

The Branford Boase Award



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BRANFORD BOASE AWARD: THE SHORTLIST 2020

The year's outstanding debut authors for children: shortlist for the 2020 Branford Boase Award announced

- **Stars of the future named on the shortlist for the award that singles out the most exciting new children's authors**
- **2020 shortlist "particularly rich and varied"**
- **Strong showing for Egmont and Penguin and first ever shortlisting for Pushkin Press**

The shortlist for the **2020 Branford Boase Award** is announced today, Thursday 30th April 2020. Since 2000, the **Branford Boase** has been awarded annually to the author of an outstanding debut novel for children. Uniquely, it also honours the editor of the winning title and highlights the importance of the editor in nurturing new talent.

Founded to commemorate author **Henrietta Branford** and influential Walker Books editor **Wendy Boase**, the **Branford Boase Award** is recognised as one of the most important awards in children's books with an impressive record in identifying outstanding authors at the start of their careers. Winners and shortlisted authors include **Siobhan Dowd, Meg Rosoff, Mal Peet, Philip Reeve, Frank Cottrell Boyce, Frances Hardinge, Patrick Ness** and **Marcus Sedgwick**. The shortlist for the 2020 award is as follows:

Little Badman and the Invasion of the Killer Aunties by Humza Arshad and Henry White, edited by Holly Harris and Sharan Matharu, illus Aleksei Bitskoff (Puffin)

The Space We're In by Katya Balen, edited by Lucy Mackay-Sim, illus Laura Carlin (Bloomsbury)

A Pocketful of Stars by Aisha Bushby, edited by Liz Bankes and Sarah Levison (Egmont)

Bearmouth by Liz Hyder, edited by Sarah Odedina (Pushkin Press)

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson, edited by Lindsey Heaven (Electric Monkey)

Frostheart by Jamie Littler, edited by Naomi Colthurst (Puffin)

The Million Pieces of Neena Gill by Emma Smith-Barton, edited by Naomi Colthurst (Penguin)

This year the judges are **Sue Bastone**, vice-chair **SLA**; **Victoria Dilly**, creator of the **Book Activist** blog; **Layla Hudson** of **Round Table Books**, Brixton; and **Muhammad Khan**, author of **I Am Thunder**, winner of the 2019 **Branford Boase Award**. The panel is chaired by **Julia Eccleshare**, children's director of the Hay Festival.

Julia Eccleshare, one of the founders of award and chair of the judges says: "In highlighting the most exciting new authors and the most talented editors, the **Branford Boase Award** also identifies the preoccupations and strengths of current children's literature and we are pleased to say that this year's shortlist is particularly rich and diverse. Here are extremely powerful, challenging stories tackling complex issues alongside funny, exciting, original fiction; the range of voices represented is unparalleled in the award's history. We are excited not only about the books on the shortlist, but about what their authors will write next too."

See the Judges' Comments for more information on books shortlisted for the 2020 award.

The **winner** of the Branford Boase Award would normally be announced at a ceremony in London in early July. This year the announcement of the winner has been delayed until 24th September. The winning author receives a cheque for £1,000 and both author and editor receive an inscribed crystal plaque.

For further information please contact Andrea Reece on 07807893369 or andrea.reece@zen.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

The annual **Branford Boase Award** celebrates the most promising book for seven year-olds and upwards written by a first-time novelist and also highlights the importance of the editor in the development of new authors. The shortlisted authors may have published other books in another genre – for example, poetry or a picture book – but eligibility for the prize requires that this is their first children's novel.

As well as encouraging publishers to find and promote new writers, the Award sets out to alert readers of all ages to the work of interesting newcomers.

The **Branford Boase Award** was set up in 2000 in memory of prize-winning author **Henrietta Branford** and **Wendy Boase**, editorial director and one of the founders of Walker Books. They worked together on a number of Henrietta's novels, a partnership they greatly enjoyed. Both Henrietta and Wendy died of cancer in 1999.

Running alongside the Branford Boase Award, the **Henrietta Branford Writing Competition** encourages writing talent in under 18s.

The Award is the joint idea of **Julia Eccleshare** and **Anne Marley**. Julia is chair of PLR and director of the Hay Festival children's programme. Anne was a co-director of Authors Aloud UK and was Head of Children's, Youth & Schools Services for Hampshire Library & Information Service for many years. She has served on many children's book award panels, including the CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Awards.

The **Branford Boase Award** is sponsored by **Walker Books** who have pledged new funding to ensure its future.

Last year's winners were Muhammad Khan and his editor Lucy Pearse with **I Am Thunder** (Macmillan Children's Books).

For more information about the award, including a full list of past winners, and the Henrietta Branford Writing Competition visit www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk .

Or contact Andrea Reece on 07807893369 or andrea.reece@zen.co.uk

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