

The Branford Boase Award



STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 19.30 THURSDAY 14 JULY 2022

Heart-warming, hilarious story of a boy and his Nai Nai named the outstanding debut novel for children 2022

- **Maisie Chan and her editor Georgia Murray of Piccadilly Press win the 2022 BRANFORD BOASE AWARD awarded to the author and editor of the outstanding debut novel for children**

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[Images available for download](#)

Thursday 14 July 2022: **Maisie Chan** is the winner of the **2022 Branford Boase Award** for the year's outstanding debut novel for children for her comic, family story **Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths**, about an 11-year-old whose life is turned upside down by his growing friendship with his grandmother, newly arrived from China. The award is shared with Chan's editor, Georgia Murray, of Piccadilly Press.

Founded in 2000, the **Branford Boase Award** was set up in memory of award-winning author Henrietta Branford and her editor Wendy Boase of Walker Books, who both died in 1999, and is unique in honouring editor as well as author. It is regarded as one of the most important awards in children's books and has an impressive record in picking out star authors at the start of their careers. Previous winners include Meg Rosoff, Liz Hyder, Marcus Sedgwick, M.G. Leonard and Frances Hardinge. Winning editors include JK Rowling's editor Barry Cunningham, Philip Pullman's editor David Fickling and Fiona Kennedy, publisher of Michelle Paver, Marcus Sedgwick and Sally Gardner.

The shortlist for the **2022 Branford Boase Award** is abundantly inclusive, with diverse authors and protagonists, eight freshly told stories which reflect the writers' understanding of the needs of today's readers and the certainty of authors and publishers that those readers want to read outside their own experiences. The judges, who include 2021 winner of the **Branford Boase Award**, author of **Orphans of the Tide**

Struan Murray, describe themselves as inspired by all the books they shortlisted, highlighting in particular Natasha Bowen's young adult mermaid fantasy **Skin of the Sea**, for its ambition and achievements. They were however unanimous in choosing **Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths** as winner praising the way it challenges stereotypes head-on and conveys the unexpected joy of intergenerational love while remaining full of humour and the kind of silliness children love.

Struan Murray, author of **Orphans of the Tide** and winner of the 2021 **Branford Boase Award** winner says of **Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths**, "Our shortlist was extremely strong and each of the books featured is exceptional in some way, but **Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths** stands out. It is warm-hearted, funny and brims with real emotion, painting a vivid picture of the trials and joys of growing up. The character of Nai Nai in particular is a triumph; though we rarely hear her speak, Maisie Chan succeeds in giving us an unforgettable character we can't help but love."

Danny struggles to convince his teachers, classmates and parents that art rather than maths is his thing. Maisie Chan says, "While my book is not about racism, I didn't want to ignore that British Chinese children and all children of colour experience assumptions about them and are often seen as 'other'. I think the character of Danny helps to break down stereotypes as he's not like the Chinese boys you often see in books. They're the sidekicks, geeky, or not very creative, they wear glasses, they don't speak up. But Danny learns to speak up for himself. To me, he's just a regular boy and I think simply having him be like that is an act of rebellion."

On winning the **Branford Boase Award**, she says, "Winning the **Branford Boase Award** is amazing! I'm super happy for myself, but more so for my wonderful editor Georgia Murray from Piccadilly Press because she deserves recognition for helping to make **Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths** into the book that it became. I owe her a great deal. Thank you so much to the judges, I'm thrilled!"

Georgia Murray said: "I loved Maisie's writing straight away – it's fresh and funny and felt so grounded in real worlds, people and experiences. The dialogue sparkled. But I also loved Maisie's astute and honest portrayal of her protagonist and his dilemmas. And a protagonist who we just don't see enough in children's books – a young British-Chinese boy. It was a privilege to work with her and it's a privilege to share the **Branford Boase Award** with her."

Alongside **Struan Murray**, author and winner of the 2021 **Branford Boase Award** the judges are critic **Imogen Russell Williams**; **Farrah Serroukh**, Research and Development Director **CLPE**; and **Sonia Thompson**, Head Teacher at St Matthew's C.E. Primary School, Birmingham. The judging panel is chaired by **Julia Eccleshare**, children's director of the **Hay Festival** and one of the co-founders of the **Branford Boase Award**.

Julia Eccleshare says, “The **Branford Boase Award** stands out amongst prizes not just because it acknowledges both author and editor, but for the way it highlights exciting new directions for children’s literature. The authors and editors on our shortlist will shape children’s reading in the years and decades ahead. Congratulations to them all, we are very excited to see what they write next.”

The 2022 winners of the **Branford Boase Award** were announced by Struan Murray on Thursday 14 July at a ceremony at **CLPE**, Webber Street, London SE1 8QW. Maisie Chan receives a cheque for £1,000 and Maisie and Georgia both receive engraved trophies.

The **Branford Boase Award** is supported by **Walker Books**.

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

Notes to Editors:

Founded in 2000, the annual **Branford Boase Award** celebrates the most promising book for seven-year-olds and upwards written by a first-time novelist. It also highlights the importance of the editor in the development of new authors. The shortlisted authors may have published other books in another genre – e.g. 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.

Maisie Chan is a British-born Chinese author. She has written short early reader books for Hachette and a collection of fairy tales, myths and legends in **Stories From Around the World** for Scholastic, as well as stories for **The Big Think**: a well-being curriculum based around stories for primary school children. She also started the group Bubble Tea Writers to support and encourage new British East Asian writers in the UK. Originally from Birmingham, Maisie now lives with her family in Glasgow. **Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths** won the **Jhalak Children’s and YA Prize** which celebrates books by writers of colour and was shortlisted for the **Blue Peter Book Award**.

Georgia Murray is commissioning editor at Piccadilly Press, an imprint of Bonnier Books UK.

The complete list of titles on the 2022 shortlist are:

Skin of the Sea by Natasha Bowen, edited by Carmen McCullough and Tricia Lin (Penguin)

Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths by Maisie Chan, edited by Georgia Murray (Piccadilly Press)

The Upper World by Femi Fadugba, edited by Emma Jones, Stephanie Stein & Asmaa Isse (Penguin) YA

Grow by Luke Palmer, edited by Penny Thomas (Firefly Press) YA

The Valley of Lost Secrets by Lesley Parr, edited by Zöe Griffiths (Bloomsbury) 9+

Digger and Me by Ros Roberts, edited by Ella Whiddett and Ruth Bennett (Little Tiger) 9+

The Boy who Made Everyone Laugh by Helen Rutter, edited by Lauren Fortune (Scholastic) 9+

Grimwood by Nadia Shireen, edited by Ali Dougal (Simon and Schuster) 7+

The Branford Boase Award was set up in memory of the 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 MBE** and **Anne Marley MBE**. Julia is the director of the Hay Festival children's programme. Anne was Head of Children's, Youth & Schools Services for Hampshire Library & Information Service for many years and helped to found Authors Aloud UK, an author booking agency. She has served on many children's book award panels, including the **CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Awards**.

For more information about the award and the Henrietta Branford Writing Competition visit www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk .

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