

# The Branford Boase Award



**\*\* UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01 GMT THURSDAY 29 APRIL 2021 \*\***

## **BRANFORD BOASE AWARD: THE SHORTLIST 2021**

### **The year's outstanding debut authors for children: shortlist for the 2021 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**
- **2021 shortlist "a showcase for all that children's literature can be"**
- **Verse novel on the shortlist for the first time ever**

The shortlist for the **2021 Branford Boase Award** is announced today, Thursday 29 April 2021. 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 'the one to watch' with an impressive record of identifying exceptional authors at the start of their careers. Winners and shortlisted authors include **Siobhan Dowd, Meg Rosoff, Muhammad Khan, Philip Reeve, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Frances Hardinge, Patrick Ness** and **Marcus Sedgwick**. The 2020 winner was **Liz Hyder**.

Seven books have made the shortlist, and include Jenny Pearson's **Costa**-shortlisted comic road-trip adventure **The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates**; Elle McNicoll's 'own voices' novel, **A Kind of Spark (Blue Peter Book Award Winner and Blackwell's 2020 Book of the Year)**; and Danielle Jawando's hard-hitting YA novel **And the Stars Were Burning Brightly**. For the first time in the award's history, a verse novel has been shortlisted, Manjeet Mann's YA story **Run, Rebel**.

Cont/-

The shortlist for the 2021 award in full:

**When Life Gives You Mangoes**

by Kereen Getten, edited by Sarah Odedina (Pushkin Children's Books)

**Witch** by Finbar Hawkins, edited by Fiona Kennedy (Zephyr)

**And the Stars Were Burning Brightly** by Danielle Jawando, edited by Jane Griffiths (Simon and Schuster)

**A Kind of Spark** by Elle McNicoll, edited by Eishar Brar (Knights Of)

**Run, Rebel** by Manjeet Mann, edited by Carmen McCullough (Penguin)

**Orphans of the Tide** by Struan Murray, edited by Ben Horslen, illustrated by Manuel Sumberac (Puffin)

**The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates** by Jenny Pearson, edited by Rebecca Hill and Becky Walker, illustrated by Rob Biddulph (Usborne)

The judges are **Zoey Dixon**, **YLG Librarian of the Year 2020**; **Scott Evans**, teacher, consultant and founder of [TheReaderTeacher.com](http://TheReaderTeacher.com); **Natasha Radford** of **Chicken and Frog** bookshop, Brentwood; and **Liz Hyder**, author of **Bearmouth**, winner of the 2020 **Branford Boase Award**. The panel is chaired by **Julia Eccleshare**, children's director of the Hay Festival.

**Julia Eccleshare**, co-founder of award and chair of the judges says, "The range of stories and voices on this year's shortlist is thrilling. Each year the **Branford Boase Award** highlights the most exciting new talent and most gifted editors, and it regularly identifies changes in the direction of fiction for children. These seven books showcase all that children's fiction can be. Here are stories that explain and provoke; reassure and challenge; that present the world through different eyes, or make us recognise what we knew but didn't understand; and, of course, they entertain, all readers, and on repeated readings."

See the Judges' Comments for more information on books shortlisted for the 2021 award.

The winner of the **Branford Boase Award** will be announced on Thursday 15 July. The winning author receives a cheque for £1,000 and both author and editor receive an inscribed plaque.

**For further information please contact Andrea Reece on 07807893369 or [andrea.reece@zen.co.uk](mailto: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**.

Last year's winners were Liz Hyder and her editor Sarah Odedina with **Bearmouth** (Pushkin Press).

**For more information about the award, including a full list of past winners, and the Henrietta Branford Writing Competition visit [www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk](http://www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk).**

**Or contact Andrea Reece on 07807893369 or [andrea.reece@zen.co.uk](mailto:andrea.reece@zen.co.uk)**

**[- ENDS -]**