find Children's Books Ireland on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and share images and news from your group during the judging process using the hashtag #ReadingHeroes.

Children's Books Ireland has made every effort to ensure that all information provided in this pack is correct at time of print. However, we cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

Tá gach iarracht déanta ag Leabhair Pháistí Éireann le cinntiú go bhfuil an fhaisnéis sa treoir seo cruinn. Ní féidir le Leabhair Pháistí Éireann a bheith freagrach áfach as aon earráid ná easnamh.

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The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2022

The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards (formerly the CBI Book of the Year Awards/Bisto Book of the Year Awards) have been running since 1990 and are the leading children's book awards in Ireland. The awards are made annually by Children's Books Ireland to authors and illustrators who were born in Ireland, are permanently resident in Ireland or are citizens of Ireland and are open to books written in Irish or English. The shortlist for the awards is announced annually in Belfast in March, in partnership with Young at Art and the Belfast Children's Festival, and the winners are announced in Dublin in May, in partnership with International Literature Festival Dublin. In 2022, both of these announcements will be accessible online as well as in-person.

The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards identify, honour and promote excellence in books for young people by Irish authors and illustrators. The awards are the most prestigious in Ireland and offer one of the few opportunities for national and international recognition of Irish authors and illustrators.

Each year Children's Books Ireland assembles a panel of judges who are experts in children's books. The panel operates independently of Children's Books Ireland. Young readers from around the country are invited to get involved with the Junior Juries (formerly known as the Shadowing Scheme) and decide the Junior Juries' Award (formerly the Children's Choice Award).

Excellence in children's books is the over-arching criterion.

Important Dates

- **Wednesday 9 March: KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Shortlist announced**
- **Wednesday 27 April: KPMG Reading Hero Award nomination deadline**
- **Tuesday 10 May: Junior Juries' Award vote deadline**
- **Tuesday 24 May: KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards ceremony**

JUNIOR JURIES

Established in 2005, the Junior Juries is a unique programme for schools, book clubs and libraries, designed to encourage awareness and enjoyment of the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. Participating classes and book clubs make their own selection of suitable titles from the books shortlisted for the awards in March, using this resource pack to guide them in their reading. At the end of this process each group is asked to collectively vote for their favourite book. The Junior Juries alone choose the Junior Juries' Award winner so every vote counts! Check out our YouTube channel (Children's Books Ireland) for lots more.

Further Information and Contact Details

We love hearing from all our Junior Juries. Why not send us photos of your group along with some of your book reviews or simply share with us what is working for you and your group? You can contact the Children's Books Ireland team using the details below. We would be more than happy to answer any of your questions in relation to the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards and the Junior Juries.

Follow us on social media!

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@kidsbooksirel
Children's Books Ireland

Stay up to date with our latest news, book-gifting projects and classroom packs – sign up to our Schools Newsletter!

https://bit.ly/3uCKUGB

childrensbooksireland.ie Email: awards@childrensbooksireland.ie

JUNIOR JURIES' AWARD WINNERS TO DATE

(FORMERLY CHILDREN'S CHOICE AWARD/SHADOWING AWARD)

2021: Ciara Smyth ***The Falling in Love Montage***

2020: no book awarded due to COVID–19 restrictions

2019: Kelly McCaughrain ***Flying Tips for Flightless Birds***

2018: Sarah Crossan ***Moonrise***

2017: Peadar Ó Guilín ***The Call***

2016: Sarah Crossan ***One***

2015: Oliver Jeffers ***Once upon an Alphabet***

2014: Oliver Jeffers ***The Day the Crayons Quit***

2013: Sheena Wilkinson ***Grounded***

2012: Celine Kiernan ***Into the Grey***

2011: Sheena Wilkinson ***Taking Flight***

2010: Jane Mitchell ***Chalkline***

2009: Roddy Doyle ***Her Mother's Face***

2008: Michael Scott ***The Alchemyst***

2007: John Boyne ***The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas***

2006: Oisín McGann ***Under Fragile Stone***

THE KPMG CHILDREN'S BOOKS IRELAND AWARDS SHORTLIST 2022

Selecting and Sourcing Your Books

We have included a suggested reading age for each of the titles on the shortlist below. These are intended as a guideline only and we still recommend that you use your ***own discretion*** when it comes to choosing which books to read with your group. There is no onus on any group to read every book on the shortlist. Some books you may find unsuitable for the age of readers in your group. In this case, simply choose those titles which you feel will engage your group members and suit their emotional maturity and reading ability.

Maybe ...

Chris Haughton

Walker Books
ISBN 9781406385526
Suitable for 2–5

There's a Ghost in This House

Oliver Jeffers

HarperCollins Children's Books
ISBN 9780008298357
Suitable for 5+

Rescuing Titanic: A True Story of Quiet Bravery in the North Atlantic

Flora Delargy

Wide Eyed Editions
ISBN 9780711262768
Suitable for 5–10

Frindleswylde

Natalia O'Hara illustrated by Lauren O'Hara

Walker Books
ISBN 9781406388961
Suitable for 6–10

Cluasa Capaill ar an Rí

Bridget Bhreathnach maisithe ag Shona Shirley Macdonald

Futa Fata
ISBN 9781910945605
Oiriúnach do 5–12

The Summer I Robbed a Bank

David O'Doherty illustrated by Chris Judge

Puffin Children's Books
ISBN 9780241362235
Suitable for 8–10

The Shadows of Rookhaven

Pádraig Kenny illustrated by Edward Bettison

Macmillan Children's Books
ISBN 9781529031713
Suitable for 10–14+

The Henna Wars

Adiba Jaigirdar

Hodder Children's Books
ISBN 9781444962208
Suitable for 13+

Not My Problem

Ciara Smyth

Andersen Press
ISBN 9780062957146
Suitable for 14+

Gut Feelings

C.G. Moore illustrated by Becky Chilcott

UCLan Publishing
ISBN 9781912979431
Suitable for 15+

This title deals with a number of sensitive issues. Children's Books Ireland is aware that this content will not be suitable for some readers and advises Junior Jury leaders to be aware of this content before selecting the book to read with your group.

GETTING STARTED

CHOOSING YOUR BOOKS

- Age range will be essential in your choice of titles for your group. It is best to keep it reasonably narrow in order to find books to suit the reading abilities and interests of the whole group. We have provided a general age range for each shortlisted title, so use this guide in your selection process. Please take note where we have marked books covering sensitive issues and topics. Feel free to get in touch with the team if you have any questions or need some guidance on choosing books for your group.
- There are lots of different methods to choose from when it comes to your book selection, once you have identified books suitable to your age range. The facilitator may decide to choose the titles so they can plan sessions and arrange the books in advance. However, this does mean the children have no input in the selection. Popular vote is often a good method, with the facilitator choosing a few suitable titles and then letting the jurors choose the books they would like to read through a voting process. You may decide to split your group into sub-groups and let them read different books. This would mean your activities will be based on different books, so be broad and general in your activity planning.
- Many groups may work in partnership with their local public library service and borrow the shortlisted books. Alternatively Children's Books Ireland is pleased to again recommend International Education Services who offer 25% off sets of Junior Juries titles. For further details call +353 (1) 621 0310. **iesltd.ie**

SESSION PLANNING

- Keep a notebook or some Post-its handy while reading the selected books and make a note of any points that might generate discussion and ideas for group activities.
- Rather than quizzing your group on the finer points of the text, use the session to encourage your readers to respond critically and creatively to what they've read.
- If the whole group has read the same book, explore the development of specific characters by discussing the challenges they face and how they are overcome.
- Our pack includes suggested questions you could use to start discussions, activities you could plan around your chosen books and suggestions for further resources and reading. The activities you plan will be contingent on the space and budget you have to work with. If you have the space and materials, arts and crafts sessions are an excellent way to encourage readers to respond creatively and artistically to a text. You could design an alternative cover for the book, draw characters or design a poster to advertise the book.
- Writing alternative endings, letters to authors/illustrators or diary entries for particular characters, creating maps of landscapes, inventing new characters, creating a storyboard or comic version of a favourite scene or chapter are great examples of written and illustrative activities you could try with your group.
- Drama is a great and fun way to get children to engage with a book. Assign a character to a member of your group and ask them to 'hotseat'. The rest of the group asks the character questions about their thoughts and opinions on events or other characters in the story. Take turns with different group members playing different characters. Split the group into teams and get them to recreate a scene from the book that they then have to perform in front of the other groups.

SUGGESTED GROUP ACTIVITIES

· Reader Response Group Discussion

Before making their final judgement, it is important to give all group members the opportunity to discuss and debate the various books they have read. One technique that has proven to be very effective in encouraging this kind of critical dialogue in young people is often referred to as 'Book Talk'. First, ask your group to form a circle with their chairs – you should sit in with them too. Begin by asking a simple, open question, such as 'What do you think?' (e.g. 'What do you think the book is about?'). Going around the group from person to person, each individual should be asked to respond to the question with an opinion and give an example to back it up (e.g. 'I think the book is really well written because') or respond to something that has been said already (e.g. 'I agree with Jim because', 'I don't agree with Jim because').

It is very important that every participant is given the opportunity to gather their thoughts before speaking – this 'waiting time' should be respected and the participant should be encouraged to stop, think and choose their words carefully. Other participants should not be allowed to jump in and interject if someone is taking time to get their opinion across. Using the framework 'I think', 'I agree', 'I disagree' should help to structure their ideas more clearly.

The discussion can continue around the circle until no one has any more to contribute. Then a new issue can be introduced (e.g. 'What do you think about the main character?') and so on. When discussing picturebooks, this technique can be particularly effective if you circulate copies of some of the illustrations so the participants can refer to them whilst they are speaking. NB: If an individual has not read the title they can obviously 'pass' to the next person who has.

· Favourite Book Presentations

Ask each young reader to present their favourite book to the rest of the group. They must try to convince the others to give their title a high score. Set strict time limits, no more than two or three minutes each. These presentations can also be backed up with additional materials made by the children, utilising some of the questions and activities contained within this pack.

· Courtroom Drama

Establish a mini courtroom scenario with the group. Select a jury and nominate someone to propose a book (highlight the good points) and another member to oppose the book (highlight the negative points). Repeat this for all the books they have read and then ask the jury to vote on a final score for each title.

· Book Fair

Hold a mini book fair. Give each title a table in the room or a display board on which fans of each book can create a display of their work. Then assign one or two nominated presenters to each 'stand'. Give the other group members time to visit each stand, view the material and talk to the presenters. At the close of the fair, ask everyone to come together and discuss the merits of each book/stand before giving their scores.

HOW TO VOTE

KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Junior Juries scheme

Here is how the voting works: having gone through the reading, deliberation and debating process, the final step is to submit the ballot sheet on behalf of the group as a whole. You should submit only one ballot sheet per group, with scores contributed only by those who have read the title in question.

To calculate your overall group score, first ask each reader to score each of the books they have read out of 100, then average these out to get a final overall score for each title.

Please ensure you complete the ballot sheet online (link at the bottom of this page) no later than **Tuesday 10 May.**

Note to Jurors:

- Think carefully about all the books you have read and give each a score out of 100.
- If you have not read a particular book for any reason please do not contribute a score. This will ensure we are able to count up the scores fairly.
- You may award books identical scores if necessary.
- Exceptionally high or low scores should only be used when you deem a book to be of exceptionally high or low quality.

GO HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR BALLOT SHEET:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KPHBLYT

KPMG Reading Hero Award– #ReadingHeroes

We are delighted to announce the return of our special award – the KPMG Reading Hero Award 2022 – which recognises a young person's potential and gives them encouragement to pursue their chosen path. We are inviting teachers, parents, guardians, relatives, friends and librarians from all across Ireland to nominate your KPMG Reading Hero!

Within our Junior Juries all over the island of Ireland are extraordinary individuals whose participation and interest in books and reading outside of the awards is remarkable. These individuals may be voracious readers or may have completed their first book, overcoming learning or language difficulties to do so. Your nominated KPMG Reading Hero may have inspired their peers to get involved in the Junior Juries or may have made extraordinary efforts to engage with the activities set by the Junior Juries group leader. They may not be the best student or the fastest reader, but their efforts will merit reward, and we want to hear their stories. Whatever their achievements, we are asking Junior Juries leaders to nominate them so that we can recognise and reward their efforts. An up to 500-word written testimony from the group leader should highlight the positive attributes of the KPMG Reading Hero and tell the story of their achievements in relation to the Junior Juries process.

The recipient of the KPMG Reading Hero Award will receive a personal trophy and a €200 book voucher as well as winning a collection of books worth €1,000 for their school library. The KPMG Reading Hero Award will also be invited to attend the awards ceremony on date TBC.

Last year, the KPMG Reading Hero Award was presented to Dean Porter, aged 11, from Drumfries, Co. Donegal. Dean was nominated by his teacher, Róisín Walsh, at Scoil Naomh Pádraig, who said, 'As soon as I read about the award, Dean popped into my mind as he is one of the most avid readers I have ever had the privilege to teach in my more than 30 years' experience.' Dean has an extraordinary passion for books and reading, a passion that has seen him through the past three years during which he has been attending Crumlin hospital in Dublin. 'Dean had a serious operation for scoliosis and missed school for a number of months,' said Ms Walsh, 'however, he kept reading and kept reading and when he returned full time to the classroom, there were virtually no gaps in his education.'

To nominate your Reading Hero, please email your nomination to readinghero@kpmg.ie by Wednesday 27 April 2022

FURTHER RESOURCES FROM CHILDREN'S BOOKS IRELAND

We want everyone to get the most out of reading, so we've put together some resources to aid teachers, librarians and facilitators of reading clubs. Many of our resources will help with activity planning during your Junior Juries programme and throughout the year. You will find guidelines on setting up a school library, guidelines for a successful reading group, information on author visits and the Writers in Schools Scheme and some activity packs and guides to books for specific topics.

childrensbooksireland.ie/resources/

Doodle Starters

Our themed doodle sheets are a great way to get children drawing bugs, castles, space and lots more!

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/resources-ideas/ideas-activities-packs/doodle-starter-activity-sheets

Recommended Reads

The Children's Books Ireland *Recommended Reads* guide is one of our most important ways of sharing books. By recommending the very best books in all genres and age groups, we can ensure that children find the right book for them, often with some help from an adult in their lives – a parent, grandparent, teacher, librarian or bookseller – who can call on this guide for help. Below you'll find the link to back-issues of our reading guides. For the most up to date issue, sign up for Children's Books Ireland membership and you will receive the guide in the post.

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations?field_type=33&sort_by=field_publication_date_1

Themed Reading Lists

We have also created themed reading lists that you may find useful when recommending books to children or choosing books for your groups. Themes and topics include: Adventure Stories, Celebrating Families, Celebrating Difference, Fantasy, Emotional Wellbeing, Funny Books, Graphic Novels, Grief, Mystery, Sport, Overcoming Fears, Rainbow Reads, Ireland, and junior and senior lists celebrating Seachtain na Gaeilge.

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations?field_type=34&sort_by=field_publication_date_1

Mind Yourself reading guide and resources

Mind Yourself is a project designed to encourage conversations around mental health and wellbeing through children's books. It includes a recommended reading guide, a resource pack and a series of creative workshop videos.

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations?field_type=35&sort_by=field_publication_date_1

BOLD GIRLS

BOLD GIRLS is a project that aims to break down societal barriers and to instil confidence in girls and young women by showing them female characters in children's books with agency, power and opinions, addressing at a young age some of the issues that stand in the way of women achieving their ambitions, whether that be in leadership, in government or the arts. BOLD GIRLS highlights and reviews books that feature strong, intelligent, self-possessed female protagonists in children's books, as well as celebrating twenty female Irish authors and illustrators, both emerging and established, who have made an exceptional contribution to the canon of Irish children's literature. The reading guide and resource pack can be found online.

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/resources-ideas/ideas-activities-packs/bold-girls-resource-pack

Junior Juries Archive

The Junior Juries (formerly called the Shadowing Scheme) has been running for fifteen years. Here you will find previous packs like this one, collectively covering over 110 books with detailed activities, questions and projects for groups.

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/resources-ideas/ideas-activities-packs/junior-juries-archive

Or you can access the primary and secondary school packs for the past five years here.

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/resources-ideas/ideas-activities-packs/excellent-books-classroom-and-how-use-them-primary-school

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/resources-ideas/ideas-activities-packs/excellent-books-classroom-and-how-use-them-secondary-schools

Inis magazine

Inis magazine, in print and online, is the most important record of the development of Irish children's literature. It is a great source of regular reviews, is uploaded frequently and back issues are also available to read.

https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations?field_type=35&sort_by=field_publication_date_1

MAYBE …

Chris Haughton

Walker Books
Hardback, 40PP, £12.99
ISBN 9781406385526

Themes

- Animals
- Family
- Danger
- Nature

Summary In this delightful picturebook, Chris Haughton bring us a funny, suspenseful and keenly observed cautionary tale about pushing boundaries and indulging your more mischievous, cheeky side (when nobody is looking). Three little monkeys, and their big monkey, are sitting high up on their branch in the forest canopy. 'Ok, monkeys! I'm off,' says the big monkey. 'Now remember … Whatever you do, do NOT go down to the mango tree. There are tigers down there.' *Mmm … mangos!* think the little monkeys. They LOVE mangos. Hmm … *maybe* … maybe they could just *look* at the mangos? That'd be ok, right?

Judges' Comments This clever and engaging text from Haughton is bursting with fun and joy as we follow three misbehaving monkeys who cannot resist temptation. Despite the threat of tigers lurking in the grass, they convince themselves that it will be OK just to venture into the jungle and taste a mango – or two. Maybe … With the author–illustrator's brilliant use of saturated colours of purple, blue, deep pink, magenta and red, the mischievous monkeys and their jungle environment are skilfully brought to life in this page-turning tale that invites reader participation.

About the Author–Illustrator

Chris Haughton is an Irish designer and author living in London. His previous picturebooks include *A Bit Lost*; *Oh No, George!*; *Shh! We Have a Plan*; and *Goodnight Everyone*, each of which has earned him nominations and wins at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. He grew up in Dublin, loving books with pictures and diagrams as a child. When he grew older, he moved to Hong Kong and worked as a teacher with small children. A lot of the time the children didn't understand his English, so he drew on the blackboard or used picturebooks to help them.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Look at the front and back covers. What are the monkeys thinking on the cover?
2. Why does the word 'Maybe' have '…' (an ellipsis) after it – what could it mean?
3. What do you think will happen between the monkeys and the tigers on the back?
4. Do the tigers seem friendly?
5. What do you think of the colour choice for the cover?

AS YOU READ

1. Where is the mother monkey going?
2. Why does she want her babies to stay away from the mangos?
3. Do you think the monkeys are being careful?
4. Who is watching the monkeys?
5. Where are the mangos?
6. What happens when the monkeys get the mangos?
7. Who is telling this story?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. Why did the monkeys go back up the tree?
2. Did you like how this story ended? Why?
3. Do you think the monkeys were being silly?
4. Did you notice anything hiding in the pictures?
5. How did you feel when you saw the tigers?
6. How many tigers are in the book in total?
7. Would you rather be a tiger or a monkey in this story?
8. Do you think it is a good idea for the monkeys to get the bananas too?
9. What was your favourite page of the book? Why?
10. Do you think the monkeys are always getting into trouble?

QUESTIONS FOR OLDER READERS

1. What does this book teach young readers about animals?
2. How did the author–illustrator make you want to turn the page?
3. Is the art style a good choice for young readers? How would you describe it?
4. Did the author–illustrator do anything interesting with the font during the story?
5. How can you tell when a character is speaking?
6. How does the illustrator show you how the monkeys are feeling at each point in the story?
7. Chris Haughton likes illustrating animals because they can be drawn much more exaggeratedly than humans. Do you think the way he draws character expressions makes them more understandable for young readers?
8. What words would you use to describe the monkeys in this book?
9. What benefit do you think there is in having animals as main characters instead of humans?
10. Would you read this book to your younger sibling, if you have one?
11. What age group do you think this book is intended for and why?
12. Do you think older readers can enjoy picturebooks too?
13. Did you enjoy looking at the pictures alongside the text? If you were to take away the words from the page, would you still be able to understand what was happening in the story?

ACTIVITIES

- Write a short review of the book.
- The tigers are very unique looking – they don't look much like real tigers. Chris Haughton loves to exaggerate animals. Draw what a tiger would look like if you could decide what they looked like in real life.
- Write a sequel to this story where you follow the monkeys' quest for the bananas mentioned at the end.
- The monkeys love fruit like mangos and bananas. What fruit do you like? There are so many to choose, it's impossible! Come up with a cool superfruit combining all the different fruits you like. Write down its name, its flavour, its smell, and draw a picture of it.
- Rewrite the book from the viewpoint of the tigers. Consider if they were angry, scared or happy that the monkeys visited their den. Draw some pictures to go with it.

ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER READERS

- Rewrite this story for your age group. What would you change? Try making it into a comic strip.
- The monkeys in this story can talk. Write a day-in-the-life story about a pet from their point of view if they could speak.
- Chris Haughton creates his illustrations by making paper cut-outs and photographing them in place (see the video link in the Further Resources section for a tutorial). Create an illustration of any animal you like using this method.
- Organise a class debate on the following topic: 'In Sweden, people put banana on pizza. In Ireland, we put pineapple on pizza. Can mangoes or other fruits go on pizza?'

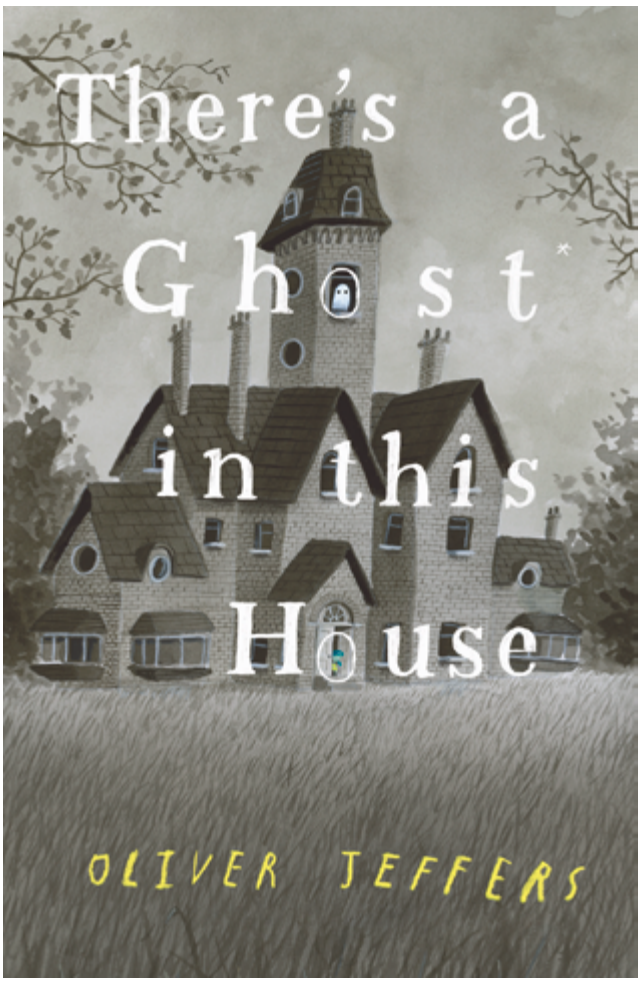
FURTHER RESOURCES

- See the Walker Books book trailer for *Maybe …* on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gwc6N5AfyGY
- Watch this Moon Lane TV story-time video of Chris Haughton reading *Maybe …* on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_my_vMpjyEk
- Watch this Candlewick Press video on YouTube showing Chris Haughton creating a character out of paper: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ep22GovHdDg
- Visit Chris Haughton's website: https://www.chrishaughton.com
- Check out the teachers' notes for *Maybe …* from Walker Books: https://www.walker.co.uk/UserFiles/file/Maybe%20Teachers%27%20Notes.pdf
- Check out the Children's Books Ireland *Deliver the Joy of Reading* guide for more recent publications by Irish authors and illustrators: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/deliver-joy-reading-reading-guide-2021

THERE'S A GHOST IN THIS HOUSE

Oliver Jeffers

HarperCollins Children's Books
Hardback, 44PP, £20.00
ISBN 9780008298357



Themes

- Critical thinking
- Observation
- Ghosts
- Death
- Aloneness
- Art

Summary A spooky child invites us into their abandoned house to search for ghosts with them. What will we find?

Judges' Comments This wonderfully playful picturebook from Jeffers provides a fun and enjoyable read through innovative use of form, as readers are guided by a young girl through a house that she believes is haunted – but she hasn't actually seen any ghosts. We soon realise that we can see more than she does if we just take time to turn the pages correctly. This beautifully produced and expertly crafted book is original and imaginative in its use of counterpoint, with words and (multiple) illustrations presenting the reader with differing perspectives.

About the Author Oliver Jeffers is a world-renowned picturebook maker and artist from Northern Ireland. He has written eighteen children's books so far, which have been translated into over fifty languages. Oliver has won many awards internationally for his work, including a *New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Books Award, a Bologna Ragazzi Award, an Irish Book Award and a United Kingdom Literary Association Award, as well as eight Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year awards. His most recent book – *There's a Ghost in This House* – was released concurrently with a related art installation in New York.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Look at the cover. What do you see? Do you like the font (the way the letters are drawn)? Are they all similar in style, or are some different? If some are different, why might that be?
2. What do you think the asterisk (*) is for?
3. Take off the dust jacket (the paper around the book). Do you see anything new? Did you find another asterisk? What effect does the dust jacket have on the appearance of the book? Do you prefer the book with or without it? Would you have removed it and looked underneath if we hadn't asked you to?
4. Look at the endpapers (the decorated first and last pages of the book). Are they the same?
5. Do you think the ghosts would be easy to draw or difficult?
6. What do you think this book will be about?

AS YOU READ

While you read the book for the first time, have a look through the questions and notes below. You might have noticed there are no page numbers – instead there is a small doodle on the bottom right of each two-page spread. Can you find the doodled object in each photo? We're going to use these doodles to guide us through the book, rather than writing in our own page numbers!

1. **Keyhole page to candles page**
   In these opening pages, we are invited by a strange-looking child to hunt for ghosts with them in an old house. Did you find the doodled objects in each photo? How many ghosts did you see? Are they mean ghosts or friendly ghosts?
2. **Fancy-plate page**
   This is a very interesting page. Do we know more than the child, or does the child know more than us? Who are the ghosts gesturing to? What do they want us to do? Do the ghosts know more than us?
3. **Newel-post (the end/beginning of a stair's banister) page**
   What do you think is through the door?
4. **Angled-door page to lampshade page**
   What do you think the child is feeling? What is the ghost feeling? How would you feel if you were the child? Where do you think the child's adults might be?
5. **Ornate-soap-dish page to teapot page**
   Not all of the two-page spreads have a doodle at the bottom right corner. Can you see the other doodles on these pages? Are the pages different in another way? The teapot page is very dark, and we have to look very closely to see the teapot in the photograph. Have you found it yet?
6. **Book page to picture-frame page**
   How many ghosts can you see on these pages? Do they have different personalities? Which is your favourite? Why can't the child in the book see them? We are encouraged to look very closely throughout this book. If you looked this closely at the world around you, do you think you'd notice things that you hadn't seen before?
7. **Final pages**
   What do you think of the ending?
8. You may have noticed that this book uses lots of different artistic techniques (ways to make a picture). Read it a second time, and think about words like 'collage' (sticking together different pictures) and 'readymade' (making art out of a thing that was made in a factory), while also thinking about texture (fuzzy, clear, smooth, rough), aesthetics (the value of beauty) and what makes a story a story.
9. The illustrations in this book are simply done – particularly of the ghosts – and the backgrounds are old photographs. Some techniques are very original – like using the place where page numbers usually are to draw us back to the previous page instead of moving us forward. In this way we hover over and around each page like ghosts ourselves! Do we read this book in the same way that we read a regular picturebook?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. Did you think this book was a traditional story?
2. Did it feel like you were part of what was happening?
3. Which was your favourite page?
4. Which artistic techniques did you like the most?
5. Which did you like least?
6. Which do you think you could do too?

QUESTIONS FOR OLDER READERS

1. Did this book feel more like a story, a play, a pantomime or a piece of art?
2. Do you think the story had a moral, or do you think the author wanted to teach us to do something?
3. How many different types of paper are in the book (including finishings like matte, glossy and so on)? It would have been easier to produce a book with one type of paper and finish. Why do you think each type was chosen for particular pages?
4. How many layers are there to this book, if the first layer is the unaltered photos and the final layer is the reader engaged in the book?
5. The drawings in this book are quite simple, but the author is a renowned artist. What do you think is the most artistic thing about the book?
6. On the publishing information page (just after the title page) we can find lots of practical information about where and when the book was published, what fonts were used, who designed the book (what does this mean?), where the photographs came from and more. Unusually, there is a detailed description of how the art for the book was made. What does Oliver Jeffers emphasise here about the art-making process?
7. In the text accompanying photographs of his related art exhibition, Jeffers contemplates mortality and the mundanity of day-to-day life – something I'm sure many people have considered over the past two years. He suggests that we should spend more time seizing the day – what could you do this week to live your best life?

ACTIVITIES

- Watch Oliver Jeffers's book trailer for *There's a Ghost in This House* on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb4ez_qE5Vg. Then have your own spooky performance of the story. Organise some readymade or found objects to make it look like you are in an old and spooky place. Think about what sound effects you might like to use.
- Have a debate about whether the child in the book is alive or a ghost.
- 'A fraid of ghosts' is a fantastic collective noun. List all your other favourites and make up some more!
- Make a haunted picture using a photo from an old magazine or the internet and tracing paper. You can do the same as Oliver Jeffers and paint white ghosts over the tracing paper, or you could cut out ghost shapes and stick – or draw – googly eyes on them and move them about the picture to make a mini-play or decorate your classroom or house with them.
- Make a haunted room using a box and old magazines for wallpaper and floorboards (or you can print these from the internet). Make a 3D ghost using modelling clay or papier mâché and some furniture using lollipop sticks. If you are reading this as a group, stick all the boxes together to make a big haunted mansion!

ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER READERS

- Watch Oliver Jeffers's book trailer for *There's a Ghost in This House* on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weBodfabfh0. Then make your own short movie about the book or another ghost story that you like.
- Explore the related exhibition, *A Fraid of Ghosts*, on Oliver Jeffers's website: https://www.oliverjeffers.com/a-fraid-of-ghosts. How is it similar and different to the book? Which do you prefer?
- Make your own haunted artwork using readymade images or objects.

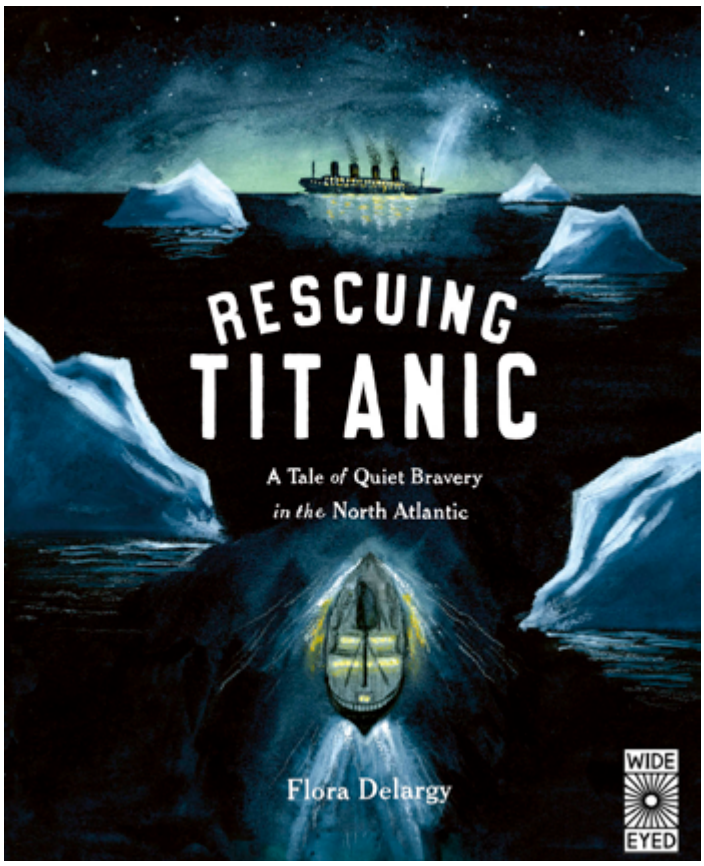
FURTHER RESOURCES

- Check out this colouring sheet by Oliver Jeffers from Children's Books Ireland: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/sites/default/files/2021-09/CBI-ImagineNation-Jeffers.pdf
- Watch Oliver Jeffers reading *There's a Ghost in This House* on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb4ez_qE5Vg
- Check out Oliver Jeffers's *Fraid of Ghosts* art exhibition on his website: https://www.oliverjeffers.com/a-fraid-of-ghosts
- Read this interview with Oliver Jeffers, from Creative Review, on his artistic process: https://www.creativereview.co.uk/oliver-jeffers-theres-a-ghost-in-this-house-illustration-book/

RESCUING TITANIC: A TRUE STORY OF QUIET BRAVERY IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

Flora Delargy

Wide Eyed Editions
Hardback, 75PP, £14.99
ISBN 9780711262768



Themes

- History and historical non-fiction
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Bravery and courage

Summary Written and illustrated by début Northern Irish artist Flora Delargy, whose grandfather and great-grandfather both worked in the Belfast shipyards where the *Titanic* was built, this exquisitely illustrated story of quiet bravery tells in rich detail how the little ship *Carpathia* saved 705 passengers of the *Titanic* from the icy waters of the North Atlantic.

Judges' Comments

This début book, with stunning illustrations, provides a different perspective on one of the world's most famous maritime disasters – the sinking of the *Titanic*. The focus this time is on the RMS *Carpathia* and its journey across the ice fields in an attempt to save passengers from drowning. Intertwining the stories of passengers and crews on both ships allows for a collective tale of heroism while also paying respect to the victims of the catastrophe. Illustratively, the detailed hand-drawn artwork is excellent and reveals the extraordinary research behind the project.

About the Artist Flora Delargy is an author and illustrator from Belfast. She has a master's in children's book illustration from Cambridge School of Art. In 2019, she was selected for the Illustrators Exhibition at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. *Rescuing Titanic* is her first book for children.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. What do you think of when you hear the words 'non-fiction book'?
2. What can you learn from the subtitle of the book?
3. Describe the cover illustration in three words.
4. Name one fact you know about the *Titanic* and one fact you know about the *Carpathia*, if you can!

AS YOU READ

1. Look at the key crew and passengers on pages 8–9: do you recognise any names from the *Carpathia*? Do you recognise any names from the *Titanic*?
2. List three differences between the *Titanic* and the *Carpathia* (for example, size, passengers, what was being transported, the year it was built, destinations and so on). Why do you think the two ships differ so much?
3. Why would it be important to have three different groups of crew members on the *Carpathia*?
4. Which of the navigational tools shown on pages 22–23 do you think is the most important? Why?
5. Do you think Morse code was an effective way to communicate?
6. Look at the illustrations on pages 34–35. What do they tell us about the atmosphere on the *Titanic* after it struck the iceberg?
7. How do you think Harold Cottam felt when he received the message from the *Titanic*?
8. Compare the illustration of the *Carpathia* on pages 42–43 to the one on pages 24–25. What do you notice about the people inside the ship? How is their behaviour different?
9. What do you think it was like to be on a lifeboat fleeing the sinking *Titanic*?
10. Why do you think the crew and passengers on the *Titanic* used flares? Were they effective?
11. Look at the illustration on pages 62–63. What does it tell us about the survivors and how they felt?
12. How did the staff and passengers of the *Carpathia* support and comfort the survivors of the *Titanic* after they were rescued?
13. Captain Rostron of the *Carpathia* was commended for his bravery in rescuing people from the *Titanic*. How important was leadership and teamwork in this operation?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. Did you know anything about the *Carpathia* before reading this book? Did you know more about the *Carpathia* or the *Titanic*? Why do you think that might be?
2. Take a look at the glossary. What words do you recognise? What words are new to you. Does the glossary help you better understand certain parts of the book?
3. Why do you think telling the story of the *Carpathia* and the bravery of the crew and passengers is important?
4. Do the illustrations help tell the story? What was your favourite illustration and why?
5. Lots of people were involved in rescuing survivors from the *Titanic*. Who do you think is the most interesting? Why?

QUESTIONS FOR OLDER READERS

1. Pages 42–43 are flipped vertically. Why do you think the author chose to do this?
2. Why do you think it's important to remember the *Carpathia*?
3. What part of the story would you have liked to learn more about? Where might you get more information about it?

ACTIVITIES

- Look at the Morse code alphabet on page 27. Can you translate the code in the middle of pages 26–27? Try writing your name, favourite colour or favourite animal in Morse code – all it takes are some dots and dashes!
- Create a timeline of events on the night the *Titanic* sank (hint: use the clocks and timestamps that appear from page 28 onwards to help you). Take a ruler and draw a straight line. Then mark ten points on the line with equal space between them. Each mark translates to thirty minutes. The first mark will be midnight, second mark 12.30 a.m., third mark 1.00 a.m. and so on until 5:00 a.m. Then using the information in the book, mark out the important events of that night on this timeline.
- Look at the illustration of the *Carpathia* on pages 24–25. Draw an outline of a ship (you can even use tracing paper and copy the outline from the book). Then use a ruler to create boxes inside the ship. Draw pictures to show what the inside of your boat would look like. (What rooms would you have? What do the people do in each room?). You can design it however you want!
- Research these other infamous big ships: HMHS *Britannic* and RMS *Olympic*. Check out online websites or visit your local library or museums. There are lots of fascinating ships in history you can learn more about.
- Bernice Palmer photographed key moments during the rescue of the *Titanic* survivors, recording important moments in history. Use a camera to photograph or draw a picture to record a moment that's important to you (your family now, a big event, a historical site near you, whatever you like). You could always explore your own family history and document any notable events.

ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER READERS

- Look at the further reading on page 75. See if you can borrow a copy of any of the books listed in your local library (you might be able to order them in from other libraries) or as digital copies online.
- Do you know of other books about the *Titanic* or *Carpathia*? Share them with your classmates.
- Pick a key crew member or passenger from pages 8–9 and research them. Find out where and when they were born, about their job, about their family and friends, why they were on the ship and so on. Then write a list of questions you would have liked to ask them in an interview.
- Try the Homeschool Science iceberg science experiment (all you need is a big bowl, water and a block of ice). You can follow the instructions on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otVQ5ULYRxg. Consider how much ice is visible above the water. How do you think this impacted the *Titanic* when it hit the iceberg? How do you think it affected the *Carpathia* as it navigated the ice field?

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Flora Delargy talks about her work on *Rescuing Titanic* on the Quarto Group blog. She shows readers that a glimmer of hope can be found even in great tragedy, and heroes are not always big and mighty: https://www.quartoknows.com/campaign/quartokids/meet-the-author-flora-delargy
- Listen to the *Just Imagine* podcast where Flora Delargy talks about her background and experience writing and illustrating *Rescuing Titanic*: https://justimagine.co.uk/podcast/flora-delargy/
- Take a virtual tour of the *Titanic* on the HistoryView website: https://historyview.org/library/titanic/
- Watch 'The Story of the *Carpathia*' on YouTube to learn more about the *Carpathia* and the ship's fate after the rescuing of the *Titanic*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a6_DEobUU4
- Visit the Titanic Museum in Belfast: https://www.titanicbelfast.com/

FRINDLESWYLDE

Natalia O'Hara
Illustrated by Lauren O'Hara

Walker Books
Hardback, 40PP, £14.99
ISBN 9781406388961

Themes

- Winter magic
- Tricksters
- Growing up
- Feelings and emotions
- Seasons and the passing of time
- Fairy and folk tales

Summary Cora and her grandmother live in a house in the woods. The rule is clear: when the first snow falls, never let the light out, never let winter in. Winter, in this tale steeped in magic, folklore and literary references, takes the form of a selfish, lazy, cunning boy: Frindleswylde. When the rule is broken, Cora must rescue Granny and the light from the frozen underworld that Frindleswylde calls his kingdom. And to do that, she needs to accomplish three impossible tasks …

Judges' Comments This charming tale centres on Cora, who must follow the mysterious Frindleswylde into the enchanted kingdom of frozen summer to retrieve the light for her granny's lamp. This beautiful and original story contains echoes of Hans Christian Andersen as well as Russian folk tales and features whimsical illustrations reminiscent of the work of Ivy Wallace. The quality of the hand-drawn illustrations – something increasingly rare in contemporary books – is outstanding and the strength of the illustrator is apparent throughout.

About the Author and the Illustrator Natalia and Lauren O'Hara are two sisters who make children's books together. Natalia – who writes – studied English at Oxford and Cambridge, before working as a journalist, travel writer and script editor in London, Prague and Geneva. Lauren – who illustrates – studied fine art and illustration at Kingston. Later she designed sets and window displays in London, before becoming an illustrator and moving to Dublin. Their books include *Hortense and the Shadow* (2017), *The Bandit Queen* (2018) and *Frindleswylde* (2021). Lauren also illustrated *Madame Badobedah* (2019) by Sophie Dahl, which was shortlisted for the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2020.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Look at the cover. What is going on in the cover illustration? Whose story do you think this is?
2. What kind of story do you expect from the cover? A true story? A made-up adventure? A magic story? … What makes you say that?
3. What do you notice about the colours on the front and back covers? Do they tell you anything about the story you are about to read?
4. Look at the title. What do you think it means? Do you recognise any words in 'Frindleswylde'?
5. Read the blurb on the back cover. What do you know about 'Frindleswylde' now? What kind of person or creature do you expect? Draw a picture!

AS YOU READ

The coming of Frindleswylde (front endpapers–page 8)

1. Look at the endpapers (the double page between the cover and the title page). What do you think they show? What do you notice about the colour, compared to the cover? Can you spot this pattern elsewhere in the book?
2. Why does Granny pick up the ice child? Is it a good idea?
3. 'I am *everything* […] and also nothing, which is far better.' What do you think Frindleswylde means when he says this?
4. How does Cora end up going after Frindleswylde? Was it her decision? What about when she jumps into the hole in the pond?
5. What is Frindleswylde's plan?
6. What exactly has happened to Granny? What does Cora know about it?

The three Impossible Tasks (pages 9–18)

1. What is the first Impossible Task?
2. When Cora freezes the pond over, who else can you spot in the picture? Does Cora notice? Keep an eye out for this with the next tasks.
3. What is the second Impossible Task? Did you expect Cora's solution?
4. What is the third Impossible Task? Does Cora think of Granny for this task?

The Queen of Winter (pages 19–26)

1. Why does Cora think a nutshell is a funny present?
2. What was, in fact, Frindleswylde's plan? Was it clever? Did you see it coming?
3. Does the picture of Cora as the Queen of Winter (on page 20) remind you of another image in the book?
4. What is the Queen of Winter's life like? Would you enjoy it yourself? What kind of 'work' does she do?
5. What causes the queen's memory to return?
6. Why doesn't Frindleswylde want to give the nutshell back? Is he just mean or is there another reason?
7. What does the nutshell do?
8. 'Cora remembered home.' What is so special about this sentence?
9. 'But the statue was hard, silent and white.' What do you notice about *this* sentence?

'The secrets in things' (pages 27–end)

1. How does Cora save Granny?
2. What happens to the world around them?
3. What is Frindleswylde's reaction?
4. What are the signs that spring has come? What does Frindleswylde do then?
5. How has Cora changed by the end of the story?
6. Why does she leave her window open in winter?
7. Does Frindleswylde ever come back?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. **A baddie?** How would you describe Frindleswylde? Would you like him as a neighbour or a friend? Is he all bad? Do we ever see things from his point of view? Why do you think he never makes contact again with Cora, but remains nearby at the end?
2. **Frindleswylde's kingdom.** Where is it? How are the laws of nature different there than in Cora's (and our) world? The book's words and pictures are full of the signs of winter, from the weather to the animals, plants, colours, sensations and so on that you might encounter in the heart of the season. Can you list them? Is winter the same where you live?
3. **Three Tasks.** What do you notice about each Impossible Task? And about each of Cora's solutions? How are they different from one another? How are they similar? How does each task transform Cora's world? How do they transform Cora herself (physically and emotionally)? Compare the portrait of Frindleswylde on page 6 with the portrait of Cora after the tasks on page 20. What do you notice?
4. **The 'secrets in things'.** What does Cora mean by this (page 27)? What examples can you find of those 'secrets' and those 'changes' in the book? And outside the book? Why is knowing this secret powerful?
5. **Colour coding.** Keep track of the colours throughout the book. What are the main colours used by Lauren O'Hara in each double page? Do they remain the same throughout? What is the effect? What colours are associated with Frindleswylde? With Granny? With Cora? Do they ever change?
6. **Connections**. Did this story remind you of any others? Did the pictures remind you of other stories, books or movies? How many can you come up with as a group? As a whole class? Did you enjoy noticing those connections? Did it matter if you didn't notice some of them or if you didn't know about them?

QUESTIONS FOR OLDER READERS

1. **Title.** Was it Frindleswylde's story in the end? What do you think of the author's choice of title? Can you think of other options? Which is your favourite?
2. **An unlikely heroine**. Track Cora's journey as heroine of her story. Does she initially appear as heroine material? How much of what happens to her is caused by circumstances or by someone else? When does she begin to make her own decisions? How does it work out for her? How has her status changed by the end of the book?
3. **All the best laid plans …** In this story, all the characters' plans and intentions are thwarted at one point or another. How is this especially true of Granny? Read pages 3–4 for some examples. This effect (the opposition between expectations and reality) is a form of 'dramatic irony'. Can you find other examples of it in *Frindleswylde*?
4. **'Inside this nut is everything bad.'** What does Frindleswylde mean by that? Compare it to Cora's realisation that 'Everything changes, then changes again'. Which character do you feel closer to on this? Why?
5. **Classical echoes.** This story is full of echoes of tales from centuries past, from Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Snow Queen' to C.S. Lewis's White Witch in the Chronicles of Narnia, via Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and folk tales from Russia and elsewhere. Can you find any more? Look up the origin of the name Cora. What connects the O'Hara sisters' Cora to the 'original' millennia-old one?
6. **Personifications of winter.** What is Frindleswylde's 'job' as the personification of winter? What tools and techniques does he use? What is his aim ultimately? Can he ever succeed? Research other personifications of winter and compare them with the O'Hara sisters' creation. Are there any positives associated with the season or with its representative in other traditions or tales?

ACTIVITIES

- **Ready for anything.** Imagine you have to go after Frindleswylde too. It's the middle of the night and you are in your pyjamas. What do you do? What do you need? Make a list of the clothes, tools, food and so on you might need on an adventure to Frindleswylde's kingdom. Either write up a list, draw yourself with all your kit or pack your bag!
- **Freeze frame.** A freeze frame (or frozen picture) is a drama game where the actors act out a scene without moving or speaking. In groups, create a frozen picture of Cora accomplishing each Impossible Task. Which exact moment of the scene will you choose? Remember, you can't move or talk! Think about where to place yourself, what shape to make with your body, your facial expression and any props you might need. Can the rest of the class guess which task you picked?
- **A fourth Impossible Task.** Frindleswylde gives Cora three Impossible Tasks. Fairy tales love the number three! Goldilocks and the three bears, the three little pigs, the three wishes granted by the genie … Can you think of any more? Now, try and come up with a fourth task for Cora. What could it be? What makes it impossible? Write it on a piece of paper and swap it with a friend. Try to find a solution for each new task and compare them. Did anyone in the class set a task that was truly impossible?
- **Frosted story box.** Recreate the characters and décor of the Frindleswylde story with what you have to hand. Try using minifigures, bricks, paper puppets, playdough, odds and ends from your pencil case or kitchen drawer … It must all fit on a plastic box lid! Blu Tack your elements to the inside of the lid, pop the lid on the box and place the lot in the freezer for a few minutes or until it fogs up. Here's your frosted story! Can you tell it to someone before it thaws out?
- **Shine your own light.** On black paper or card, draw the outline of a house in white pencil, crayon or chalk. Draw all the windows with their shutters closed, then carefully cut out the shutters on three sides, making sure they are still connected to the house by one side. Open the shutters, then stick the black house on yellow or orange paper or card, so that the colour only shows in the windows. In each window, draw something or someone that brings you joy or hope, like Cora and Granny's lantern.
- **Let it snow!** Find out more about snow on the UK's Met Office website: 10 facts about snow - Met Office; watch soap bubbles freezing in slow motion in Adrian Ybarra's YouTube video: https://youtu.be/Wqk_CKSxlyU; and try making fake snow! This YouTube video of Maqaroon testing fake snow recipes will help you create your own winter wonderland: https://youtu.be/jvjss8QlMX0

ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER READERS

- **Moving debate.** To feel (and live and change and maybe hurt) or not to feel (and stay the same and alone and maybe safe) is one of the things that Frindleswylde and Cora are in opposition over. Who do you side with on this question? Place a sign saying 'Cora' at one end of the room and another saying 'Frindleswylde' at the other. Invite each participant to choose their position on the Frindleswylde/Cora line for each of the following statements: 'Feelings are bad', 'Change is scary', 'People never change'. Ask them to explain why they are standing where they're standing, and after hearing a few opinions, ask if anyone wants to change position.
- **Frindleswylde's autograph.** What is Frindleswylde's way of saying he was there at the end of the book? What would be a good symbol for you? Think about the things you do, the things you love, the kind of person you are. What could represent all of it? A picture of an object? A very simple self-portrait? Your initials in a special script? Experiment with making your own mark!
- **The summer edit.** What if Frindleswylde's kingdom was summer and his superpower related to heat? What would he look like? What kinds of landscapes would you see in his kingdom? What would it feel like there? What colour palette would you use to picture it? Give it a go.

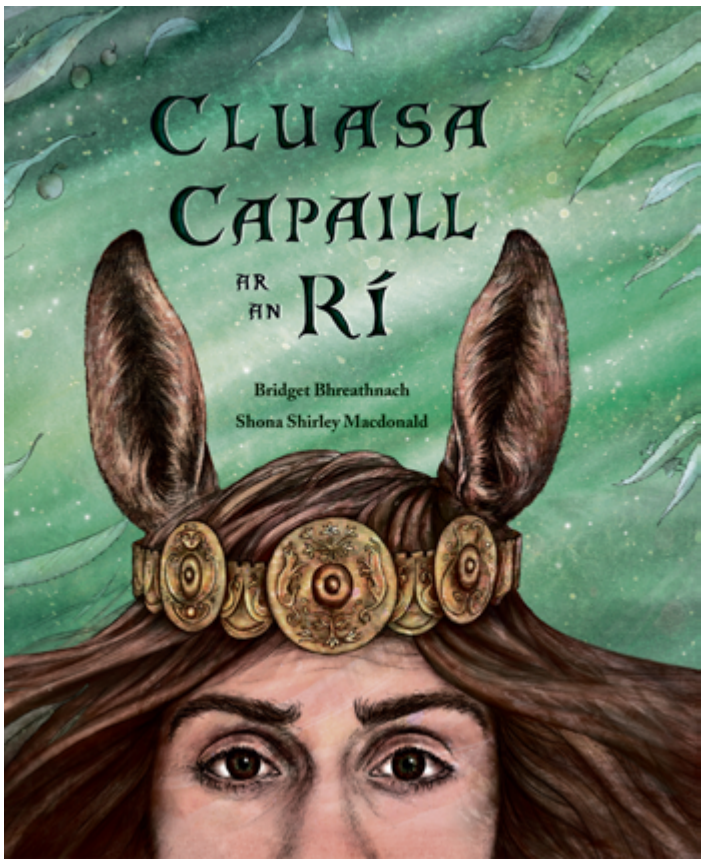
FURTHER RESOURCES

- Check out Lauren O'Hara's *Madame Badobedah,* written by Sophie Dahl, and try the activities in the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2020 pack: KPMG-CBI-Junior-Juries-Resource-Pack-2020.pdf
- Read this 2017 interview on Let's Talk Picture Books where Lauren and Natalia O'Hara talk about working together on their first book, *Hortense and the Shadow*: http://www.letstalkpicturebooks.com/2017/11/lets-talk-illustrators-48-natalia-ohara.html
- Explore more fairy tales, myths and legends in this Children's Books Ireland curated list for readers aged 0–14: Folklore, Myth, Legend | Children's Books Ireland

CLUASA CAPAILL AR AN RÍ

Bridget Bhreathnach
Maisithe ag Shona Shirley Macdonald

Futa Fata
Clúdach Crua, 48LCH, €14.95
ISBN 9781910945605



Téamaí

- Béaloideas
- Gruaig
- An fhírinne a insint
- An éagsúlacht sa chuma fhisiceach a cheiliúradh

Achoimre Is athinsint atá sa leabhar seo ar scéal béaloidis faoi bhuachaill óg a thagann ar an saol le tréith aisteach, iontach ag baint leis: cluasa capaill! Ní raibh a thuismitheoirí ag súil leis seo ar chor ar bith agus déanann siad a seacht ndícheall chun na cluasa seo a choinneáil faoi rún. Iompraíonn Labhraí an rún mór seo le linn a shaoil agus foghlaimíonn sé gur trom an t-ualach é.

Tuairiscí na Moltóirí Oibríonn an téacs agus na léaráidí go hálainn le chéile san athinsint seo ar Labhraí Loingseach, an rí a bhfuil cluasa capaill air agus a chaitheann gach bearbóir a bhearrann a chuid gruaige a mharú ionas nach ligfidh siad a rún. Leagan fileata é an leagan seo den scéal atá inste go hálainn, atá simplithe ach nach bhfuil aon dochar déanta do shaibhreas na teanga, a bhfuil maolú déanta ar ghnéithe dorcha den scéal ach ar ann dóibh fós. Leagan atá oiriúnach agus dírithe ar an sprioclucht léitheoireachta é an leagan seo den scéal ársa ina dtugtar léargas grinn agus tarraingteach ar na carachtair leis na léaráidí mionsonraithe agus an úsáid den chéad scoth a bhaintear as dathanna.

Faoin Údar Is údar agus colúnaí í Bridget a rugadh i Nua-Eabhrac is a tógadh i Ros Muc, i gConamara. Tá dhá leabhar scríofa aici don aos óg atá foilsithe ag Futa Fata; *Lúlú agus an Oíche Ghlórach* a mhaisigh Steve Simpson agus *Ní Mise a Rinne É!* a mhaisigh Donough O'Malley. Tá a cuid leabhar aistrithe go Sínis agus Téalainnis agus tá fáil chomh maith orthu i nGaeilge na hAlban. Bronnadh Gradam Réics Carló, Leabhar na Bliana don Óige, ar *Cluasa Capaill ar an Rí*.

Faoin Maisitheoir Is i bPort Láirge atá Shona Shirley Macdonald lonnaithe ach is as Albain ó dhúchas di. I measc na leabhar atá maisithe aici tá an t-úrscéal grafach i nGaeilge na hAlban *An Smutag Ghaisgeil*, agus *The Moon Spun Around*, cnuasach filíochta le W.B. Yeats (The O'Brien Press, 2016). Roghnaíodh íomhánna as an leabhar céanna do thaispeántas an Illustration Bienniel i mBratasláiv na Slóváice an bhliain chéanna. Bronnadh Gradam Réics Carló, Leabhar na Bliana don Óige, ar *An Féileacán agus an Rí* in 2020 agus ar *Cluasa Capaill ar an Rí* in 2021.

CEISTEANNA

SULA LÉANN TÚ AN SCÉAL

1. Ar chuala tú an scéal seo cheana féin? Cad a tharlaíonn ann? Faigh tuairimí ó chúpla duine sa rang agus féach an bhfuil na leaganacha éagsúla cosúil le chéile nó difriúil ó chéile?
2. Léigh an cur síos a rinnie an t-údar ar an athinsint seo. Cé na tíortha inar insíodh an scéal seo?
3. Sula bhféachann tú ar chlúdach an leabhair agus sula n-osclaíonn tú an chéad leathanach, cas an leabhar thart agus léigh an blurba. Cad a bheidh ar an gclúdach, meas tú? Cén chuma a bheidh ar an bpríomhcharachtar? Breathnaigh ar an gclúdach anois. An raibh an ceart agat?

AGUS AN SCÉAL Á LÉAMH AGAT

1. Lch 4. Cén fáth a raibh ar Labhraí bearradh gruaige a fháil? An cuimhin leat an uair dheireanach a fuair tú féin bearradh gruaige?
2. Lch 6. Cuireann an ceol dea-spin ar Labhraí. Roghnaigh ceol deas le cur ar siúl sa chúlra agus an chuid seo den scéal á léamh agat.
3. Lch 8. Conas a choinnigh Labhraí a chluasa suimiúla faoi rún?
4. Lch 9. Feiceann slua an bearbóir ag sleamhnú isteach sa chaisleán. Cé air a bhfuil siad ag cuimhneamh? Línigh bolgán smaoineoireachta os a gcioinn agus scríobh amach a dtuairimí.
5. Lch 12. Cén fáth nach bhfuil Eala ag iarraidh ligean dá gruaig Labhraí a bhearradh? Lig ort gur tusa Eala agus impigh ar an rí do mhac a ligean saor ón obair seo.
6. Lch 14. Cén gheallúint a thugann Mártan? An mbeidh sé in ann í a choinneáil?
7. Lch 16. Cad a thugann Mártan faoi deara faoin rí anois? An bhfuil áthas nó fearg nó eagla air?
8. Lch 18. Éiríonn le Mártan dul abhaile. Féach go mion ar na comharthaí sa choill. Cum seoladh baile Mhártain.
9. Lch 20. Tá an rún mór ag cur isteach ar Mhártan. Línigh bolgán brionglóide agus cuir isteach na rudaí ar fad atá ag rith trína cheann.
10. Lch 22. Réitíonn Eala oideas luibhe do Mhártan. Scríobh amach liosta de na comhábhair a bheidh ann.
11. Lch 24. Smaoiníonn Mártan ar an ngeallúint a thug sé. Cén t-athrú beag a dhéanann sé anois maidir leis an ngeallúint?
12. Lch 26. Conas a mhothaíonn Mártan tar éis dó an rún a scaoileadh?
13. Lch 28. Ach conas a mhothaíonn Labhraí Loingseach anois tar éis do Mhártan an rún a scaoileadh? Cén bhrionglóid a bhíonn aige?
14. Lch 30. Cloiseann Craiftine ceol álainn sa choill. Roghnaigh píosa ceoil le cur ar siúl sa chúlra agus é ag siúl sa choill.
15. Lch 32. Tá Labhraí in ísle brí anois. Cad atá ag cur isteach air?
16. Lch 34. Baintear geit as na daoine nuair a fheiceann siad an chuma atá ar Labhraí. Lig ort go bhfuil tú ag breathnú air mar chuid den slua. I gcogar leis an duine in aice leat, déan cur síos ar na smaointe a ritheann leat.
17. Lch 35. Tosaíonn an chláirseach ag canadh! Can in éineacht léi agus can amach é níos airde gach uair: *Tá dhá chluas capaill ar Labhraí Loingseach! Tá dhá chluas capaill ar Labhraí Loingseach!*
18. Lch 36. Tá Labhraí réidh leis an bhfírinne a insint! Sula n-iompaíonn tú an leathanach, smaoinigh ar an méid a déarfaidh sé leis an slua.
19. Lch 38. Conas a mhothaíonn Labhraí anois tar éis dó an rún a scaoileadh?

AGUS AN SCÉAL LÉITE AGAT

1. Téigh siar ar leathanaigh 26–28. Cén t-athrú a thagann ar Mhártan agus ar Labhraí nuair a scaoileann Mártan an rún? Cén fáth a bhfuil freagairt chomh difriúil sin ag an mbeirt acu?
2. An bhfuil aon cheacht le foghlaim againn ón scéal seo?
3. Cad iad na príomhdhathanna a fheiceann tú sna léaráidí? Cén fáth ar roghnaigh an maisitheoir na dathanna sin?
4. Aimsigh na trí léaráid is fearr leat den scéal. Déan fótachóip díobh agus roinn iad. Iarr ar dhuine éigin eile iad a chur san ord ceart. Ansin, iarr orthu an scéal a insint leis na trí léaráid sin.

CEISTEANNA DO LÉITHEOIRÍ NÍOS SINE

1. Cén chomhairle a thabharfá do Labhraí agus é ina bhuachaill óg?
2. Cén fáth a bhfuil cáil ar an scéal áirithe seo? Cén fáth ar insíodh é fud fad na cruinne?

GNÍOMHAÍOCHTAÍ

- Siúlóid pictiúr. Oscail an pictiúrleabhar agus téigh ar shiúlóid pictiúr tríd ar dtús. Le linn do shiúlóide, an bhfeiceann tú aon léaráid atá cosúil leis an gclúdach?
- Clúdach Nua. Téigh ar shiúlóid pictiúr arís. Roghnaigh léaráid nua ón scéal mar chlúdach.
- Sa lá atá inniu ann. Léigh an scéal arís agus an uair seo, athraigh trí rud chun an scéal a lonnú sa lá atá inniu ann. Cé na héadaí a chaithfidh na carachtair? Cá rachaidh siad?

GNÍOMHAÍOCHTAÍ DO LÉITHEOIRÍ NÍOS SINE

- Bailigh cúpla scéal béaloidis eile a bhaineann le hÉireann. Féach i leabharlann na scoile agus ar na suíomhanna seo a leanas: www.duchas.ie agus www.askaboutireland.ie
- Cuir eolas ar na cineálacha scéalta atá i mbéaloideas na hÉireann, mar shampla, An Rúraíocht agus an Fhiannaíocht.
- Breathnaigh, in éineacht le duine fásta, ar léirmheasanna atá scríofa ar an leabhar: https://www.futafata.ie/cluasa-capaill-ar-an-ri-bridget-bhreathnach-shona-shirley-macdonald
- An aontaíonn tú leis na léirmheasanna sin?
- Scríobh do léirmheas féin ar an scéal. Cén rud is mó a chuaigh i bhfeidhm ort faoin scéal?

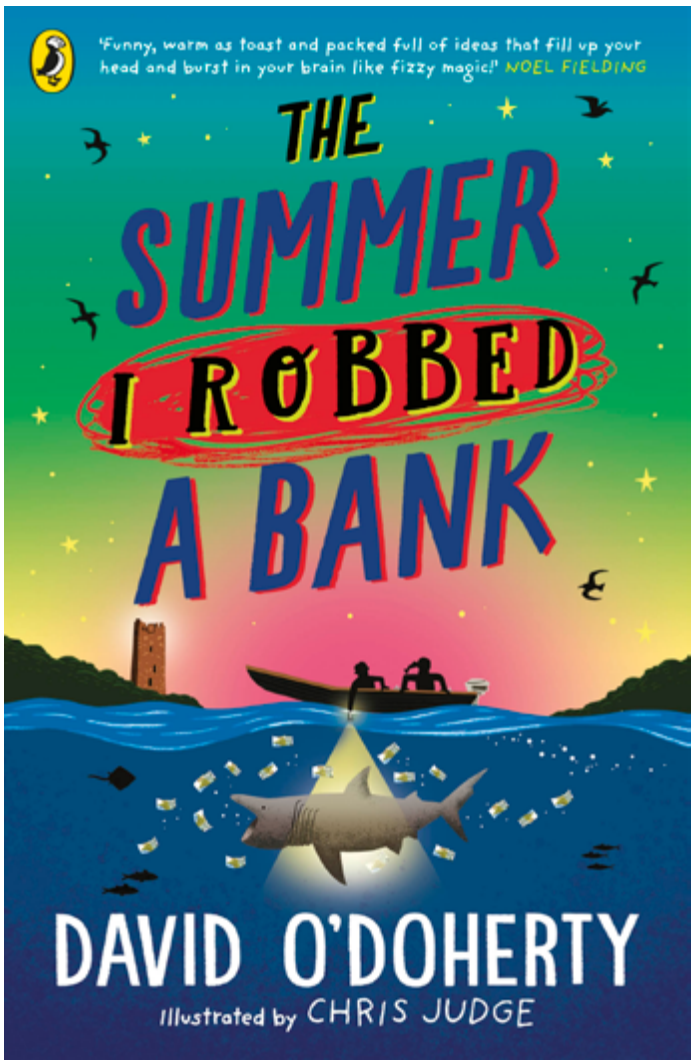
TUILLEADH ACMHAINNÍ

- Breathnaigh sa leabhrán *Bímis ag Léamh* a ghabhann leis an mBosca Leabharlainne: childrenslaureate.ie. Bain triail as rap a chumadh bunaithe ar an scéal (leathanach 30).
- Leagan eile den scéal. Caith súil ar leagan eile den scéal le in éineacht duine fásta
  - Leagan Gaeilge: https://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/digital-book-collection/talking-ebooks/scealta/an-ri-le-dha-chluais-asai/
  - Leagan Béarla: https://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/digital-book-collection/talking-ebooks/stories/the-king-with-the-donkeys/
  - Cén leagan is fearr leat? An bhfuil aon rud sa leagan *Cluasa Capaill ar an Rí* nach bhfuil sna leaganacha digiteacha seo?

THE SUMMER I ROBBED A BANK

David O'Doherty
Illustrated by Chris Judge

Puffin Children's Books
Paperback, 304PP, £6.99
ISBN 9780241362235



Themes

- Resilience
- Friendship
- Family break-up
- Cancer
- Coming of age
- Island living

Summary Twelve-year-old Rex, the anti-hero of this funny adventure story, finds himself on Achill Island for a few weeks in the summer. His parents have separated and his mother is in hospital with a broken leg so he is in the care of his eccentric (and terminally ill) Uncle Derm. Here he meets a thoroughly good-natured girl, Kitty, and her hapless father, Ronan. Money is needed to save the local assisted-living centre, and chaotic and hare-brained schemes lead to lots of hilarity and self-discovery as the plot unfolds. A fast-paced, engaging book with a heart of gold.

Judges' Comments Following his parents' separation, Rex isn't impressed when he is sent to a remote Irish island for his summer holidays. That is until he is roped into helping his strange and brilliant Uncle Derm in a crazy plan (inspired by tales of pirate queen Grace O'Malley) to rob the island's mobile bank and redistribute the money. This fresh and original narrative from Doherty – supported with illustrations by Judge – is a funny and subversive tale filled with poignancy and beauty that captures the magic of one momentous summer.

About the Author David O'Doherty is an award-winning stand-up comedian, writer and regular guest on television shows such as *8 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown* and *Would I Lie to You?* He has written two theatre shows for children, including one where he fixes their bicycles on stage. His Danger Is Everywhere series has been hugely successful. David's granny lived on Achill Island, the setting for this book.

About the Illustrator Chris Judge is an award-winning illustrator, writer and artist based in Dublin. He is the author of three picturebooks based on his Lonely Beast character. He has worked with David O'Doherty on the bestselling Danger Is Everywhere series. He has also illustrated books by Roddy Doyle, Eoin Colfer and Ryan Tubridy. He has designed many large outdoor mosaics for schools and colleges around Ireland. He has also designed the Dublin Story Bird, a marvellous two-and-a-half-metre-high 3D bird.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Does the title make you want to read the book?
2. Look at the front-cover illustration and say whether you think the robbery was a success?
3. Are there any clues as to where the book might be set?
4. Read the comments on the inside front cover. Do you like that some reviews are from famous people and publications and some are from young people?
5. Read the blurb on the back cover and list as many facts as you have evidence for about Rex, the narrator.
6. On the inside back cover we learn that David O'Doherty is a stand-up comedian. Does that make him a funnier writer?

AS YOU READ

Chapters 1–8 (pages 1–55)

1. People often make jokes about Rex's name. Is this teasing or bullying?
2. When Uncle Derm is babysitting, how does he bring Rex out of his 'shutdown'?
3. In chapter 4 there are three pieces of bad news. What are they?
4. What do you think about Rex's relationship with his mother?
5. Describe Uncle Derm's house on Achill.
6. Why does Rex lock himself in Derm's van?
7. Look at the single illustration at the beginning of each chapter and say how each one relates to that chapter.

Chapters 9–16 (pages 57–121)

1. Sarcasm is when people say the opposite of what is true to make someone else look or feel foolish. This is sometimes done in fun. What sarcastic comment does Rex make about Derm's boat?
2. What does Derm do to prevent the building inspector visiting the island?
3. What do Rex and Kitty have in common? How does each one deal with it ?
4. Why does Rex decide to return to Dublin? How far does he get?

Chapters 17–24 (pages 123–178)

1. List all the fundraising activities organised to raise money.
2. If you were a visiting Health and Safety Officer, what problems might you have with these activities?
3. Which one sounds the most fun?
4. They raise about €2,000 – why then do they need to rob the mobile bank?
5. Is the robbery well planned and does it work out as expected?
6. 'A strong initial plan and then no detail': who says this and what are they talking about?
7. What does Rex learn from Kitty about coping with divorce?

Chapters 25–31 (pages 179–224)

1. Why can't they get at the money?
2. Who says 'you have to stop overthinking everything'? About whom is it said? Do you agree?
3. What does Derm mean when he says, 'Manulla makes this place look like downtown Tokyo'? Why are they going to Manulla? Why does the plan change?

Chapters 32–42 (pages 225–284)

1. What is the plan to get the bank van to Inishbiggle?
2. When it ends up in the sea, what is the plan to retrieve it?
3. How do they eventually get at the money?
4. How do you feel about the way the book ends?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. Did you enjoy the book? Why?
2. How did Rex change during his holiday in Achill?
3. Who had the most influence on him?
4. What skills did Rex bring to the planned robbery?
5. At what point did you realise Derm was ill?
6. What emotions did you feel while reading this book?
7. Is the plot realistic?
8. Who was your favourite character?
9. Does this book remind you of any other book or film? What book or film is it?

ACTIVITIES

- On a map of Ireland, plot Rex's journey to Achill.
- Go to www.achilltourism.com. Scroll down and watch the short video (two and a half minutes) entitled 'Visit Achill in 2020'.
- Invent a back story for Rex's mother, explaining why she was so protective of Rex and why she was so afraid of him going swimming.
- Arrange a class debate with the topic 'Living on an island is better than living on the mainland'. Write a speech either for or against. Use details from the story and the video above to support your point of view.
- There are lots of references to Grace O'Malley, the pirate queen, in this book. She is also known as Gráinne Mhaol and she was a real woman who lived in the west of Ireland about 500 years ago. Find out all you can about her.
- Derm was trying to prevent the closing down of the assisted-living centre. Who might have lived there? Is there a similar building in your community? Find out all you can about it.
- Suggest ideas for a fundraiser for your school. You can decide whether you want to go for madcap ideas that would never get past the principal or ideas you could really do. Work in groups and each group can pitch their idea to the class.
- The traditional boat in the west of Ireland is a currach, and in this story four currachs were lashed together to transport the van. This type of boat has a wooden frame with canvas stretched over it. The famous Irish artist Paul Henry has a painting called *Launching the Currach*. Look at this online and then look at more of Paul Henry's paintings of the west of Ireland.
- The illustrator of the book is Chris Judge. Look back at all of the illustrations and suggest how Chris decided to tackle the task of illustrating this book – what to draw, where to place it in the story, what technique to use. Do you think he read the book or that the author or publisher told him what to draw?The writer, David O'Doherty, is a successful comedian. Are Chris Judge's illustrations funny?
- Allocate one or two of the forty-two illustrations to each person in the class. Using A4 sheets (landscape) copy the illustrations and the numbers under them. Display in order on a wall or in book format. Design a new cover. Then retell the story from the illustrations
- Go to www.chrisjudge.com and look at all the art work and installations on the site. On YouTube, find 'Doodle Squares with Chris Judge' and draw along.
- At the end of the book there is an extract from *Danger Is Everywhere*, also by O'Doherty and Judge. Read it and discuss what, if anything, made you smile or laugh. Compile a class list of funny books you have read and would recommend. Don't forget picturebooks.
- Write advice to writers and illustrators: 'I find a book is funny if …'
- Compile a class list of everyone's advice.

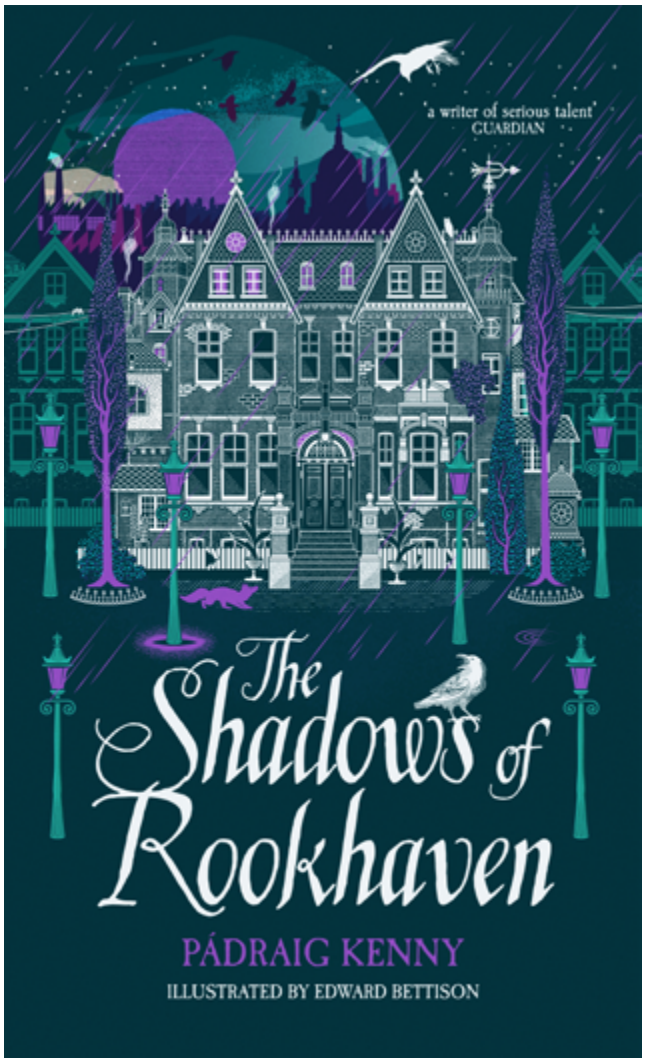
FURTHER RESOURCES

- Check out these Children's Books Ireland reading lists:
  - Adventure Stories https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/adventure-stories
  - Celebrating Families https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/celebrating-families
  - Difficult Changes https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/difficult-changes
  - Overcoming Fears https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/overcoming-fears
  - Grief https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/grief
- Go here to read an extract from *The Summer I Robbed a Bank* https://www.puffinschools.co.uk/resources/first-chapter-extract-the-summer-i-robbed-a-bank-by-david-odoherty/

THE SHADOWS OF ROOKHAVEN

Pádraig Kenny
Illustrated by Edward Bettison

Macmillan Children's Books
Hardback, 342PP, £12.99
ISBN 9781529031713



Themes

- Family
- Belonging
- Alienation
- Difference
- Identity
- Grief
- Community
- Forgiveness
- Memory
- History

Summary This sequel to *The Monsters of Rookhaven* opens in the lead-up to the Great Configuration, a cosmic event that occurs only once every hundred years. Rookhaven becomes the central point for the celebration, as members of the Family begin to gather. Mirabelle has never seen a Configuration before and she looks forward to a moment of communion with the people she cares about most in the world. But all is not well in Rookhaven. Old friends are in trouble and one of the guests is hiding a dangerous secret that will test Mirabelle's resolve and shake the foundations of the Family that means so much to her.

Judges' Comments As monsters from all over the country descend on Rookhaven for the Great Configuration, an event that only takes place once every hundred years, Mirabelle senses that she is being treated as an outsider. Meanwhile Billy appears at the mansion, intending to bring chaos and destruction. Billy and Mirabelle soon realise that they must team up if they are to protect those they love. Kenny's brilliant second book about Rookhaven is wonderfully paced story – with truly excellent illustrations by Bettison – exploring ideas of loss, difference, forgiveness, family and friendship.

About the Author Pádraig Kenny is from County Kildare, now living in Limerick. Previously an arts journalist, a teacher and a library assistant, he now writes full-time. His first novel, *Tin*, was a Waterstones Book of the Month and was nominated for the Carnegie Medal, as well as being shortlisted for the Irish Book Awards and several regional awards. *The Monsters of Rookhaven* received the Honour Award for Fiction at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. He is married with four children.

About the Illustrator Edward Bettison is a graphic designer and illustrator from East Yorkshire in England. His twin interests of skateboarding and music introduced him to a huge variety of commercial art and artists from a young age. This inspired him to study graphic design at Nottingham Trent University. He then worked in London in the music industry before moving into the publishing world. He is now a freelance illustrator and book designer who specialises in highly detailed illustrations. He lives in Brighton with his partner and son.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. This book is a sequel. What does that mean to you? Have you read the first book? Do you think it will matter whether you have or not?
2. Look at the cover – do you think it's old-fashioned? Does it give you a clue what the story might be about?
3. Does the illustrator's style remind you of anything? Does it make you think of a specific period in history?
4. Look carefully again at the cover – what do you see? Think about the elements present in the cover illustration – is anything conspicuous by its absence?
5. The house is called Rookhaven – do you think that means it's a safe place for rooks? What do you know about these birds? Do you know any stories or fairy tales about them?

AS YOU READ

Part One: Billy and the Worms

1. Do you recognise the book Billy is reading? Why do you think he might need to read books to escape his situation?
2. What does the word 'covenant' mean? Why do you think the Worms might have been punished for breaking it? Have you heard the word used in any other context?
3. 'A pretend family wasn't a real family, but pretending was better than nothing.' Do you agree with this quote? Why do you think Billy needs a pretend family?
4. What do you know about the Blitz? What would the city of London have looked like shortly after this event? Do you think it might be an easy place for Billy and his family to hide in?
5. Why do you think Billy stops to look at the family as they go through their evening routine? Do you think he's 'spying'?
6. Do you think Billy and Meg are different from the Catchpoles? Why do you think the men chasing Billy are so intent on catching him, even if it means hurting him?
7. What does Billy's grief for the Catchpoles say about the nature of family?

Part Two: The Misbegotten

1. What do you think the Great Configuration might be?
2. Think about the Dibbles. Just because they don't have eyes, it doesn't mean they can't see perfectly well. What do you think this says about the idea of appearances in the book?
3. What does Aunt Mavis mean by saying Mirabelle is 'different'? Is her gesture of cleaning her hands after touching Mirabelle significant?
4. If you've read the first book, what do you remember about Gideon? Has he changed?
5. What do you think about Mirabelle and Dr Ellenby's relationship? She clearly cares about his health. Why does she tell him that she's mortal too?
6. Think about what Dr Ellenby says about human beings growing and changing. What do you think has happened to Jem to explain why she hasn't written to Mirabelle in months? If Dr Ellenby's health is declining, how do you think this makes Mirabelle feel? And why do you think Odd doesn't want to see the doctor?
7. What do you think about the way that different chapters focus on a different character's perspective? Does it give you a balanced view of the narrative?
8. Think about Billy's arrival at Rookhaven. He feels at home yet lost at the same time. Can you understand why? Why would Mirabelle's concern for him take him by surprise?
9. Why do you think Billy hits Odd? Why would his instinct be to lash out like that?
10. Billy feels like he's different too. Is this the same feeling that Mirabelle has? He calls himself and Meg outcasts. What does that mean? Have you come across that word before?
11. Mirabelle is thinking about Billy, about the hunted look that he has. Does he remind her of herself? What kind of person do you think Mirabelle is?
12. Why do you think Piglet's pages are black? What else is different about Piglet's pages in the book? Why do you think he's noticed Billy's presence in the house?
13. Billy clearly relies on instinct and his physical strength to survive. Can you understand why he feels so angry when Gideon steals his satchel? Angry enough to fling himself at Gideon and smash through the window?
14. Aunt Mavis and some of the other Family members clearly don't like Billy or Mirabelle. Why is this? Do you think some members of the Family think differently to those that live in Rookhaven, like Odd, Uncle Enoch and Aunt Eliza?
15. Mavis declares that Billy has come to Rookhaven under false pretences – but Mirabelle points out that he was allowed to pass through the Glamour and the flowers didn't stop him coming to the house. Why do you think that is significant? Why do you think Mirabelle wants to advocate for Billy?

16. Aunt Mavis mentions the Misbegotten. What do you make of Uncle Enoch's and Aunt Eliza's reactions?
17. What is the difference between Within and Beyond? How is Mirabelle perceived in both of these contexts?
18. Mavis talks about confirming Billy's heritage. What do you take the word 'heritage' to mean? What do you think Mavis means by it?
19. Billy tells Eliza that he had 'nowhere else to go'. Do you think this is true? If, as Gideon says, Billy is 'like' Mirabelle, does this mean that he's not on his own?
20. Think about the language of home in the book. Billy says Rookhaven is welcoming because of Mirabelle. Here, Eliza tells him to make himself at home. Do you think Rookhaven is a good place for him to be, regardless of why he was sent there?
21. Think about how Odd uses his portals to move through different spaces. Do you think he's running away from something? Why won't he visit Dr Ellenby?
22. Think about how Billy interacts with the space around Rookhaven. How has he been used to living in London? What kind of spaces he is used to?
23. Why do you think it's hard for Billy to hear that Lucius thinks he's a friend? Or that Mirabelle is a good judge of character?
24. Billy has been pretending all his life, trying to blend in and be something he's not. Has Mirabelle been doing the same? Why are they nearly more than family, as she says?
25. Piglet can sense that Odd is frightened. Why do you think Piglet has trouble following Mirabelle's words? Is Piglet different too?
26. Billy senses the danger before anyone else. Can you understand why he tries to run?
27. Did you expect Piglet to be a small boy with eyes that keep changing colour? What other form did you think he might take?
28. Mirabelle has clearly been teaching Piglet to occupy different forms. Why do you think she and Odd picked the form of a small child for him to inhabit? Even within the house, he's clearly separated from other members of the Rookhaven family. Why do you think everyone is so afraid of Piglet?
29. Only two people seem to be able to control themselves in front of Piglet, albeit for different reasons. Why are Billy and Winthropp so transfixed by him?
30. Think about the exchange Enoch and Mirabelle have about the idea of controlling Piglet. Do you understand what they both mean, from their different perspectives?
31. Why do you think Piglet's pages are written in the present tense? Why does the word 'tomorrow' mean nothing to Piglet?
32. Odd asks Mirabelle why she's teaching Piglet to behave outside of his room. What do you make of her response? Do you think it's a personal issue for her, making sure that Piglet is part of the Family in all senses of the word? What do you think Odd's 'wrong reasons' might be?
33. How significant do you think it is that Piglet places his hand on Mirabelle's head as she cries over Dr Ellenby, even though he doesn't know why?

Part Three: The Configuration

1. At Dr Ellenby's funeral, Mirabelle meets Freddie, an old friend. She thinks about the village boys she has watched growing up – do you think it's hard for Mirabelle, watching others change as she doesn't?
2. Why do you think Mirabelle is so angry with Odd?
3. Why is Dr Ellenby's pipe so important to Mirabelle?
4. Think about the conversation that unfolds in the garden about mortal traditions surrounding death. Why do you think the members of the Family who are not from Rookhaven can't seem to understand what it means to be human?
5. Enoch sanctions Mirabelle because she has harmed another member of the Family. Have you come across this idea of sanctioning before?
6. It's too much effort for Odd to put recent events into words – can you understand why? Do characters often have trouble expressing themselves and articulating their feelings in the book?
7. In his interaction with Winthropp, Odd declares that, out of all of them, Mirabelle understands the true meaning of family best. Do you agree?
8. Mirabelle attempts to articulate her grief to Piglet. Why is losing Dr Ellenby different to losing her mother?
9. Do you think Piglet thinks about history? Do you think Piglet understands what is happening to the people in Rookhaven? Or does time move differently for him? Why?
10. Can you understand why Odd struggles to articulate the meaning behind the Configuration to Gideon? Why do you think this insight into the Ether is so important to everyone gathered in Rookhaven – and why does this make Rookhaven itself so important?

Part Four: Piglet in the World

1. Think about Billy's actions in the aftermath of his using the orb to capture Piglet. What do his feelings about what he's done say about the kind of character he is?
2. Do you agree with Mirabelle's assessment of Winthropp? Is being old in the novel always connected with knowledge?
3. What happens to Billy when Piglet moves towards him? Why do you think Piglet shows him other memories?
4. After Billy runs away – which confuses Piglet – Piglet starts thinking about emotions, about love and guilt. What does he learn from Billy's memories? When he decides to stay in the world a little longer, what do you think this might mean?
5. Think about what Winthropp says when he makes the case for trying to find Billy first – because the boy must be questioned to ascertain why he breached the sanctuary of Rookhaven. The way Winthropp describes the isolation and alienation that a Misbegotten might feel because they are different, because they are not allowed to belong – do you think that might be a metaphor or an allusion to something else?
6. Do you think Mirabelle is right to rely on her instincts when it comes to Billy?
7. Why do you think Piglet's memories are so scattered? Do you think Piglet has any sense of who he is, who he has been in the past for so long? What do you think of Piglet?

Part Five: The Pied Raven

1. 'Skulking in your big house while the world moves on around you? You lot aren't family.' What do you think Thorne means by this?
2. Is Odd's revelation that he can travel not only in space but also in time important? He uses the word 'refuge' to describe the quiet place he takes Winthropp to to escape. Why do you think he calls it this?
3. Winthropp uses the phrase 'arcane magic' to describe the things Thorne has done. What does this mean? Have you come across the phrase before?
4. As she escapes from her clamps, Mirabelle briefly contemplates leaving Billy behind. Why do you think she doesn't? Do you think they are more alike than she would care to admit?
5. 'Why is the magic boy crying?' Why do you think Piglet is crying, even though he is unaware of the effect he's had on the people on the platform?

Part Six: The Vulsifier

1. What do you think of Mr Thorne's story – a member of the Family who hunts those members who break the covenant? Do you feel sympathy for him?
2. Mirabelle remembers something Uncle Enoch once told her about Piglet, despite his age, being 'little more than a child'. Do you think that's true? And why should it matter? Does it diminish Piglet's capacity for empathy?
3. Think about the moment Piglet walks into the machine. Why do you think he does it? What is he thinking about in the moment of the separation? Who does he think of? And why?

Part Seven: Endings

1. 'We're Misbegotten – we die. You should accept that. I have.' Do you think that's true? As Mirabelle says this to Aspinall, as his true face is revealed, do you think she really has accepted her mortality?
2. When Thorne pulls the lever on the Vulsifier and Mirabelle tries to stop him, who do you think she is trying to save?
3. When the sharing of thoughts and memories that Piglet facilitates is over, he realises that everyone is afraid, albeit for different reasons. Do you understand the fears Piglet sees?
4. Why doesn't Thorne go back to Rookhaven with them, even though Mirabelle asks him to?
5. Why is it important that Mirabelle and Odd walk back to Rookhaven after visiting Dr Davenport?
6. Do you think Odd will go to visit Marcus Ellenby again?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. Think about each of these words in relation to the main characters in the book. Do you think of different meanings and implications for each character?
    - Family
    - Difference
    - Identity
    - Grief
    - Community
    - Forgiveness
    - Mortality
    - Empathy
    - Misbegotten
2. Think about the way the narrative is structured. Does it start slowly, introducing you to characters, or does it expect you to deal with a swift pace immediately? When do you think the action starts to ramp up? Does the switch in tempo work well?
3. Aunt Mavis's motto is 'Elegance above all else'. Do you agree with this? If you had a motto, what might it be?
4. If you could design a machine that could do anything, what kind of machine would you design?
5. The book is set in the years after the Second World War – the mentions of the Blitz indicate this. Why do you think the outside world seems so far away from Rookhaven?

ACTIVITIES

- Who is your favourite character and why? Rewrite a key scene from the book from your character's perspective.
- Take each of the illustrations as a sequence and write a story about them, using only the images you can see. Is it different to the story in the book? What does this tell you about the relationship between the text and the illustrations?
- Write a story about one of the destinations Odd's portals take him to. Who does he meet there? What does he do?
- Keep thinking about the word 'difference'. How is it used in the book? How do Mirabelle and Billy experience difference? What does it mean for their lives? What about Piglet – what does it mean for him? What does being different mean for you? What does it mean in our world?
- Write the letter that Mirabelle is composing to Jem in the final chapter, telling her the most important things that have happened in the story.
- The author includes a dedication – if you were going to write a book, who would you dedicate it to and why? Write your dedication!
- This is a story about monsters but it's also a story about shadows. In order to have shadows, we must have both light and dark. Can you think of a fairy tale or a fable that talks about hope in the face of adversity or gives us a sense that our individual actions matter? Why do we tell stories like these?

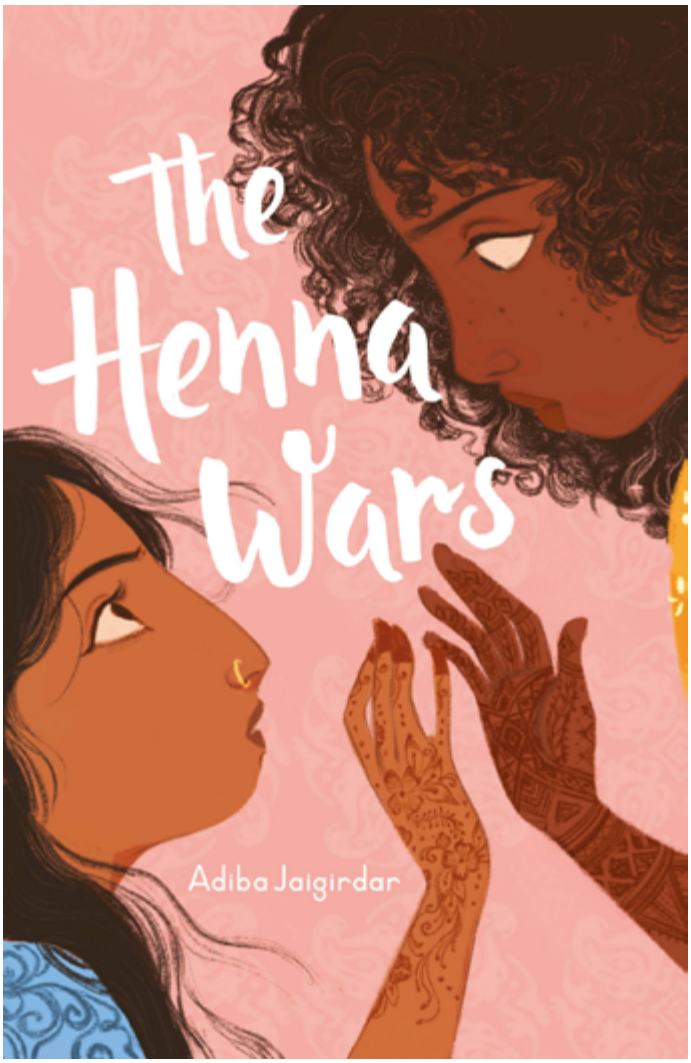
FURTHER RESOURCES

- Check out illustrator Edward Bettison's webpage for *The Shadows of Rookhaven*: https://edwardbettison.com/the-shadows-of-rookhaven
- Read *The Monsters of Rookhaven*, also previously shortlisted and by the same author, then avail of the Children's Books Ireland resource pack: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/resources-ideas/ideas-activities-packs/junior-juries-resource-pack-and-artist-videos-2021
- If you enjoyed reading this book, you might like some of the books on these themed Children's Books Ireland reading lists.
    - Adventure Stories: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/adventure-stories
    - Celebrating Difference: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/celebrating-difference
    - Celebrating Families: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/celebrating-families
    - Difficult Changes: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/difficult-changes
    - Fantasy: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/fantasy
    - Folklore, Myth, Legend: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/folklore-myth-legend
    - Overcoming Fears: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/overcoming-fears

THE HENNA WARS

Adiba Jaigirdar

Hodder Children's Books
Paperback, 383PP, £7.99
ISBN 9781444962208



Themes

- Family relationships
- Friendship
- Coming out
- Homophobia
- Racism
- Bullying
- Migration
- Cultural appropriation
- Identity

Summary Nishat's parents say she can be anyone she wants – as long as she isn't a lesbian. She doesn't want to lose her family, but she also doesn't want to hide who she is, which only gets harder once Flávia walks into her life. Beautiful and charismatic, Flávia takes Nishat's breath away. But as their lives become tangled, they're caught up in a rivalry that gets in the way of any feelings they might have for each other. Can Nishat find a way to be true to herself … and find love too?

Judges' Comments Bangladeshi-Irish teenager Nishat decides to tell her parents that she is a lesbian, but things don't really turn out as she'd hoped. When she begins to fall for her classmate and then (Transition Year) business rival Flávia, life becomes even more complicated, and she must figure out who she is and what she ultimately desires. Jaigirdar's wonderfully written and original text is an important story of first love that also explores issues of religion, race, sexuality, cultural appropriation and identity formation in contemporary Irish society.

About the Author

Adiba Jaigirdar is a critically acclaimed, bestselling author. A Bangladeshi-Irish writer and teacher, she has an MA in postcolonial studies from the University of Kent, England, and a BA in English and history from University College Dublin, Ireland. All of her writing is aided by tea and a healthy dose of Janelle Monáe and Hayley Kiyoko. When not writing, she is probably ranting about the ills of colonialism, playing video games or expanding her overflowing lipstick collection.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. What is your first impression when you see the cover?
2. What do you think this book is going to be about?
3. Where and when do you think the book is set?
4. Does the cover remind you of any other book covers?
5. Who is the target audience of this book, in your opinion?
6. If you saw this book in a bookshop or library, would you pick it up?
7. What usually appeals to you in a book cover?

AS YOU READ

Chapters 1–5

1. We learn a lot about Nishat's family background in the first couple of pages. Do you see any parallels with your own family? Has anyone in your family moved to or from another country?
2. How do you feel about Nishat's parents' reaction when she comes out to them?
3. Have you ever been to a wedding? Were there similarities with the wedding described in chapters 2 and 3?
4. Why does Priti react the way she does when she first meets Flávia, do you think?
5. Nishat and Flávia are preparing to go back to school at the end of the summer holidays. How do you usually feel when summer is over?

Chapters 6–10

1. Nishat remembers a painful incident with Flávia's cousin, Chyna, a few years previously. Why was Nishat upset by Chyna's actions?
2. What impresses Nishat about Ms Montgomery's teaching methods? Have you had any exceptional teachers? What made them exceptional?
3. Nishat and Flávia discuss diversity in their school and in Dublin in general. Do you live in a diverse area and is there much diversity in your school?
4. How does Nishat feel after her conversation with her grandmother?
5. Priti is very proud of her Instagram following. Do you use any social media platforms? What do you post on them?

Chapters 11–14

1. Why does Chyna mispronounce Nishat's name? How do you think this makes Nishat feel?
2. Flávia asks Nishat what her type of party is. What's your type of party?
3. Why is henna so important to Nishat? And why doesn't Flávia understand why Nishat is upset?

Chapters 15–18

1. Nishat and Priti are very close. Can you think of other books and films that show strong sibling relationships?
2. The book contains descriptions of several houses: Nishat's, Chyna's, Flávia's. Why does the author include these descriptions?
3. Why is the relationship between Flávia and Chyna complicated?
4. Nishat and Priti use Skype to keep in touch with their grandmother. If you have relatives far away, how do you stay in touch?
5. Do you agree with Nishat's not wanting to tell the school principal when a text is sent to the whole school outing her?

Chapters 19–26

1. How do you think Nishat's parents feel when they are called in by the principal?
2. What do you think of Nishat's decision to steal the henna tubes from Flávia's locker?
3. How does Nishat feel after her conversation with Flávia during French class?
4. How does Nishat's visit to Flávia's house help her to understand Flávia better?
5. How do you think Priti feels when Nishat finds out that Ali sent the text?
6. Why is Nishat so happy that her classmates like her henna?

Chapters 27–34

1. Nishat and Flávia finally kiss after a few interrupted attempts. This often happens in book or film rom-coms. Are there any other features of rom-coms that you've noticed in this book?
2. Why is Flávia reluctant to tell Chyna about her sexuality?
3. When Nishat is doing henna, she forgets about the world around her. Do you have any interests or hobbies that you can lose yourself in?

4. Why is Nishat so angry when Chyna says that henna is trendy?
5. How do Nishat's mother's experiences with her own parents influence how she feels about Nishat coming out?
6. How do Nishat's parents show they are beginning to feel differently about Nishat's sexuality?
7. What do you think of the ending of the book?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. What were your overall impressions of the book? Did you enjoy it? Would you recommend it to your friends?
2. Did it remind you of any other books you have read or films you have seen?
3. What scenes stand out?
4. If the book was made into a film or TV show, what songs or music would you use as the soundtrack?

ACTIVITIES

- Fast forward ten years. What sort of lives do you think Nishat and Flávia will be living, and what will the relationship between them be?
- Interview someone you know who has moved to or from another country. Ask them about their experiences of settling in to a new place.
- Imagine you were invited to take part in a transition-year business competition. Put a business plan together.
- Are there any aspects of your culture that you think are special, like Nishat feels about henna?
- It is unusual to get a Bangladeshi-Irish perspective in a young adult book. What other voices are not heard enough in YA books in your opinion?
- Try telling the story from the point of view of one of the other characters – for example, Chyna or Ali.
- Bollywood movies are mentioned several times in this book. If you have never seen a Bollywood movie, find one and watch it.

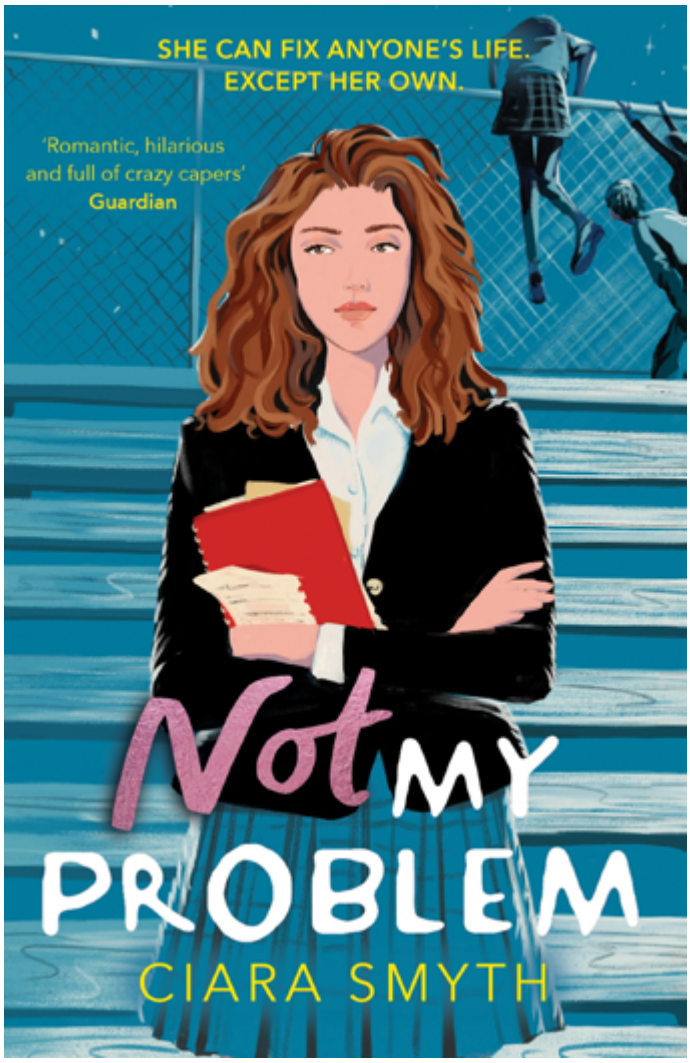
FURTHER RESOURCES

- Check out *The Henna Wars* discussion questions on the Hachette Schools website: https://www.hachetteschools.co.uk/hachette-schools-posts/2021/01/12/the-henna-wars-discussion-questions/
- Find a list of some Bengali books on Adiba Jaigirdar's website: https://adibajaigirdar.com/bengali-books
- For a selection of eighty-four LGBTQ+ inclusive books for young readers, celebrating love, acceptance and family, see Children's Books Ireland's Rainbow Reads: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/rainbow-reads
- Check out Children's Books Ireland *Free To Be Me* reading guide, which highlights books that celebrate diversity, representation and inclusion for children and young people aged 0–18: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/free-be-me-reading-guide-2021
- BeLonG To offers support and advice to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people in Ireland: www.belongto.org

NOT MY PROBLEM

Ciara Smyth

Andersen Press
Paperback, 388PP, £8.99
ISBN 9781839130854
Suitable for ages 14+



Themes

- Friendship
- Family relationships
- LGBTQ+
- Anxiety
- Alcoholism
- School

Summary When rulebreaker Aideen reluctantly agrees to help class-swot Meabh cope with her crazy workload, she doesn't expect to wind up *pushing her down the stairs*. However, this wild solution leads Aideen to discover she has a real talent for solving other people's problems. A series of ill-advised but well-intentioned hijinks ensues, with the assistance of her lovable sidekick Kavi and the annoying (but distractingly cute) Meabh. However, her own life is a mess – her mam is drinking again, her best friend is avoiding her and she is flunking out of school. As she grows closer to her new friends, she wonders can every problem really be solved?

Judges' Comments Teenager Aideen seems quite capable of solving other people's problems but struggles with her own life: her mother's alcoholism, issues with her best friend and falling grades. With humorous and witty dialogue, as well as complex portrayals that masterfully avoid cliché, this young adult novel weaves diversity seamlessly into its narrative. Smyth's excellent writing and characterisation ensure that the reader is drawn directly into an emotional and realistic tale of contemporary teen experience. This novel is hard-hitting at times while also brimming with empathy and sensitivity.

About the Author Ciara Smyth studied drama, teaching and then social work at university. She thought she didn't know what she wanted to be when she grew up. She became a writer so she wouldn't have to grow up. She enjoys jigging (verb: to complete a jigsaw puzzle), playing the violin badly and having serious conversations with her pets. Ciara has lived in Belfast for over ten years and still doesn't really know her way around.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. What impression does the front cover give you of Aideen's character?
2. Do you like the title *Not My Problem*? Does it make you want to read the book?
3. Look at the background of the cover illustration (by Spiros Halaris) – what is happening? What idea does this give you of the plot?

AS YOU READ

Chapter 1

1. What is your first impression of the following characters – Aideen, Meabh and Ms Devlin?
2. Discuss Meabh's ideas for improving the school. Do you think they are strong ideas? Would you vote for her to become student council president?
3. Why do you think Aideen is worried about her mum?

Chapters 2–6

1. What does the scene where Aideen remembers her project work with Meabh tell us about both girls? How do you think they both felt?
2. Meabh is a perfectionist and is very stressed about her grades, extracurriculars and her future. What would you suggest to help her with her anxiety?
3. What do you think of Mr Kowalski's reaction to his daughter's injury?
4. What details does the author give about Aideen's home? What impression does this give of her home life?
5. Do you like the use of text messages in the book? What are the differences between Aideen's and Meabh's styles of texting/expressing themselves?
6. How does Aideen feel about her dad being back? How does the author show us these feelings?

Chapters 7–11

1. What do you learn about Aideen's home life in chapter 7? How do you think she feels about her responsibilities?
2. How does the author create tension and drama when the characters break into the school?
3. Orla reveals to Aideen that she was cyberbullied. How would you deal with this? What do you think of how her dads reacted?
4. Why do you think Aideen reacts the way she does to Holly being annoyed? Do you think this is a healthy friendship?
5. Aideen and her mother remember the trip to Galway differently. What does this tell us about both of their characters?

Chapters 12–16

1. Aideen is very understanding – how does the author show us this? Think about how Aideen reacted reacted to Orla and Laura when they told her about their problems.
2. What do you think of Meabh's idea to make the school paper digital?
3. What do we learn about Aideen's dad in chapter 14?
4. What does Holly's response to Aideen's 'He's back' text tell us about their friendship?
5. Aideen is in a difficult position when Holly asks her to spy on Meabh. What do you think she should do?

Chapters 17–21

1. Aideen often fails to see her own talents and abilities. What strengths of hers have you noticed so far?
2. Do you think Ms Devlin is a good teacher? How does she try to support Aideen?
3. What do we learn about Aideen's childhood in this section of the book?
4. Aideen's opinion of Meabh changes – think about what she has learned through their friendship. What do you think of Meabh now compared to at the start of the book?
5. Meabh says that Aideen focuses on fixing other people's problems rather than dealing with her own. Do you think this is true? If so, why does she do this?
6. Aideen is hurt by her mam's apology – why do you think she accepts it and pretends to be happy? Compare this to the apology Aideen received from Holly in this section of the book.

Chapters 22–26

1. Were you surprised by what happened when Aideen and Angela went to break Daniel out of his home? What did you think of the rescue mission?
2. Compare the ways the different characters speak. How does Ciara Smyth make their voices distinctive?
3. Aideen and Meabh talk about stereotypical depictions of lesbians in media. Think of queer characters you know

from TV or movies. Do they fit these stereotypes? What identities do we not see represented?

4. Meabh, Aideen and Kavi have an emotional chat at the party. Aideen realises that, like her, they have often felt alone. Discuss the different ways these characters have struggled to fit in at school. What could be done to help them?
5. In this section of the book, Aideen almost kisses Meabh. What hints have we had that Aideen finds Meabh attractive?
6. Aideen confronts her mam in this section of the book and asks if she has been drinking. What do you think of how Aideen handles this conversation?

Chapters 27–31

1. Aideen helps Dylan create a viral video in which he attempts to break different Guinness World Records. Did you enjoy this scene? Which record do you think would be easiest to break?
2. Aideen speaks to Holly about their friendship and how Holly has been treating her. How has Aideen found the courage to have this conversation? What do you think are the traits of a healthy friendship?
3. At the end of the book, Aideen starts opening up to Meabh and Kavi about her struggles at school and her mam's drinking. What do you think of their reactions? How would you support a friend through a difficult time?
4. Compare Aideen and Meabh's realisations at the end of the book. How have they both grown during this novel, and what will they change in future?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. The ending of this book is a new beginning for Aideen, as she opens up to her friends and her teacher about her struggles. What do you think will happen next?
2. Think about Aideen – how has she changed since you met her in chapter 1? What is your opinion of her now?
3. Discuss some of the relationships in the book. What do you think of Aideen and Meabh's relationship – do you like them as a couple? How is Kavi a supportive friend to Aideen?
4. Imagine what happens to the characters in this book in the future. What do you think will happen to Aideen, Meabh and Kavi when they leave school? How will Aideen's relationship with her mam change over time?

ACTIVITIES

- Meabh is passionate about sustainability and fighting climate change. Think of environmental campaigns you could arrange in your school or community. You could use ideas from the book or come up with your own.
- Aideen daydreams about creating a popular app, which she names Flubberygiblets. What do you think this app would do? Create your own app idea. Think about what it would do, who the audience would be, what you would name it and what the design would be.
- The teenagers in this book deal with a lot of anxiety and pressure. Aideen has a panic attack at one stage. Research ways of dealing with anxiety (such as breathing techniques, journaling or counselling) and how to handle panic attacks. Jigsaw.ie and SpunOut.ie are resources aimed at helping young people.
- Aideen has a lot of playlists, including 'Creepy Vibes and Spooky Beats' and 'Sad Ladies of the Nineties'. Which songs would you put on a 'Not My Problem' playlist to represent this book? Think about the mood of the book, the different characters (maybe even what music you think they would like) and the events of the story.
- Aideen goes to a food bank in chapter 18 for groceries when her mam has had a relapse. Food banks and other organisations that deal with food poverty saw a huge rise in demand for their services in 2020 with increased unemployment during the Covid-19 pandemic. Research food banks or charities that accept donations in your area. You could get in contact with your local service and arrange an event – perhaps a fundraiser or a collection of non-perishable food items or period products at your school.
- Research Guinness World Records. You could look at records set in Ireland (for example, the world's largest tea towel) or, like Aideen, you could look for records that might be easy to break!
- Meabh and Holly speak at the electoral debate when running for student council president. If you were a candidate for this election, what points would you have made in your speech?
- There are lesbian and bisexual characters in this book. Aideen says that when she was outed at school, she faced a lot of bullying and homophobia. What can schools or communities do to support LGBTQ+ young people? You could look into inviting a group like ShoutOut to your school or community group to raise awareness.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- To find more LGBTQ+ inclusive books, check out Children's Books Ireland's Rainbow Reads reading list: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/rainbow-reads
- Explore the *Living with Pride* exhibition from the National Library of Ireland: https://www.nli.ie/LivingWithPride/
- Jigsaw.ie is the national centre for youth mental health: https://jigsaw.ie/
- SpunOut is Ireland's youth information website, providing easy access to relevant, reliable and non-judgemental information: https://spunout.ie/
- ShoutOut is a registered charity committed to improving life for LGBTQ+ people by sharing personal stories and educating school students, parents and guardians, teachers, youth workers and workplaces on LGBTQ+ issues: https://spunout.ie/

GUT FEELINGS

C.G. Moore

Illustrated by Becky Chilcott

UCLan Publishing
Paperback, 420PP, £7.99
ISBN 9781912979431

Themes

- Chronic illness
- Coming of age
- Body image
- Mental health
- Family
- Sexuality
- LGBTQ+ story

Summary

At school,
I learned that words,
More than weapons,
Could destroy bodies,
Could break hearts
More than fists or fury.

This is the story of Chris, what happened to him at age eleven and how that would change the rest of his life. A life-affirming and powerful coming-of-age verse novel that shines a light on chronic illness, who we are and how we live.

This title deals with a number of sensitive issues. Children's Books Ireland is aware that this content will not be suitable for some readers, and advises Junior Jury leaders to be aware of this content before selecting the book to read with your group.

Judges' Comments Told through free verse, this is a powerful coming-of-age story about Chris who, at eleven years old, is diagnosed with a rare genetic illness that shapes his life in ways he never imagined. Moore draws upon his own experience to create an engaging narrative filled with darkness and light, despair and hope, fear and desire, and love and trust. Told with insight and honesty, this is a bold and complex portrayal of living with chronic illness, of sexuality, of body image, of health and wellbeing and of growing up.

About the Author C.G. Moore has a BA in English literature and an MA in publishing and creative writing. He is also a freelance editor and marketer and currently teaches on the MA in publishing programme at the University of Central Lancashire. When he is not writing or teaching, Moore can be found in the kitchen baking, doing aerial acrobatics or playing with his Jack Russell, Ruby. His début book, *Fall Out,* was published in 2020.

About the Illustrator Becky Chilcott is a freelance graphic designer with over fourteen years' experience, living and working in London. She has extensive knowledge of the publishing industry and particularly enjoys book design with a solid grounding in collaborating with illustrators and photographers to produce fresh and exciting imagery fused with a confident use of typography. She voluntarily curates the events programme at the St Bride Library in London and teaches part-time on the Publishing MA course at the University of Central Lancashire as Lecturer in Production and Graphic Design.

QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Look at the cover. From the cover image, what do you think this book might be about? Do you find the cover appealing or unappealing? What does the title *Gut Feelings* suggest to you? Is this a book that you would pick off the shelf at the library or bookshop?
2. Read the blurb. What do you think of the description of the book? Can you guess some of the themes of this book? What do you think might happen to Chris in this story? Have you read any other books by the author C.G. Moore?
3. The book is described as a 'powerful coming-of-age verse novel'. What do you think usually happens in coming-of-age stories? Have you ever read a verse novel before? Do you think the fact that this novel is written in verse might change how you read it? If so, how?
4. *Gut Feelings* is a story about chronic illness. Do you know anything about conditions considered to be chronic illnesses? What do you think life might be like for a young person living with a chronic illness?

AS YOU READ

Part 1 – Diagnosis

1. Chris is diagnosed with familial adenomatous polyposis, something that has also affected his mother and grandfather. Have you heard of this condition before? How is Chris's experience of being eleven changed by his diagnosis? How do his family react to his diagnosis? Throughout this section, how is Chris's mental health challenged by his diagnosis?
2. How do Chris's relationships with his mother and with his father differ? Do you agree that Chris's mother is a 'warrior'? How does Chris's mother cope with all of the medical issues affecting the family? How does Chris try to bond with his father? Why do you think their father–son relationship is so difficult?
3. We learn that Chris is often teased at school. Why do you think Chris is being bullied? Chris does not seem to have any friends to confide in about his diagnosis. How do you think having a close friend might have changed this experience for Chris?
4. Chris's father is hospitalised. How do the family and their wider circle of friends and relatives cope with this shock event? How does this event change Chris's view of his father? There are a lot of biblical references in this chapter to 'divine miracles', 'praying' and 'Padre Pio's Gloves' – why do you think this is? Chris's father has an acquired brain injury – how will this change his life and the lives of his family?
5. 'I want to scream but I have no voice. My body fails to respond. No one can see my pain.' Is it easy for others to understand what Chris is going through? Some of the procedures Chris experiences feel very invasive and distressing for him. How do you think the adults around Chris handle explaining his illness, the procedures and his treatment to him? What do you think of Chris's experience at Crumlin Children's Hospital?

Part 2 – Treatment

1. Did anything surprise you about Chris's level of pain or his recovery from his total colectomy? During his recovery Chris uses a number of images to describe how he feels – which one did you think was most effective? How do you think Chris's life will change following this operation? How does Chris's illness affect his education? Do you think it is fair that Chris still has to sit regular Junior Cert and Leaving Cert exams with a chronic illness?
2. How does Chris's relationship with his body, his appearance and his scar change throughout this section? How does Chris's procedure change his relationship with food and his weight? Were you surprised that Chris dressed facing away from the mirror and preferred not to go swimming in public? Why do you think Chris is drawn to modelling?
3. Chris's dad returns to live in the family home. How do the family dynamics change over time? Why do you think Chris describes his home life like a tug o' war? Chris notes that his body has changed while his father's mind has changed – why do you think Chris finds it so difficult to be patient with his father? Chris's condition is very rare and was passed to him rather than his sister. Although Chris says he is glad to 'take the bullet' for her, how do you think this affects their relationship?
4. In this section we learn more about Chris's experience with his sexuality. Why does Chris pursue a relationship with Lynn? How do you think Chris's experiences of homophobic bullying affect his self-acceptance? Why do you think Chris is so afraid of people finding out who he 'really' is? How does Chris's view of himself and his classmates change over the course of this section?
5. Chris receives his date for his next surgery; this procedure will leave him with a stoma and ileostomy bag. How has waiting four years for his next surgery affected Chris? How are Chris's experiences of the procedures of his second surgery and the recovery afterwards similar and different to his first surgery? How does Chris's mother help him through this experience? Do you think having a stoma and ileostomy bag will be a bigger adjustment for Chris? Did anything surprise you about his experiences this time round?

Part 3 – Aftermath

1. Chris adjusts to life with a stoma and ileostomy bag. How does this affect his life as a young person in terms of college, work, dating and socialising? Before reading this did you have any understanding of the practicalities of life with a stoma and ileostomy bag? What are the ways that Chris tries to hide how his illness is affecting him? Why do you think the author gives less details about Chris's third surgery for his ileostomy reversal in comparison to his previous operations?
2. In this section, Chris comes out to his family and explores dating and romantic relationships. Were you surprised by Chris's parents' reactions to his coming out? Why do you think they react in this way? Were you surprised by the complications Chris's illness could potentially cause him when it comes to exploring his sexuality? How do you think Chris's romantic partners deal with his illness? Why do you think it is difficult for Chris to accept love and affection?
3. Chris continues to struggle with his mental health and self-acceptance. What are the 'anchors' that help him in these darker moments? How does Chris's mental health impact his body confidence? How does Chris's surgery to repair his scar affect him? How does Chris try to limit or control how people around him see him? By the end of this novel Chris has come to a better sense of self-acceptance. Why do you think he is eventually able to embrace all the different parts of his journey that make him who he is? Do you think this was an easy or difficult thing to do?

AFTER YOU HAVE READ

1. Did you enjoy reading this novel? What were the most enjoyable parts to read? What were the most difficult parts to read? Is there anything you would change about this book? Did reading this book change your perspective on anything or help you to learn anything new?
2. What did you think of the ending of Chris's story? When Chris reveals his full name to be Christopher George Moore, the reader realises this is an autobiographical story from the author's own experience. What did you think of this revelation? Did you suspect this story was autobiographical as you read? Does this change your reading of this story?
3. Throughout this book, and in the first section in particular, Chris defines and explains a lot of medical terms such as polyps, enema, colonoscopy, carcinogens, dysplasia, total colectomy, stoma and so on. How many of these terms had you heard of before reading this book? How do Chris's definitions of each of these words differ to his feelings about them? Chris lists things he associates with the word 'cancer' – what do you associate with this word? How do you feel about reading about these topics? Why do you think writing about some of these topics is considered 'taboo'?
4. Read 'Invisible Illness' on page 382 and 'ABCS' on pages 383–4. Chris's condition is a chronic illness, which means that surgery can help but he will continue to be affected in his everyday life by his diagnosis. Do you think there is enough understanding about how having a chronic illness can affect someone's day-to-day life? Can you think of examples throughout the book where others misunderstood Chris's illness or treated him with unkindness not realising he had additional needs? Chris is reluctant to admit he has a disability and unsure when to tell people about his condition – why do you think this might be?
5. In this novel we move from Chris being eleven to twenty-one years of age. How does the author handle this passing of time? Was it easy to follow this transition of time as a reader? Did you notice any changes in Chris's personality? Does Chris's confidence change over this time and why do you think this is?
6. This is a verse novel with a lot of visual elements, illustrations and unusual formatting. Did you like reading this style of book? What do you think of the placements of the poems throughout the book? Did you enjoy the illustrated elements? How do these parts add to your understanding of Chris's story? How are fading ink in the text, font and blank spaces used throughout the book? Do any particular poems and images stand out to you?
7. Chris uses the word 'normal' a lot throughout this story. What does the word 'normal' mean to you? In what ways does Chris feel 'not normal' compared to those around him? What are Chris's biggest struggles about feeling as though he does not belong? How does this affect his mental health? How tolerant do you think you, your school or your community are to people who are perceived as 'different'?

ACTIVITIES

- Chris has an invisible illness that causes disruption for him at school, college, work and in his social life. One of the problems he encounters is using disabled spaces such as toilets, as he 'appears healthy'. With your class, do a schoolwide audit of the facilities available to students with visible and invisible disabilities. Speak to students who use these services or features, and if you use them, note your own thoughts. From your learnings, are there any ways these could be improved? If so, what could you do in practice to help those with visible and invisible disabilities in your school?
- Hold a fundraiser. Raise awareness in your school or local community about invisible illnesses and disabilities like FAP. You could fundraise through a bake sale, no-uniform day, car-wash day, raffle or auction day and donate the proceeds to a worthy cause or charity of your choice that supports or advocates for people with invisible illnesses.
- Chris is often bullied at school, where he feels it is not safe to be different. Does your school feel like a welcoming space for someone who feels different? Read the poem 'I Am' on pages 417–20. Here Chris writes a free-verse poem about all of the things that make him who he is. Write your own poem like this about all of the things that make you who you are. You can add your name or keep it anonymous. Have the whole class display their poems somewhere prominent in your school to highlight the fact that there is no such thing as 'normal'.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Read this interview with C.G. Moore on Writing.ie on *Gut Feelings*: https://www.writing.ie/resources/gut-instincts-writing-about-chronic-illness-by-c-g-moore/
- Visit C.G. Moore's website: https://cgmoore.net/
- Read more about C.G. Moore's first novel, *Fall Out*, on the UCLan Publishing website: https://uclanpublishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Fall-Out-Reading-Group-Guide.pdf
- For more information on living with Crohn's disease, colitis or inflammatory bowel disease as a teenager, see:
  - Irish Society for Colitis and Crohn's Disease: https://iscc.ie/about/iscc/#:~:text=Our%20Vision&text=The%20Irish%20Society%20for%20Colitis,Inflammatory%20Bowel%20Disease%20or%20IBD).
  - Gutsy Kids: https://gutsykids.ie/
- For further reading on the following topics, check out these recommended reading lists from Children's Books Ireland:
  - LGBTQ+ stories: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/rainbow-reads
  - Illness: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/illness
  - Celebrating difference: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/celebrating-difference
  - Body confidence: https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/body-confidence
- Hannah Witton is a YouTuber, sex and relationships educator and young person who lives with a stoma and ileostomy bag due to inflammatory bowel disease. Watch her playlist of YouTube videos on her journey of adjusting to life with a stoma: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF_NN8Se99Y&list=PLg3ISyIIul8dgcjY3eUprr1i_L3vtQpmq&index=30
- LGBTQ+ resources for teens and young people:
  - BeLonG To: https://www.belongto.org/
  - ShoutOut: https://www.shoutout.ie/
- For help and support with your mental health or bullying:
  - Childline: https://www.childline.ie/
  - SpunOut: https://spunout.ie/category/mental-health

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