

NLF READING CHALLENGE

'26

neev
literature
festival
2026



STARTS
MAY 11, 2026

**3-MONTH ONLINE
READING CHALLENGE**

30 BOOKS

GRADES 4-6

Join our readers
worldwide, as every book
opens new horizons and
uncovers new adventures.

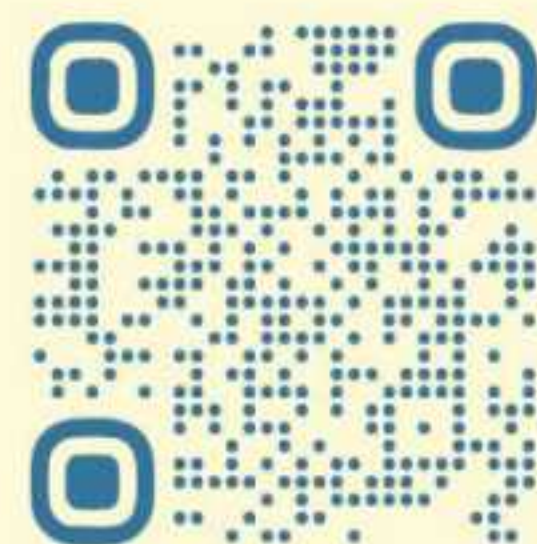
Registrations Open From

MAR 30 to
APR 30, 2026

SCAN THE QR CODE
TO REGISTER

For more details, visit us at

neevliteraturefestival.org/nlf-reading-challenge



What is the NLF Reading Challenge?



This Reading Challenge is designed to get children to read more, reflect on and discuss their reading, interact with authors, connect with other readers like themselves, and to help schools strengthen the culture of reading within their environment.



WHO IS IT FOR?

- ★ Children from **Grades 4-6** (in the Academic Year 2026-27) who love to read.
- ★ Librarians, teachers and school leaders who wish to nominate young readers.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. There are two tracks for the challenge: the Competitive and the Non-Competitive Track.
2. Participants procure and read the 30 books on our curated Reading List in 3 months.
3. A Reading Schedule is shared at the start of the challenge to help the participants navigate their reading.
4. A school needs to have five or more than five teams of students to sign up on the Competitive Track. Each team may have 3 students, either from particular grade levels between grades 4, 5, and 6, or a mix of the three.
5. Every school appoints a Reading Coordinator who will oversee the work of the teams signing up from the school.
6. Each school is required to conduct at least 5 activities around the books on the reading list that helps strengthen students' comprehension skills for the duration of the challenge: from May to September 2026.
7. Every team member is expected to read all 30 books.
8. Every school will sign a Reading Pledge to cement their commitment towards fulfilling the terms of the challenge.
9. It is recommended that a school taking part in the challenge purchases at least 1 set of all 30 books on the reading list for the school library. It is left to the discretion of the school on how best the books may be made available to all the registered teams from the organization.



HOW DOES THE NON-COMPETITIVE TRACK WORK?

Readers who wish to pursue the Non-Competitive Track may read any or all of the books on the reading list, and will get the chance to interact with acclaimed global and Indian authors during the Author Interaction sessions we host on Zoom. They soak in the reading experience at their own pace.



HOW DOES THE COMPETITIVE TRACK WORK?

1. Readers participate in teams of 3 members, overseen by the Reading Coordinator at their school. Teachers may be appointed as Reading Guides to assist the coordinator, at the coordinator's discretion.
2. The students also get the chance to attend the Author Interaction sessions we host on Zoom.
3. The Reading Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the teams keep up with the Reading Schedule. If the school chooses to involve Reading Guides, they will be jointly responsible for the same.





CAN COMPETITIVE TRACK TEAMS BE COMPOSED OF STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS?

Unfortunately, the challenge will not be accommodating teams composed of students from different schools. All three students on the Competitive Track team should be from the same school for the duration of the Challenge (May to September 2026).



HOW ARE THE WINNERS OF THE COMPETITIVE TRACK CHOSEN?

The teams on the Competitive Track will participate in one or more quizzes which will be held virtually in the last two weeks of August. The quizzes will feature objective-type questions, and will be based on the 30 books the participants are expected to read, as well as the Author Interaction sessions.



The quizzes will proceed as follows:

22ND SAT
AUGUST

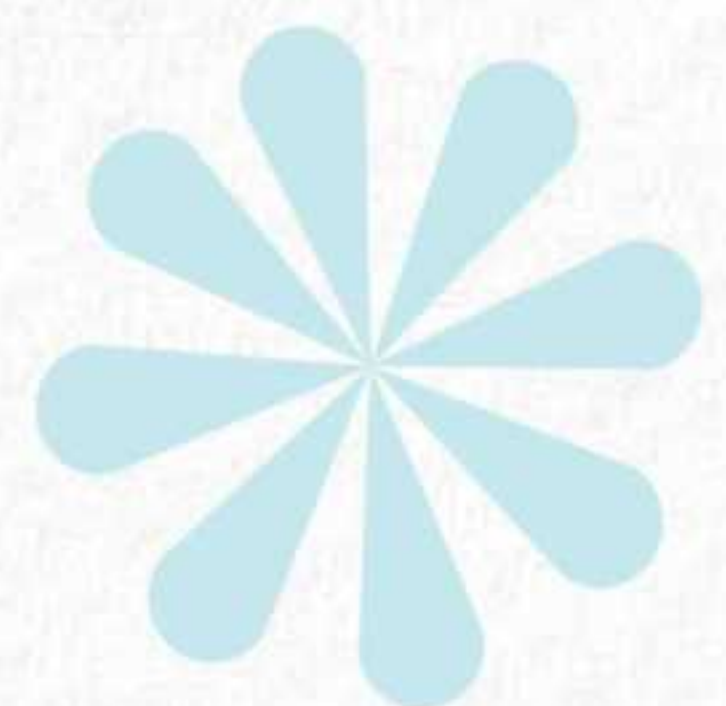
PRELIMINARY
ROUND

28TH FRI
AUGUST

SEMIFINALS

1. Mode: Virtual (Typeform)
2. Location: School
 - Teams taking the quiz from school will be monitored by their teachers.
 - The intent for students to attempt the preliminary round from the school is to ensure that all the participants remain ethical as they take the quiz, monitored by their teachers. Participating schools will be expected to share evidence of the students' presence at their respective schools to help validate this clause.
3. The top-performing teams from the preliminary round will move to the semifinals.

1. Mode: Virtual (Kahoot)
2. Location: Home
 - All teams will have to log in to a Zoom call monitored by the NLF Team.
3. The top 4 teams from this round will move into the finals
 - A team cap will come into effect at this stage of the competition. If more than one team from the same school are among the top 4 scorers, only the highest-scoring team from that school will advance to the finals. The next high-scoring team from a different school will advance instead of the second team.
 - This measure has been put in place to ensure parity in participation, and to discourage collusion between teams from the same institution.
4. All the semifinalists will receive certificates!



27TH SUN
SEPTEMBER

FINALS

1. Mode: In-person
Location: Neev Literature Festival
(Neev Academy), Bengaluru
2. The three best teams will win Gold/Silver/Bronze engraved trophies. All finalist teams will receive certificates of achievement, and a great set of books!
3. The Neev Literature Festival will bear the travel and accommodation costs for all finalist teams and an accompanying adult.







HOW DO PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE UPDATES REGARDING THE CHALLENGE?


All updates related to the Challenge, regardless of the track of participation, will be communicated via emailers and our social media pages.

Participants and their Reading Coordinators (for Competitive Track) or Reading Guides (for Non-Competitive Track) will be added to our mailing list upon registration, so please do keep an eye on your inboxes after you sign up.


We're on:

  @neevliteraturefestival

 @neevlitfest

 Neev Literature Festival

In case of any queries/concerns, you can reach us at

 literaturefestival@neevschools.com.



I AM AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT; HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

You can participate in the Non-Competitive Track as an individual. However, if you're looking to participate in the Competitive Track, form a team with two friends from your school, from Grades 4-6. Do speak with your teachers to form at least 4 more teams, and for a teacher to take on the role of the Reading Coordinator. Your school will have to commit to fulfilling the terms of the challenge to participate.





WHAT DOES A READING COORDINATOR DO, AND WHO CAN TAKE ON THIS ROLE? WHAT DO READING GUIDES DO?

Reading Coordinators (for Competitive Track) and Reading Guides (for Non-Competitive Track) supervise their students' reading, provide support and clarify queries when required. They share the links of the author interaction sessions with the students and ensure that the students attend the sessions. Reading Coordinators also monitor the students on the Competitive Track during the virtual quizzes.

A teacher/librarian/school representative can be the Reading Coordinator. If there are too many teams from one school, more teachers could be encouraged to join the challenge as Reading Guides to help support the work of the Reading Coordinator.

For Non-Competitive Track participants, any interested adult (parents, teachers, other relatives), or even an older sibling, can be the Reading Guide.



I AM A PARENT/GUARDIAN AND I WANT MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE, HOW DO I GO ABOUT IT?

If you're a parent looking to have your child participate in the Non-Competitive Track, you can fill the registration form as their Reading Guide and watch out for the updates we will be sharing through email and social media.

If you're looking at having them participate in the Competitive Track, then please speak with your child's school to participate in the initiative. The challenge will only accept registrations from teachers who are given the responsibility of being Reading Coordinators by the school. Registrations from parents will not be considered valid on the Competitive Track; the Reading Coordinator will register the teams for the challenge.





DO PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO FOLLOW THE READING SCHEDULE EXACTLY AS IT IS, WHILE PARTICIPATING IN THE CHALLENGE?

The participants don't have to follow the Reading Schedule strictly. We design the Reading Schedule such that the students finish reading the books based on which Author Interactions happen, before the sessions take place. As long as students read those books ahead of their respective Author Interaction sessions, they can read the other books in their order of preference. The Reading Schedule is meant to be a suggestion rather than a strict mandate.





WHAT IF I CAN'T FIND SOME BOOKS THAT ARE A PART OF THE CHALLENGE?



In case they're having trouble buying a book, participants could reach out to the following retailers which have signed on to be Bookstore Partners for the Reading Challenge:

- ✦ **Kahani Tree**, Mumbai
- ✦ **The Storyteller Bookstore**, Kolkata
- ✦ **KoolSkool**, Gurgaon
- ✦ **Lightroom Bookstore**, Bangalore
- ✦ **Bond Over Bindings**, Bangalore
- ✦ **Pupilio**, Ghaziabad

While we have curated the list keeping in mind the availability and accessibility of books across major bookstores and online platforms, we'll understand if you can't seem to find a particular title.

Participants may also reach out to the following libraries, which have signed on to be official library partners of the NLF Reading Challenge, to borrow and read the books on the reading list.

- ✦ **Kahaani Box**, Bangalore
- ✦ **Töölö Library**, Noida
- ✦ **Töölö Library**, Bellandur, Bangalore
- ✦ **Töölö Library**, Jayanagar, Bangalore





CURATORIAL VISION



The NLF Reading Challenge 2026 Book List brings together the best of children's literature available in the Indian market, striving to push children's reading horizons, encouraging them to look beyond the bestsellers that dominate the market, while taking into account availability, affordability, and student interests.

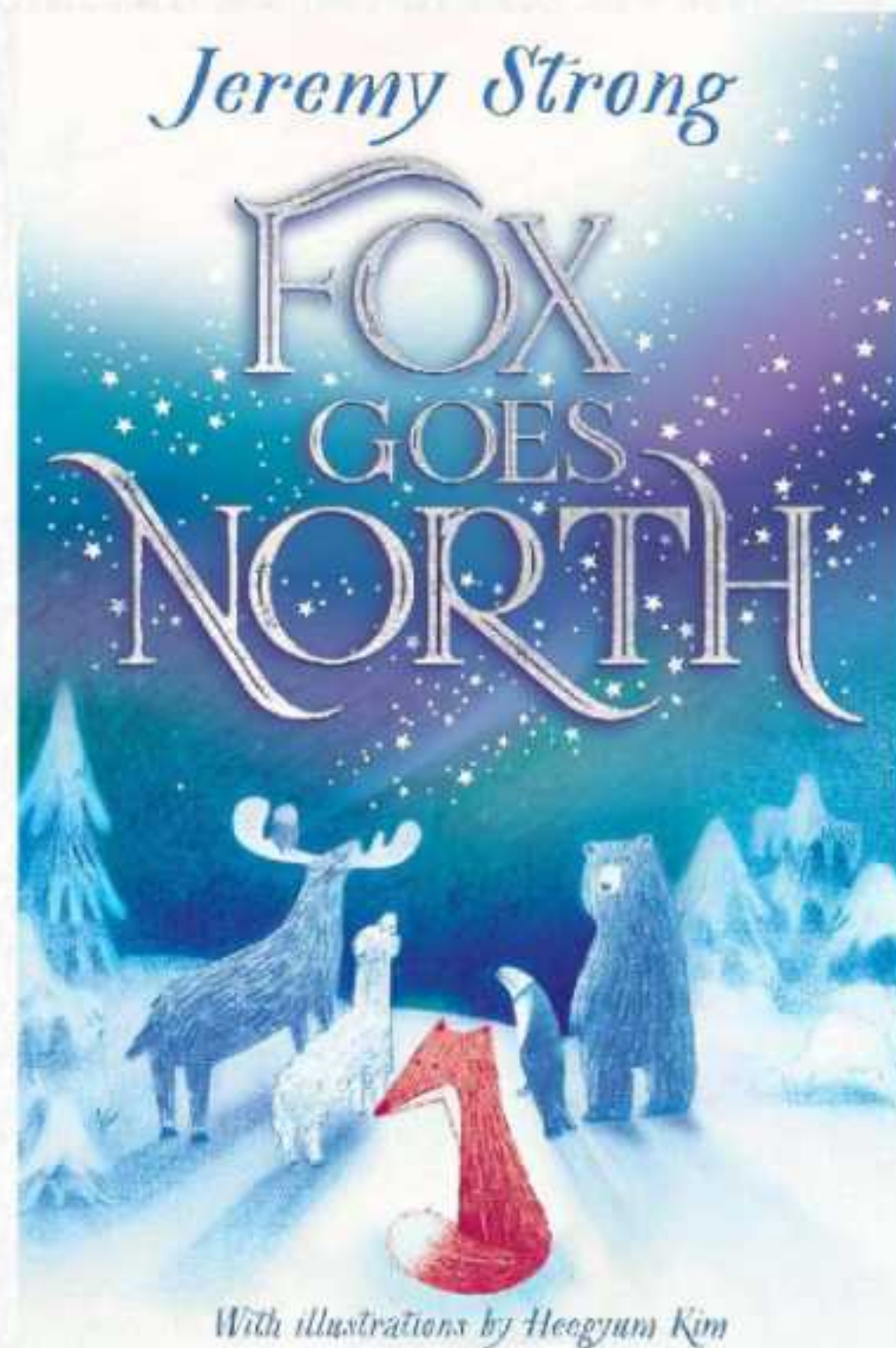
Participants will read acclaimed books published in recent years, across genres and forms and themes. Be it graphic novels (*Unfairies*, *Kishore Ashore*, *The Cartoonists Club*), delightful murder mysteries (*The Mizzy Mysteries: A Skeleton in the Closet*, *Murder! By Narwhal!*), whimsical poetry (*Dancing Frogs and Other Creatures in Verse*), non-fiction (*Ancient Indians*) or even a story told from the perspective of a typewriter (*Olivetti*), the list offers something for every kind of reader. Needless to say, the list also features several contemporary fantasy & sci-fi titles—wildly imaginative stories that captivate audiences and hold up a mirror to the joys and follies and foibles of the 'real' world.

Spanning prehistoric India, dystopian futures, and magical universes, the titles on our list travel across time and space and reality. To borrow from Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, we hope these books act as “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” for young readers, sparking their imaginations, cultivating their curiosity about themselves and the vast worlds they inhabit.

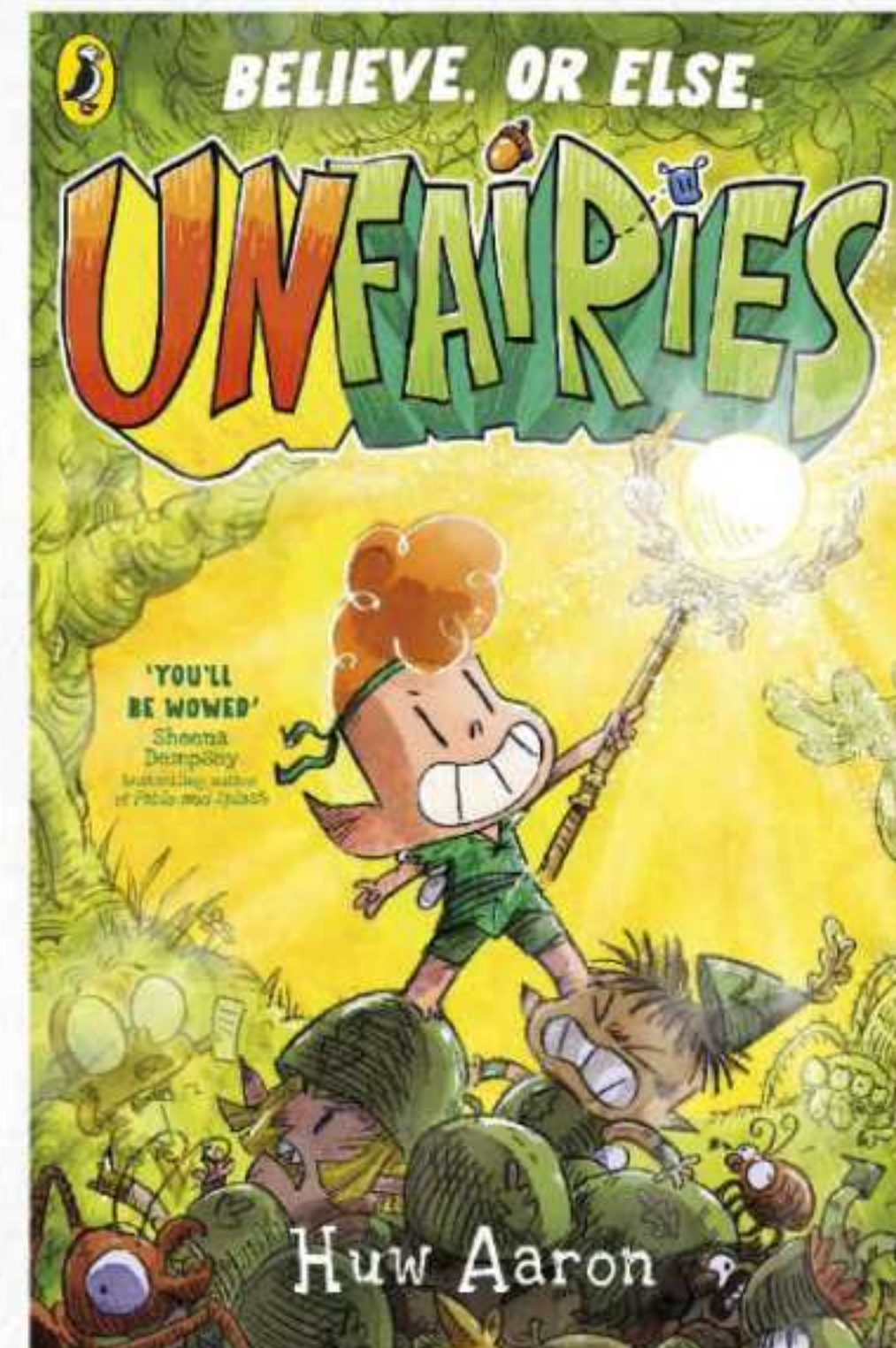


READING LIST

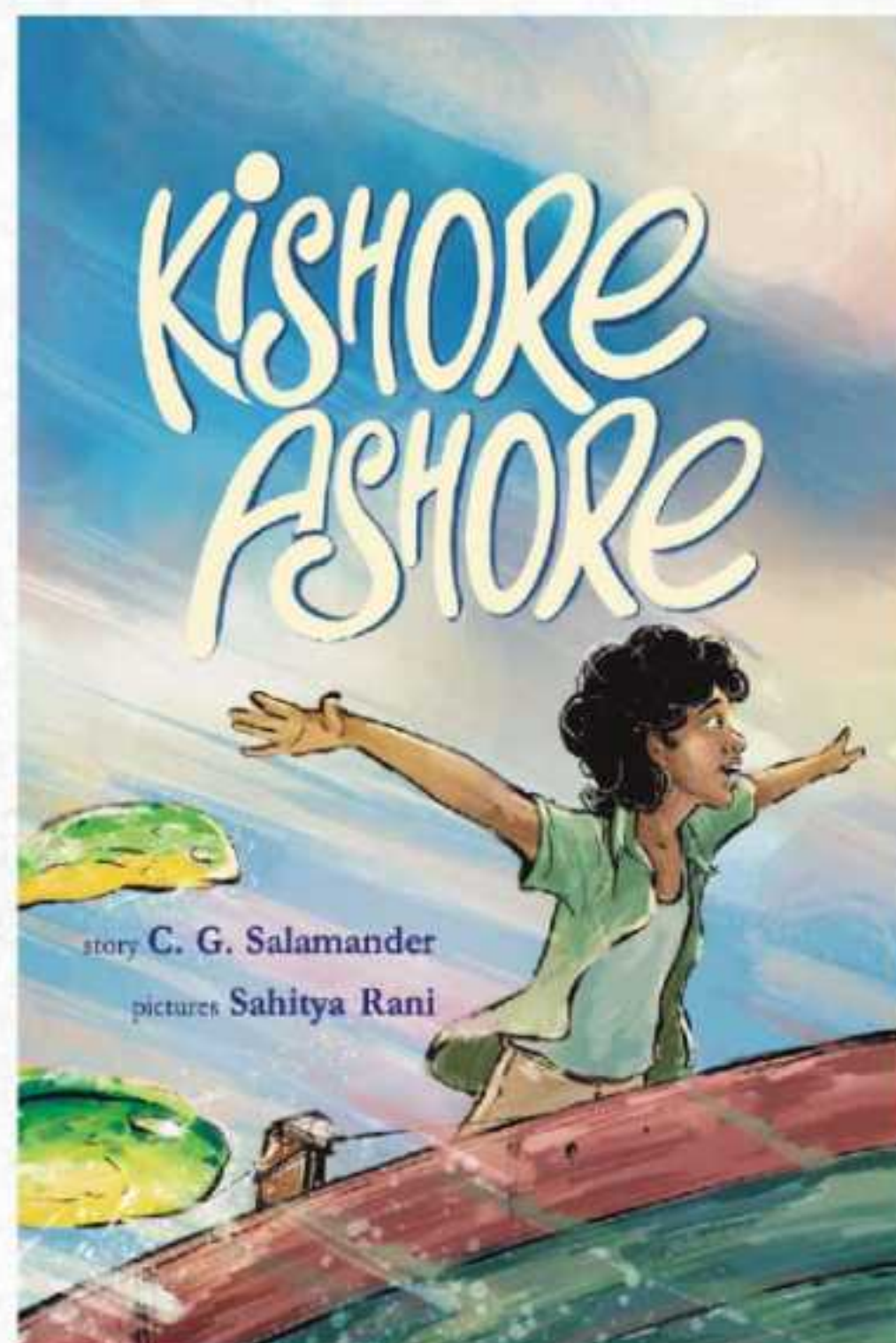
Easy to Read



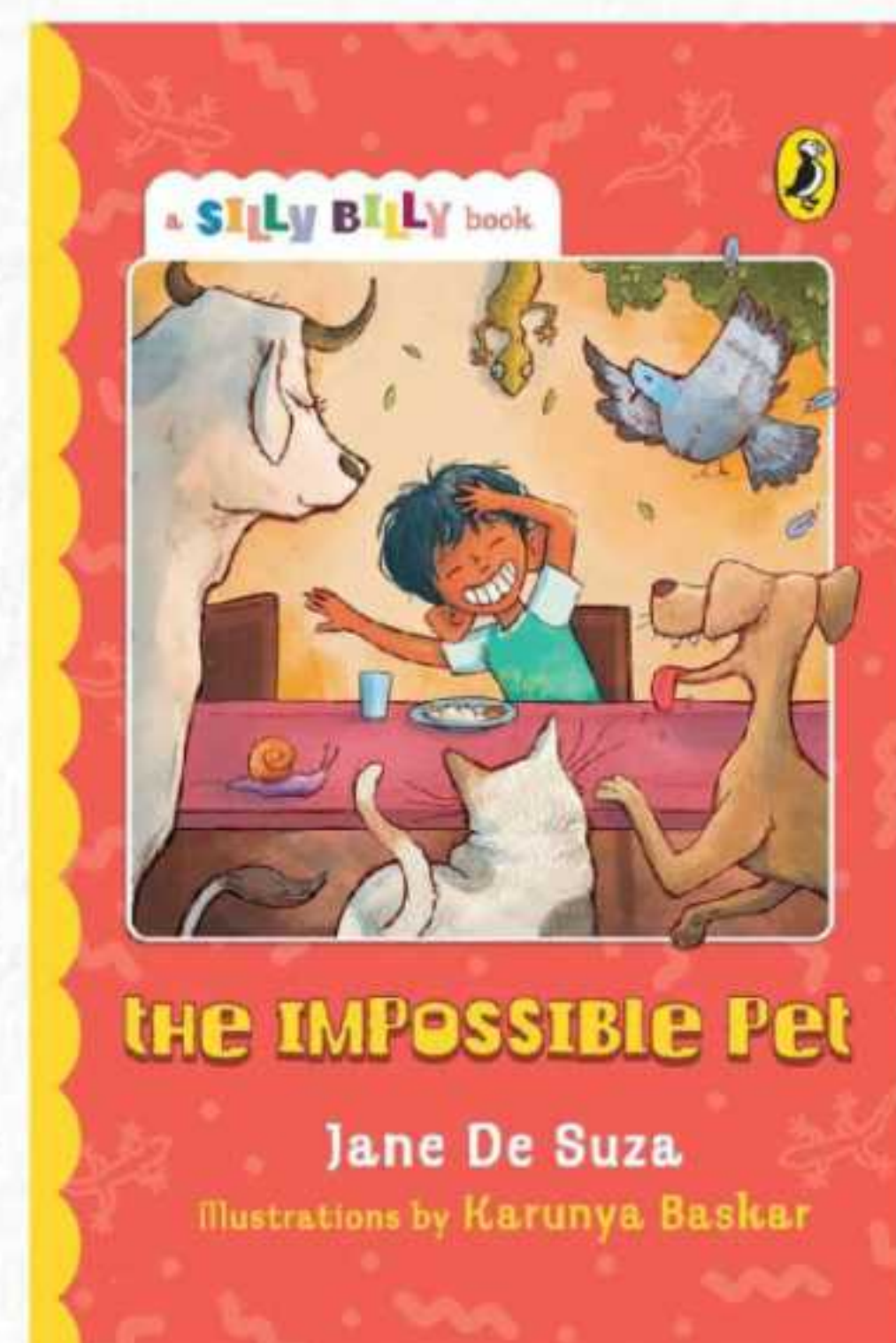
FOX GOES NORTH
Jeremy Strong



UNFAIRIES
Huw Aaron

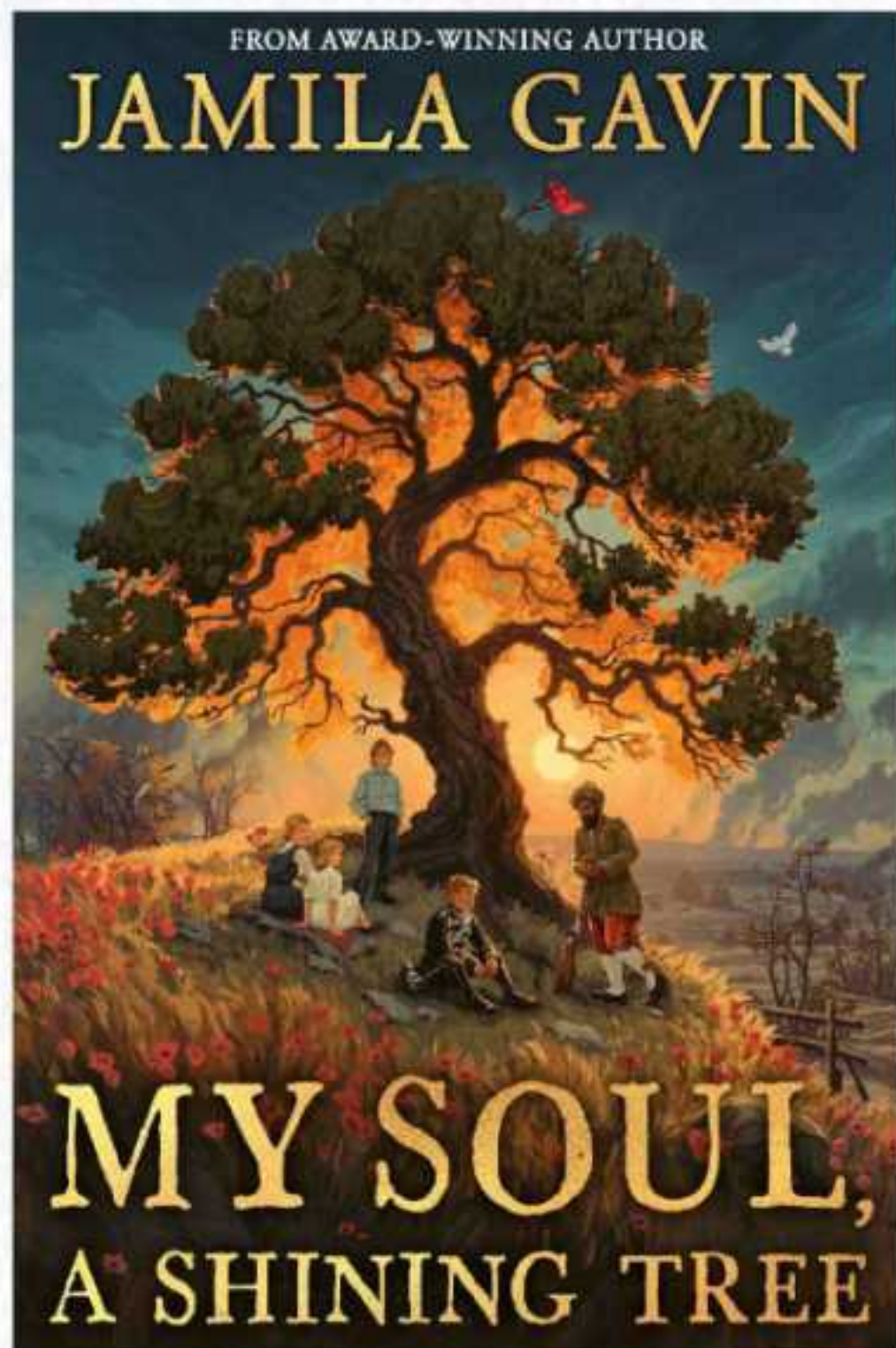


KISHORE ASHORE
C. G. Salamander &
Sahitya Rani



THE IMPOSSIBLE PET
Jane De Suza

Just the Right Level



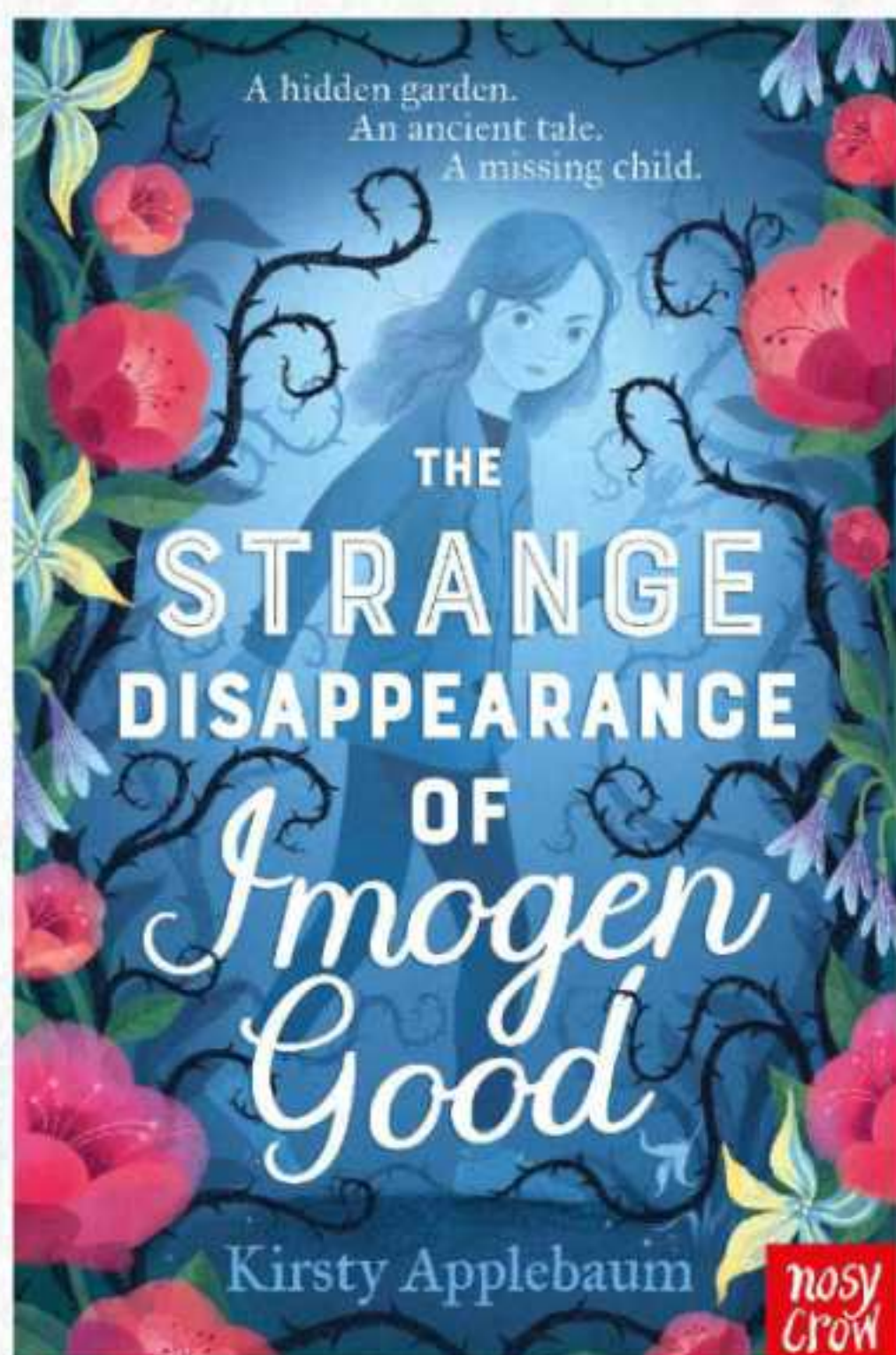
MY SOUL, A SHINING TREE
Jamila Gavin



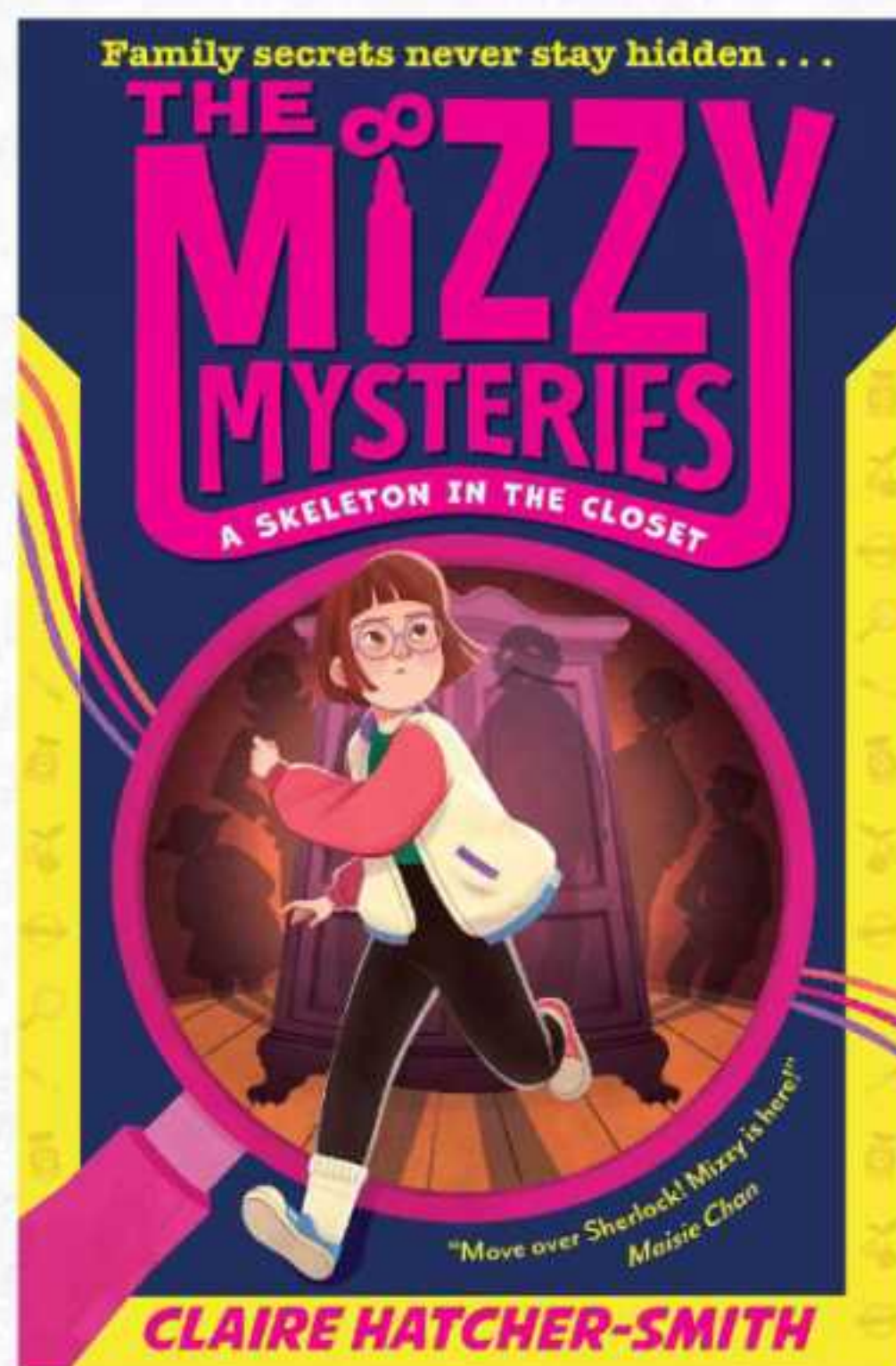
SHADOW THIEVES
Peter Burns



THE SPICK AND THE SPAN
Pil Van Martin



THE STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE
OF IMOGEN GOOD
Kirsty Applebaum



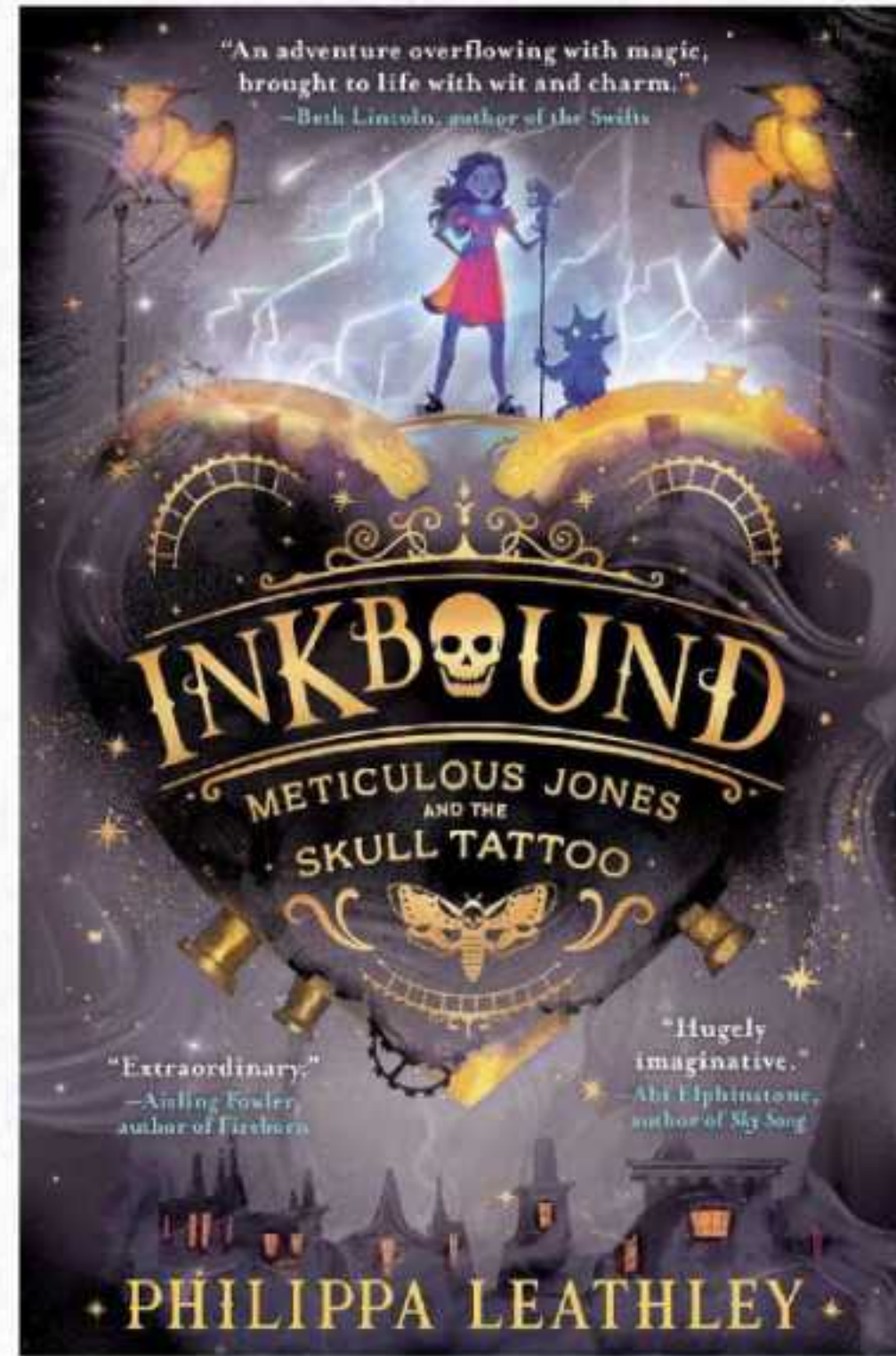
THE MIZZY MYSTERIES:
A SKELETON IN THE CLOSET
Claire Hatcher-Smith



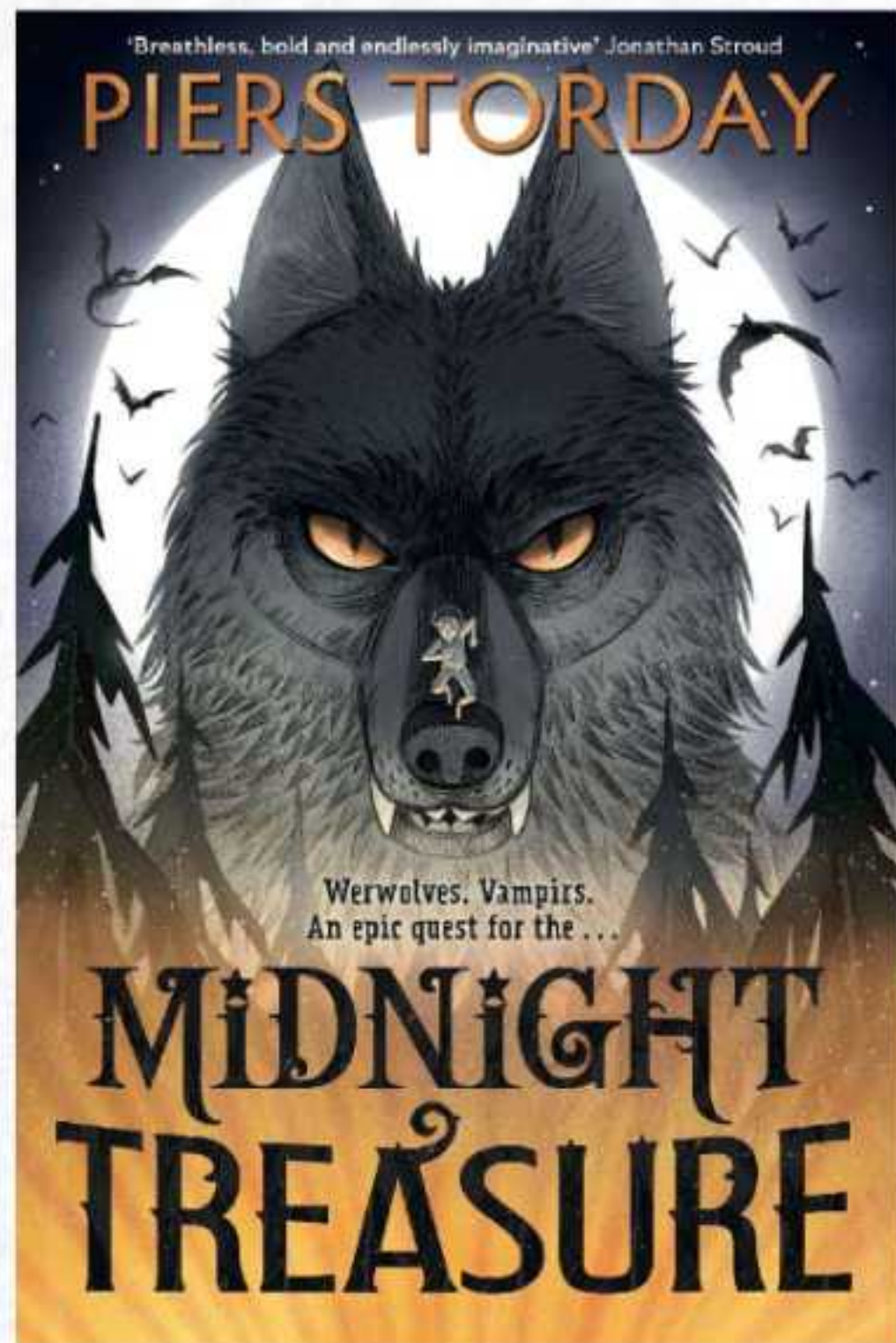
CHRONICLES OF WHETHERWHY:
THE AGE OF ENCHANTMENT
Anna James



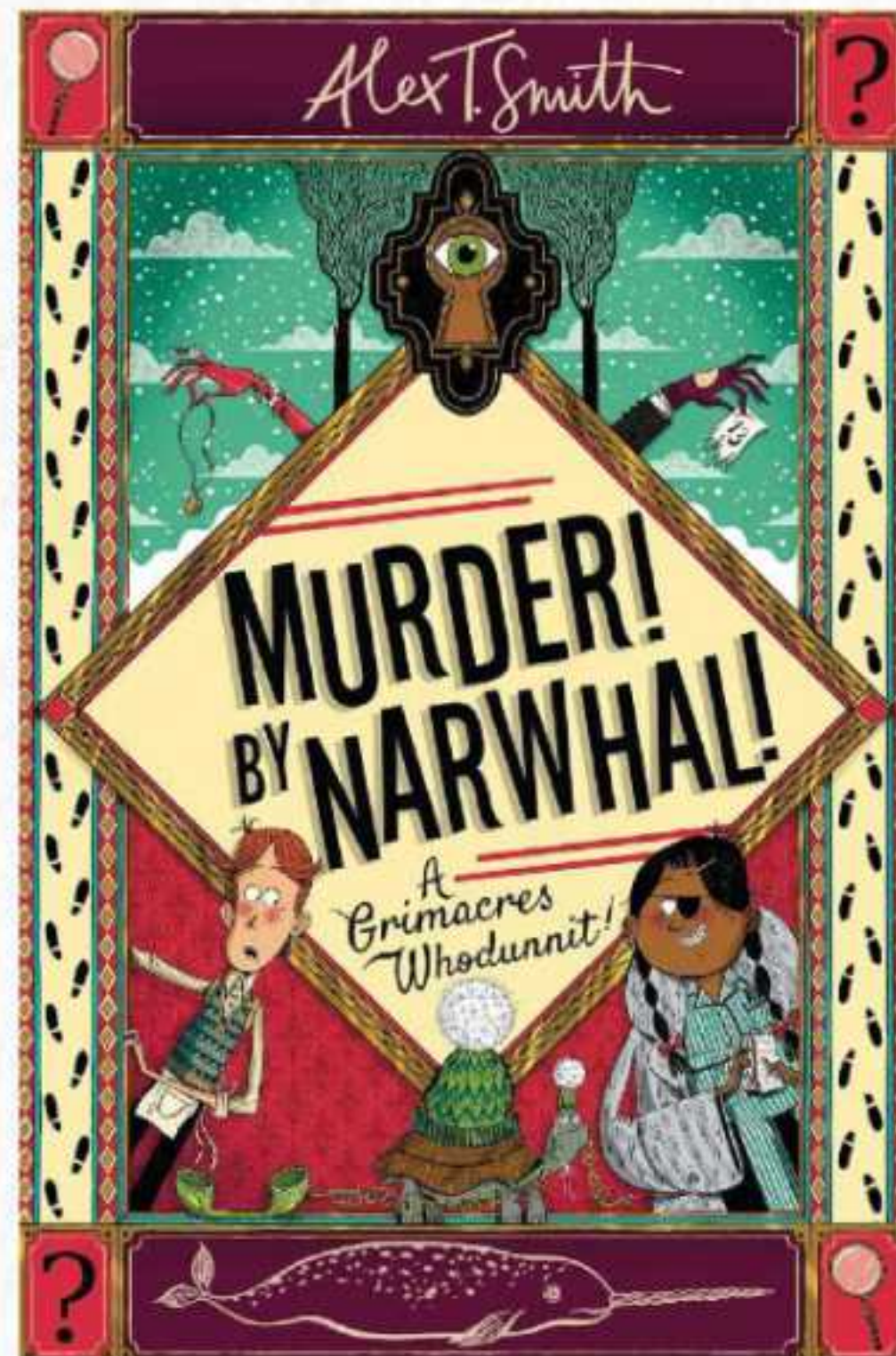
**SABRENA
SWEPT AWAY**
Karuna Riazi



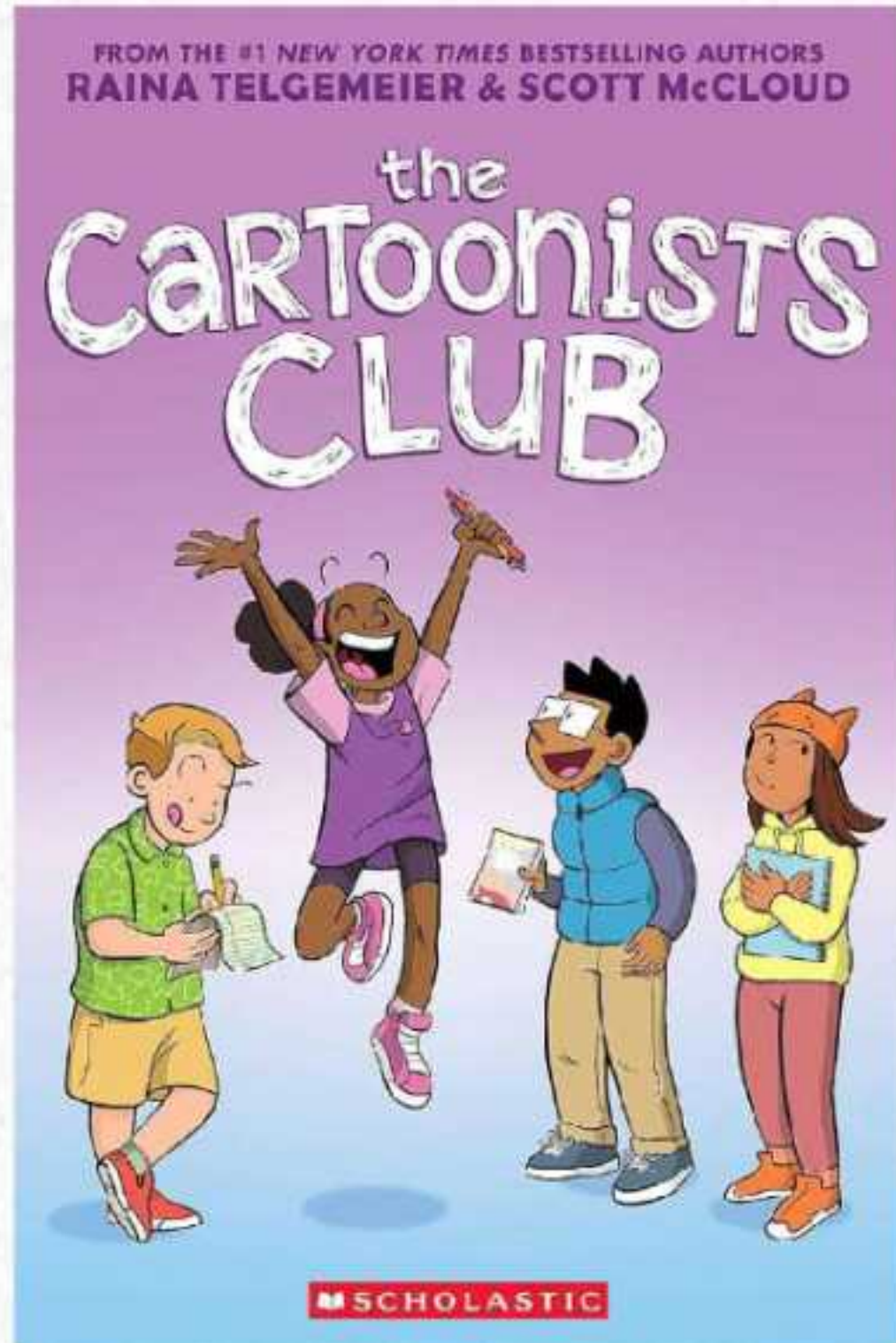
**INKBOUND: METICULOUS JONES
AND THE SKULL TATTOO**
Philippa Leathley



MIDNIGHT TREASURE
Piers Torday

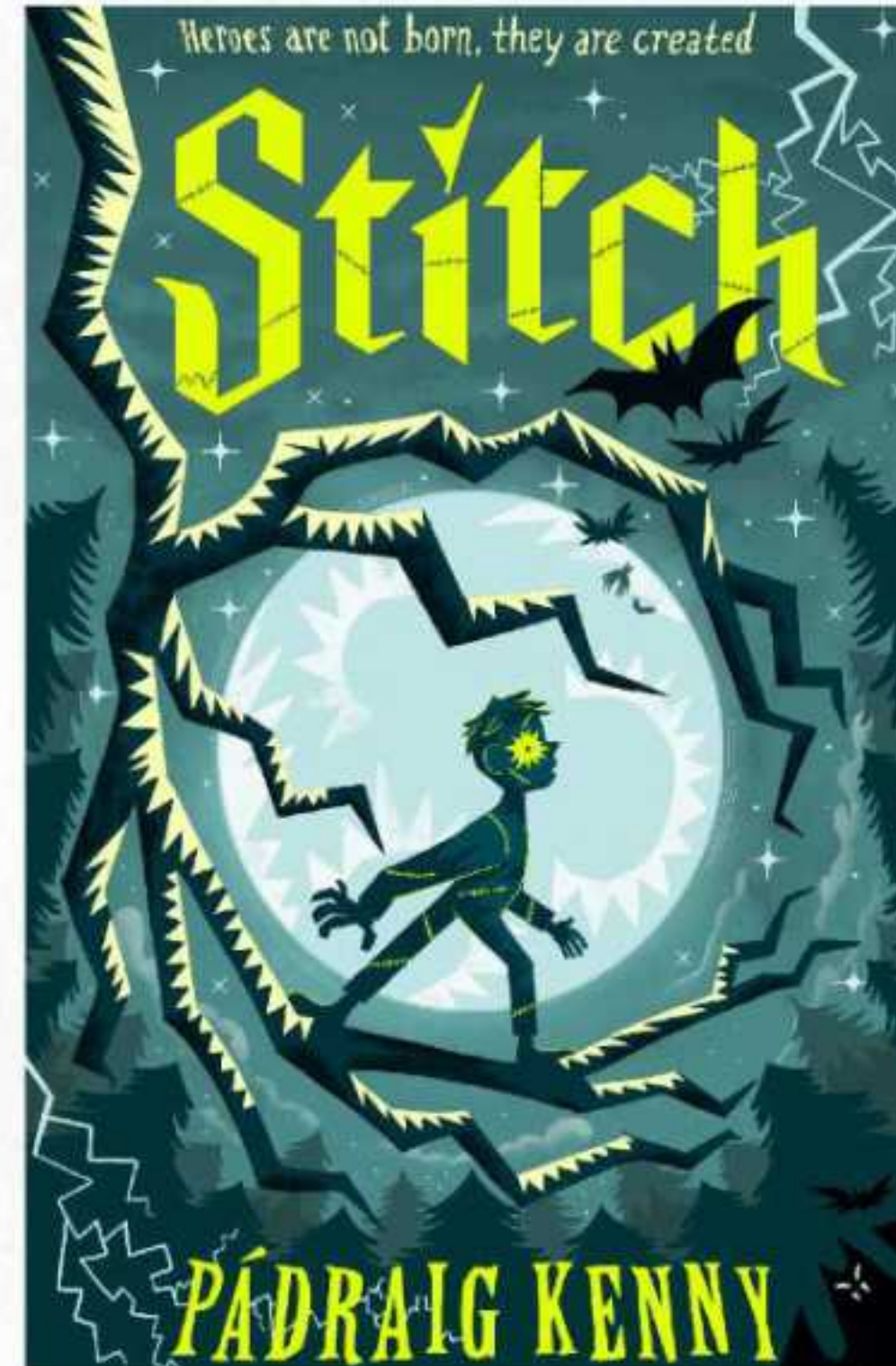


MURDER! BY NARWHAL!
Alex T. Smith



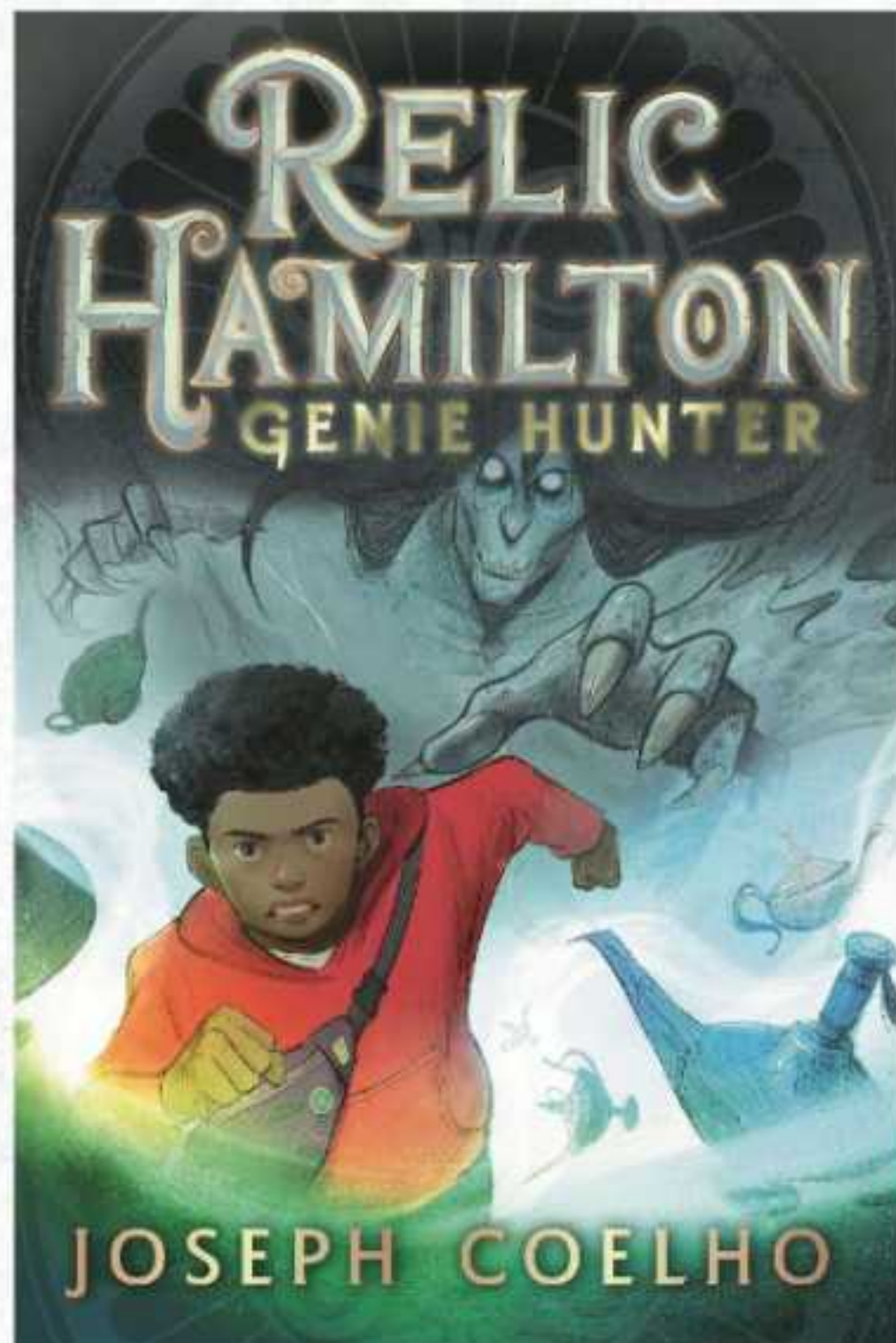
THE CARTOONISTS CLUB

**Raina Telgemeier
& Scott McCloud**



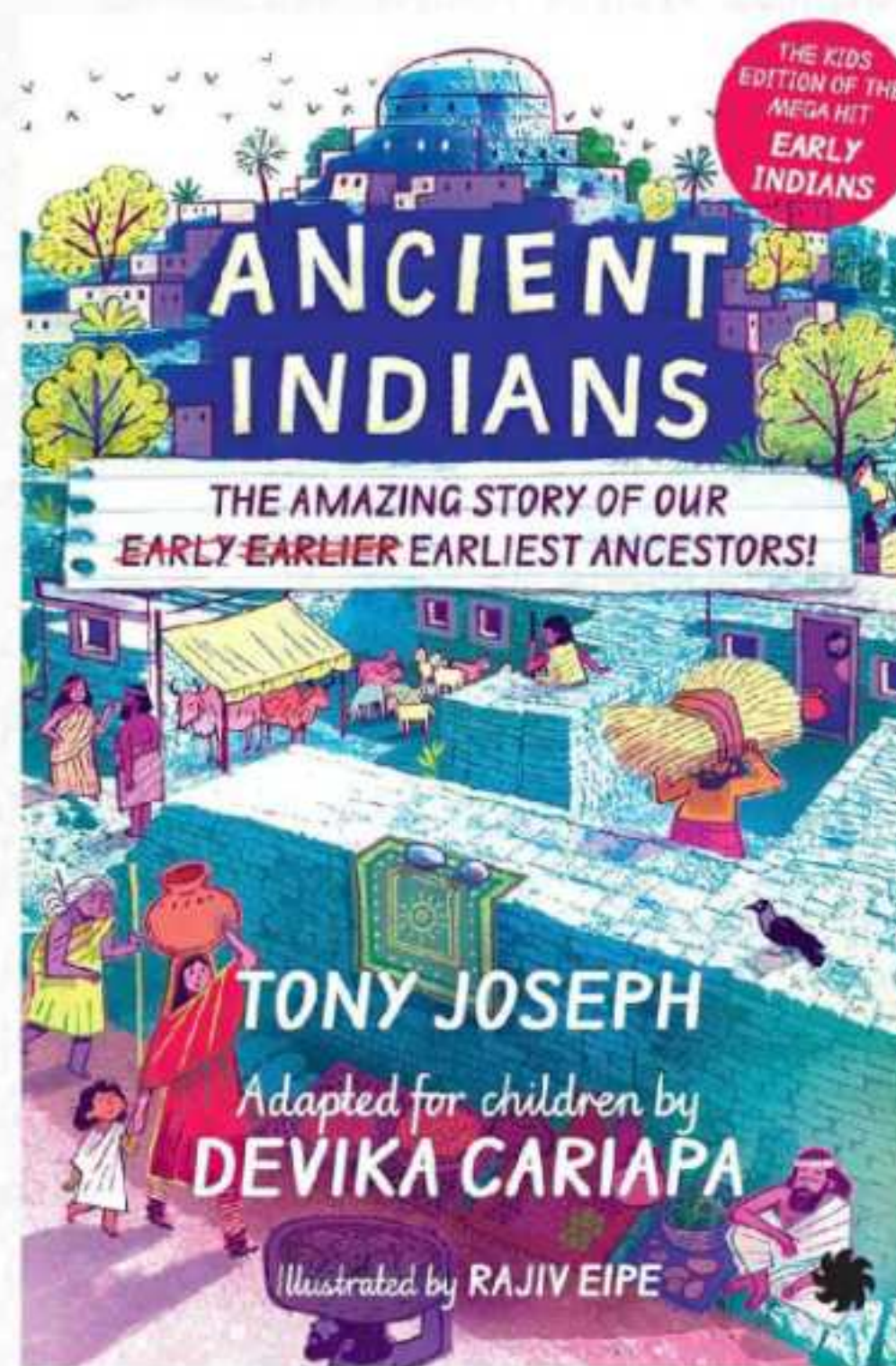
STITCH

Pádraig Kenny



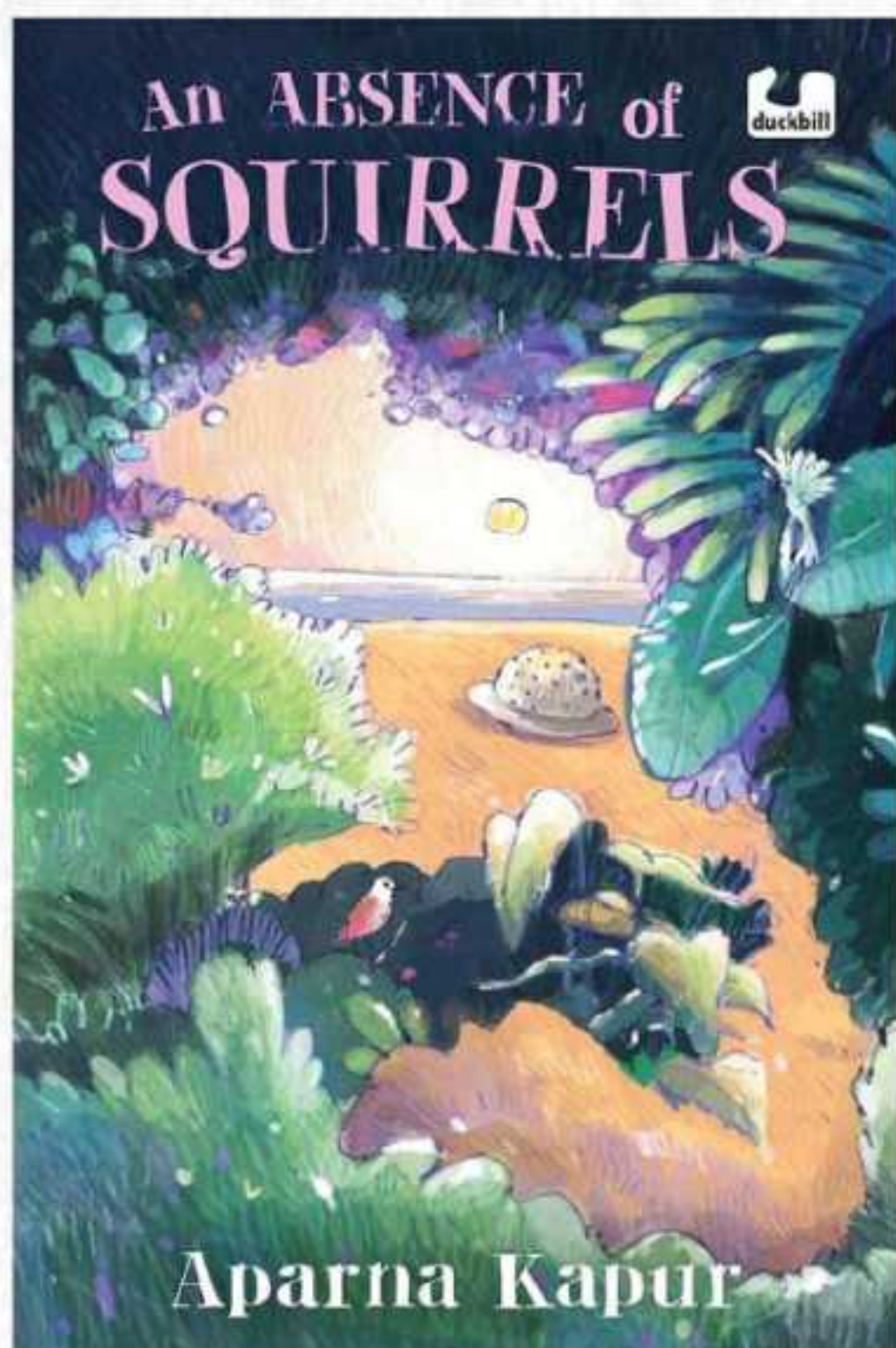
**RELIC HAMILTON,
GENIE HUNTER**

Joseph Coelho

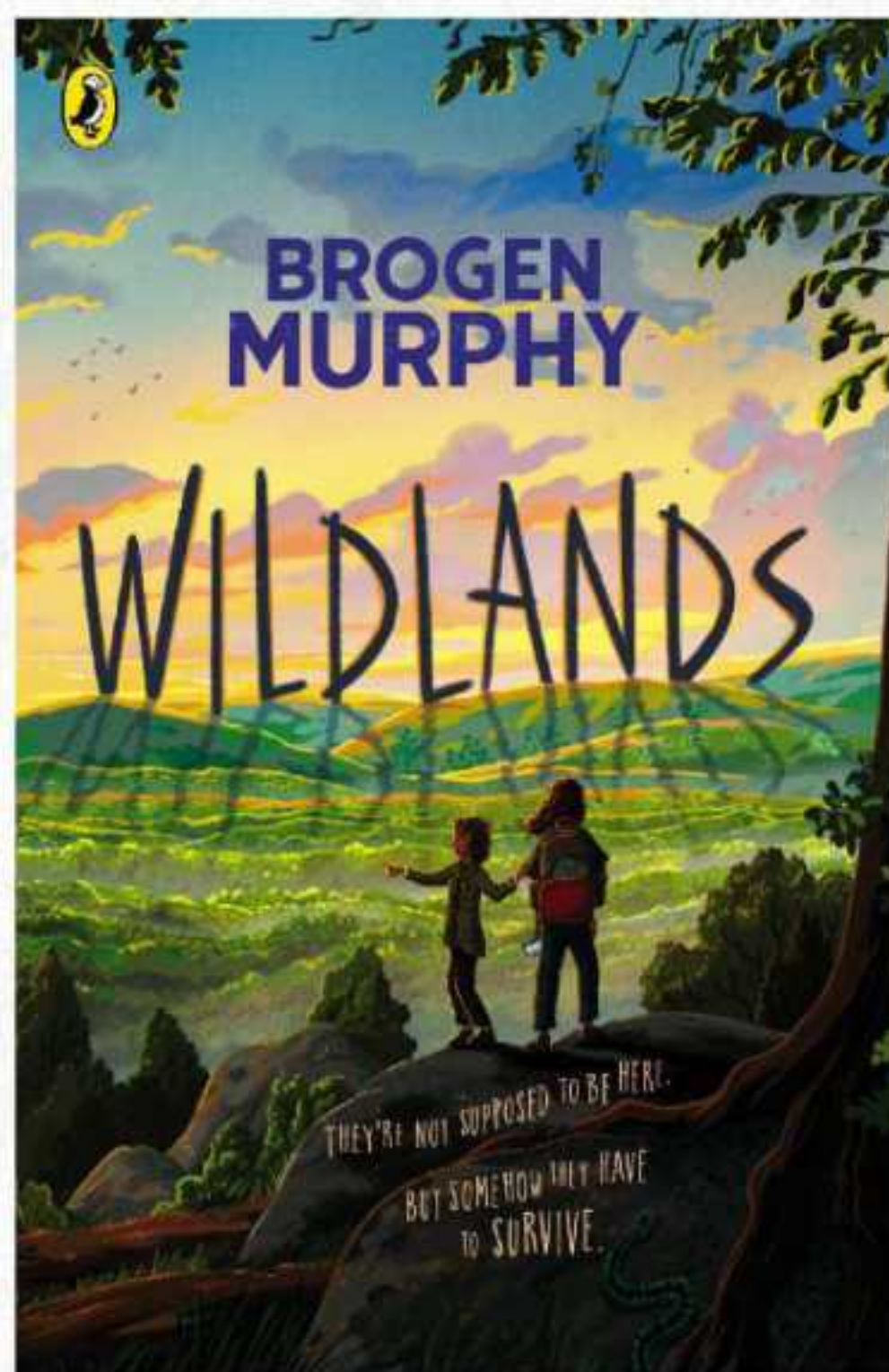


ANCIENT INDIANS

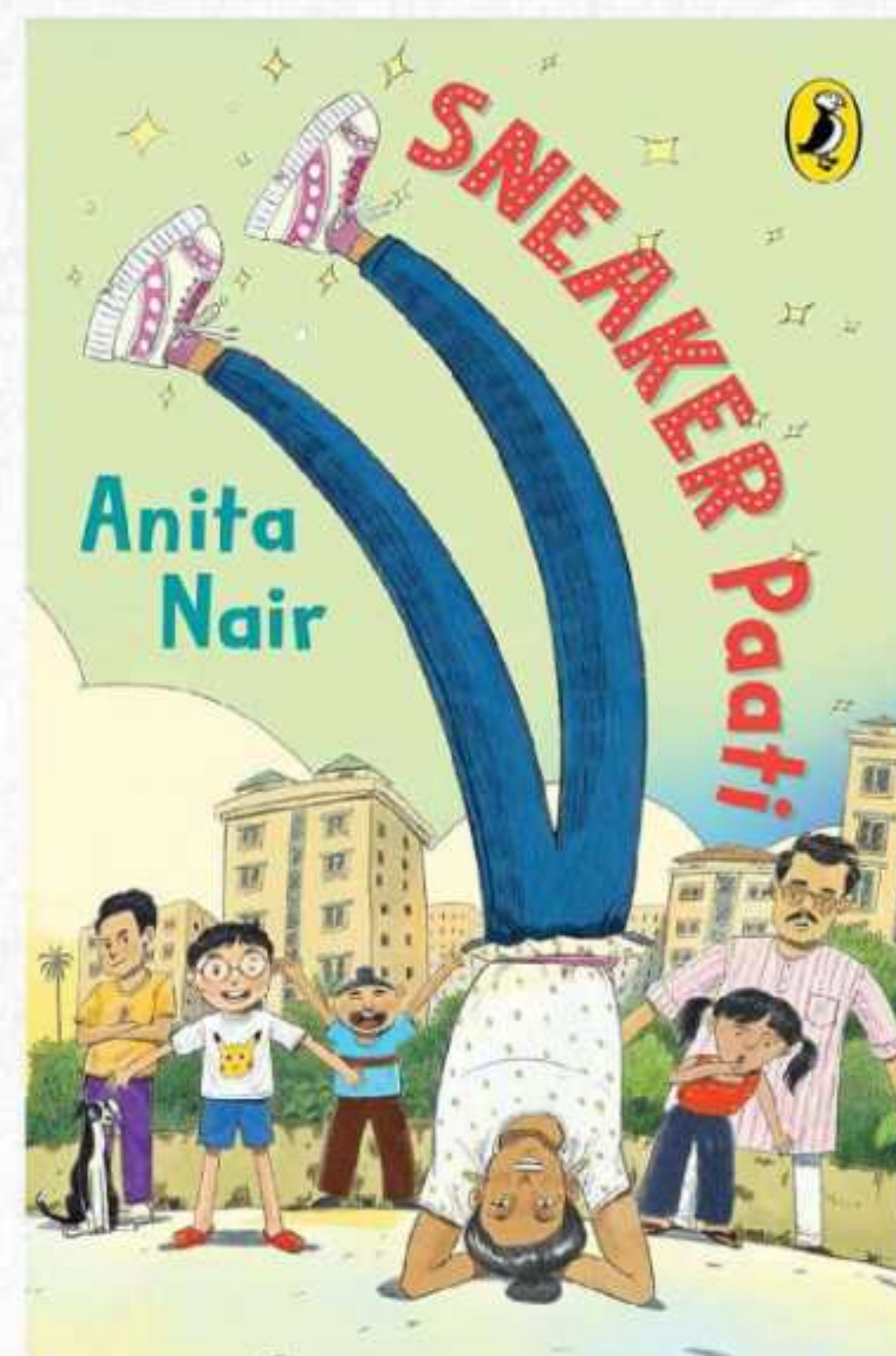
**Tony Joseph &
Devika Cariapat**



AN ABSENCE OF SQUIRRELS
Aparna Kapur



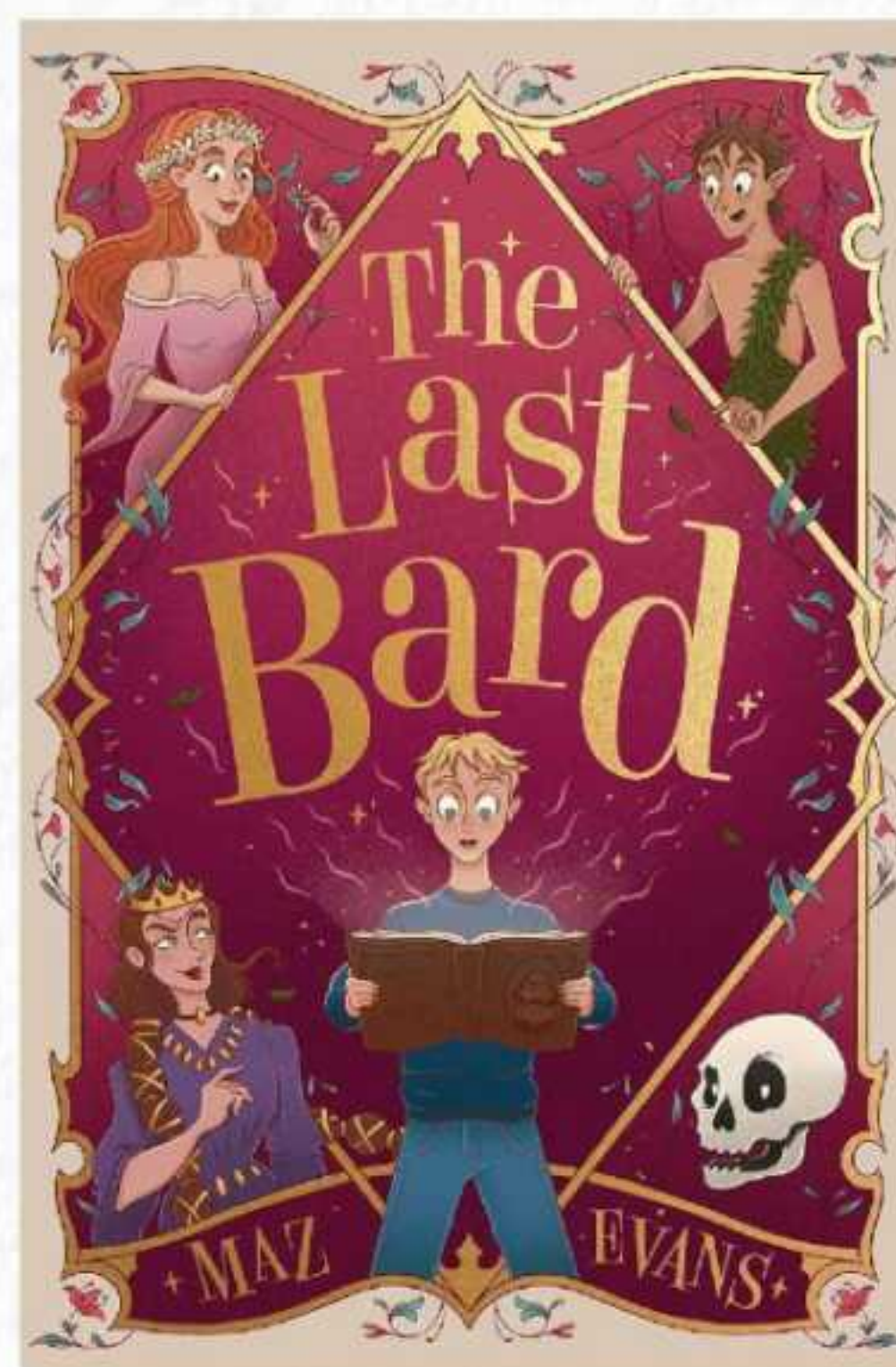
WILDLANDS
Brogen Murphy



SNEAKER PAATI
Anita Nair

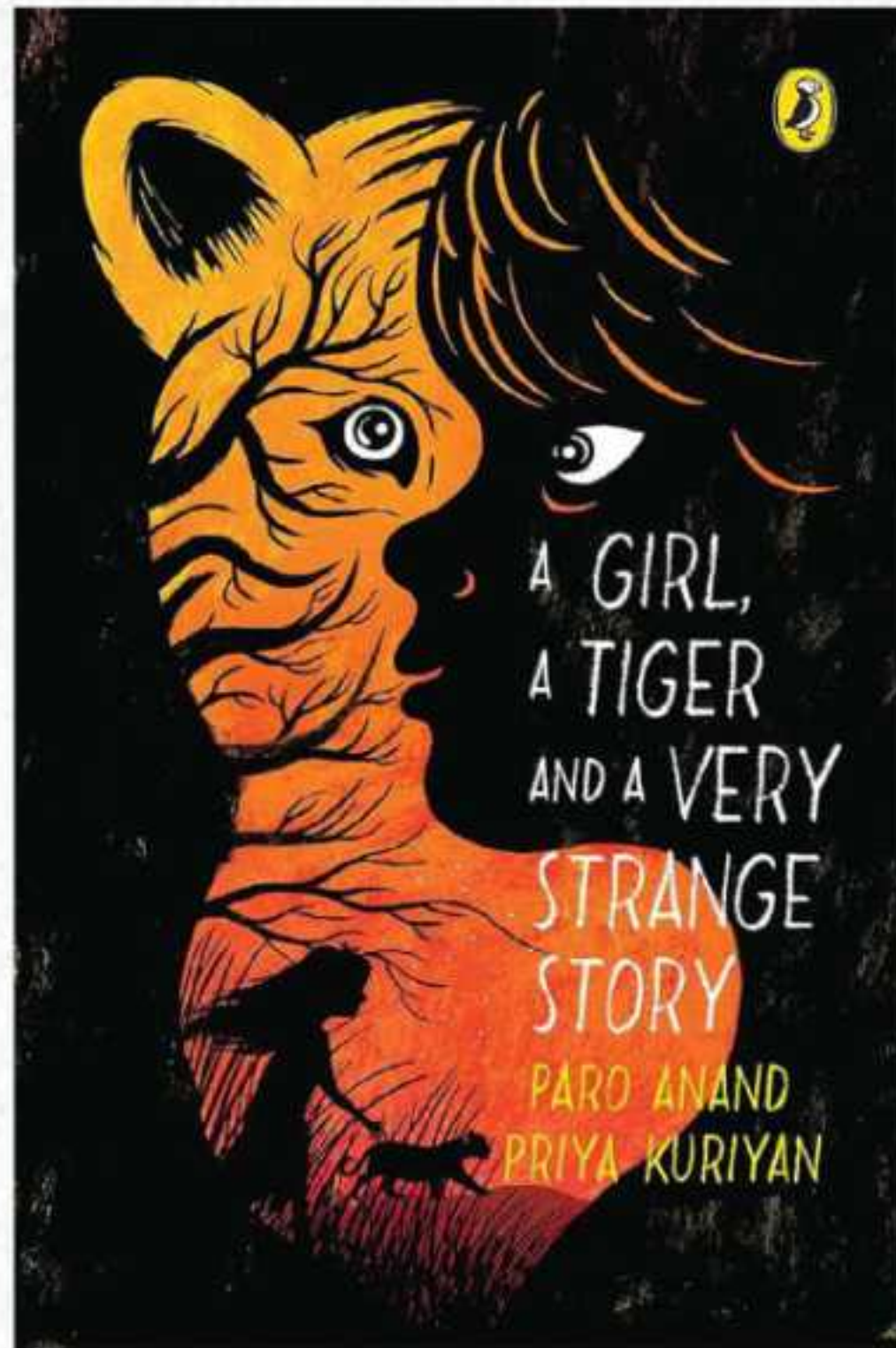


**TIDEMAGIC: THE MANY
FACES OF ISTA FLIT**
Clare Harlow

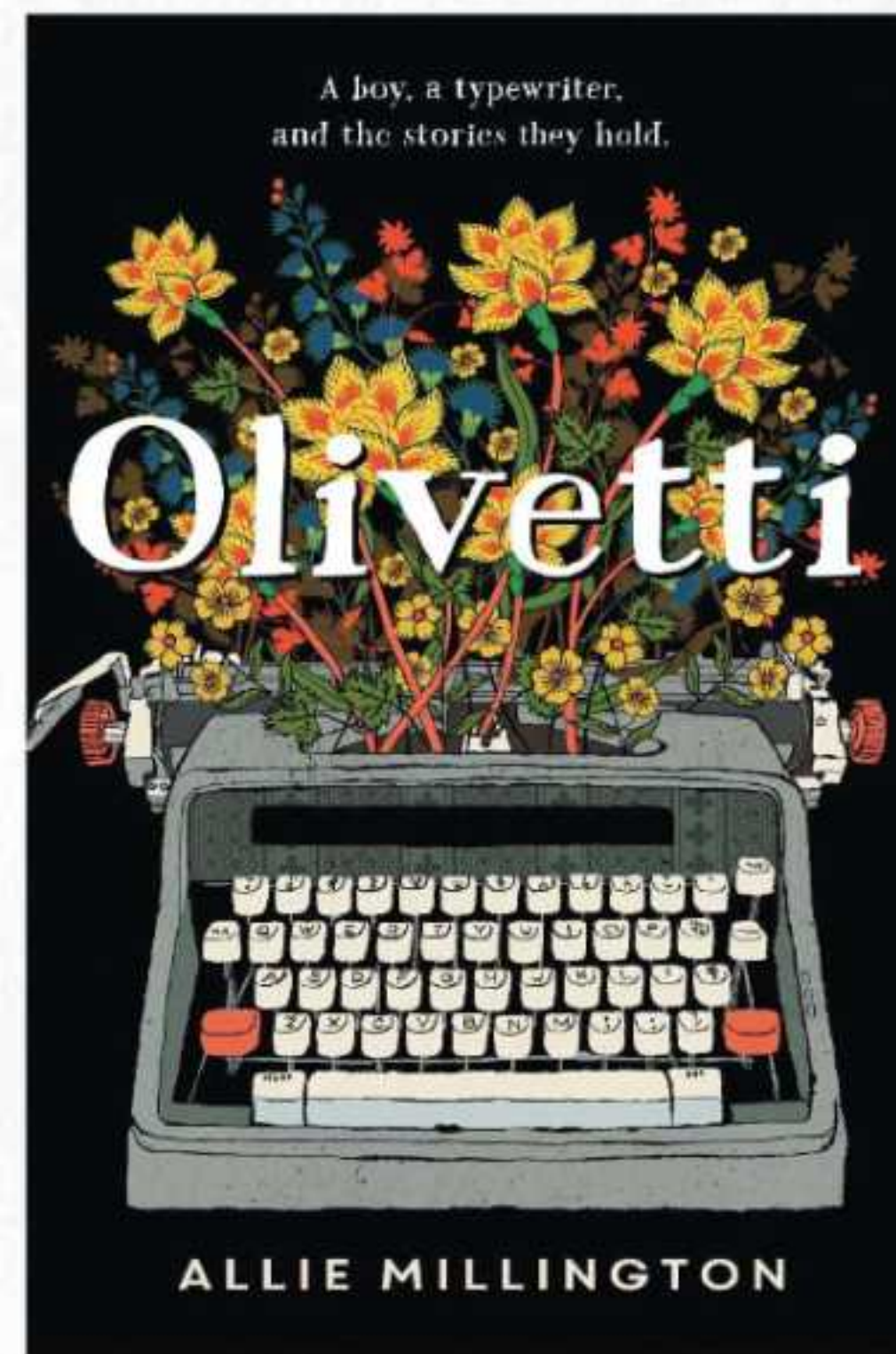


THE LAST BARD
Maz Evans

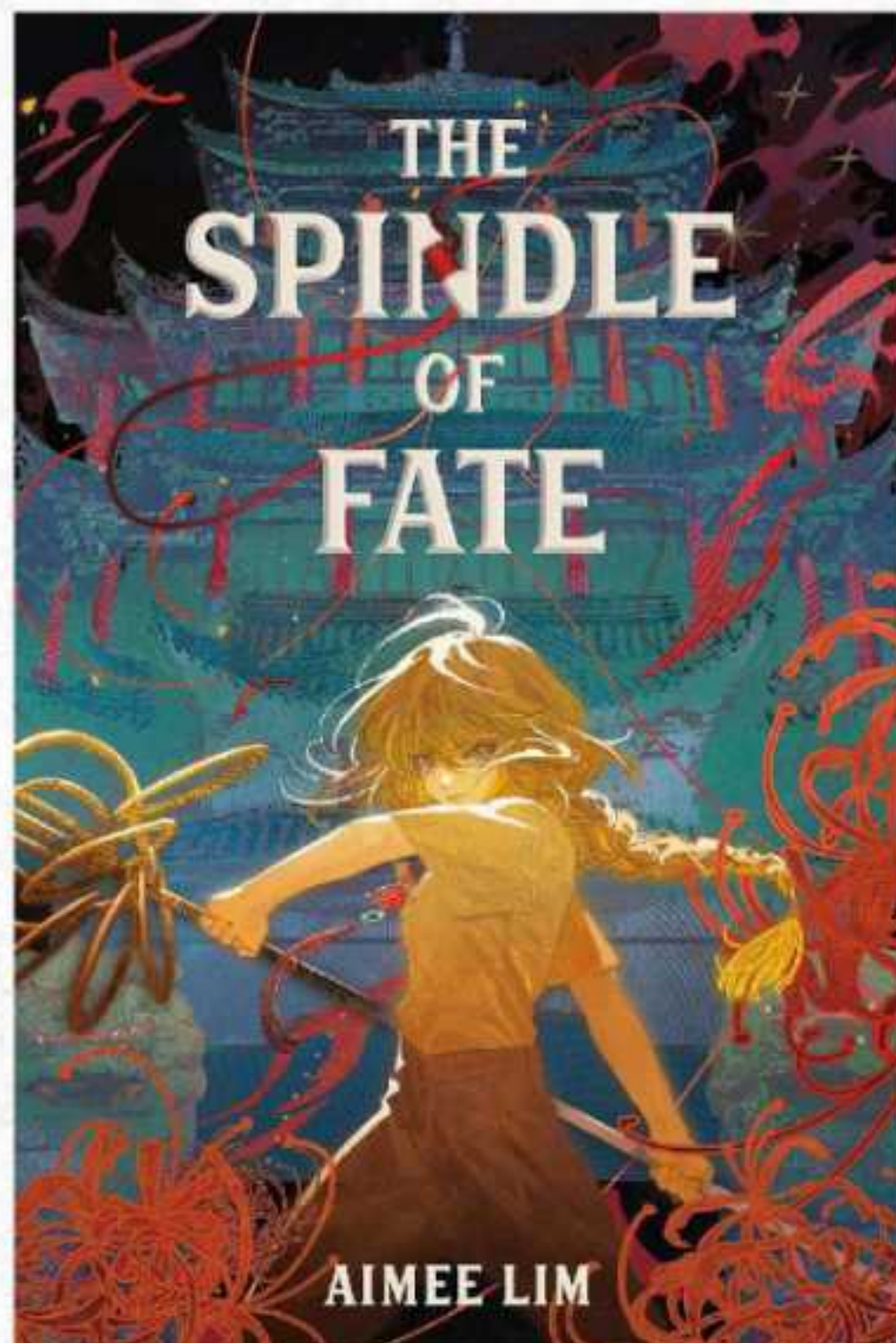
Challenging to Read



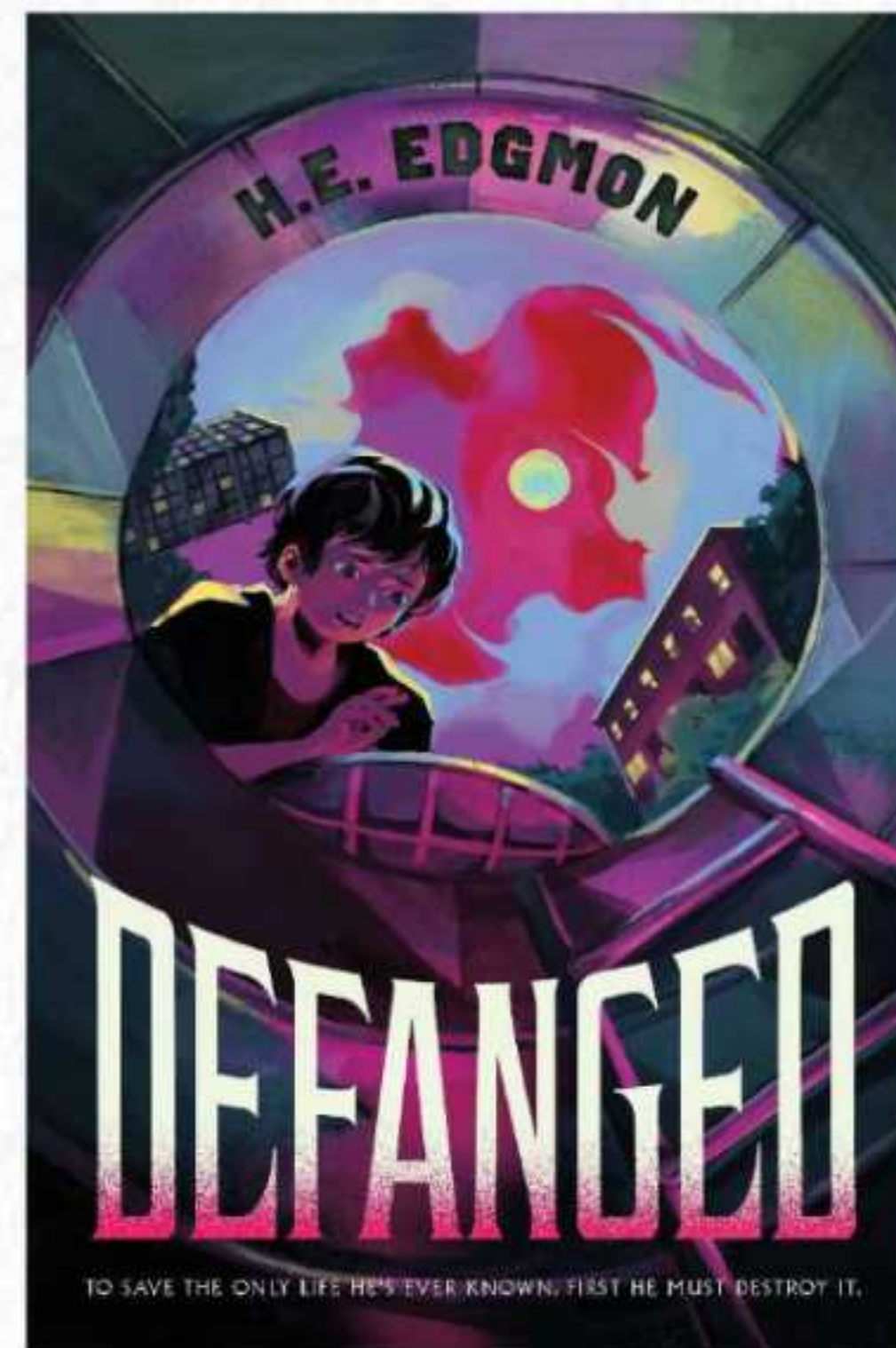
**A GIRL, A TIGER AND
A VERY STRANGE STORY**
Paro Anand & Priya Kuriyan



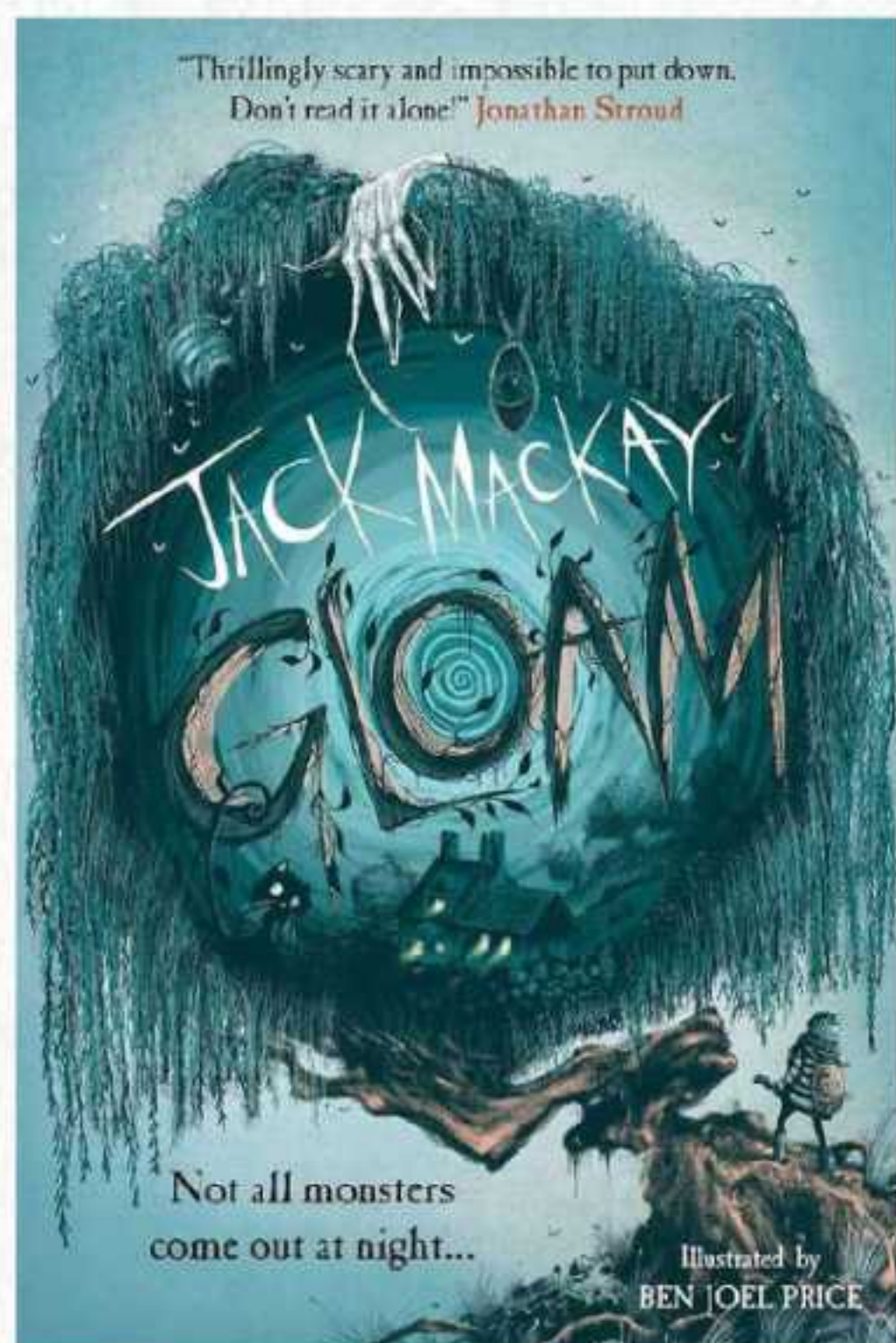
OLIVETTI
Allie Millington



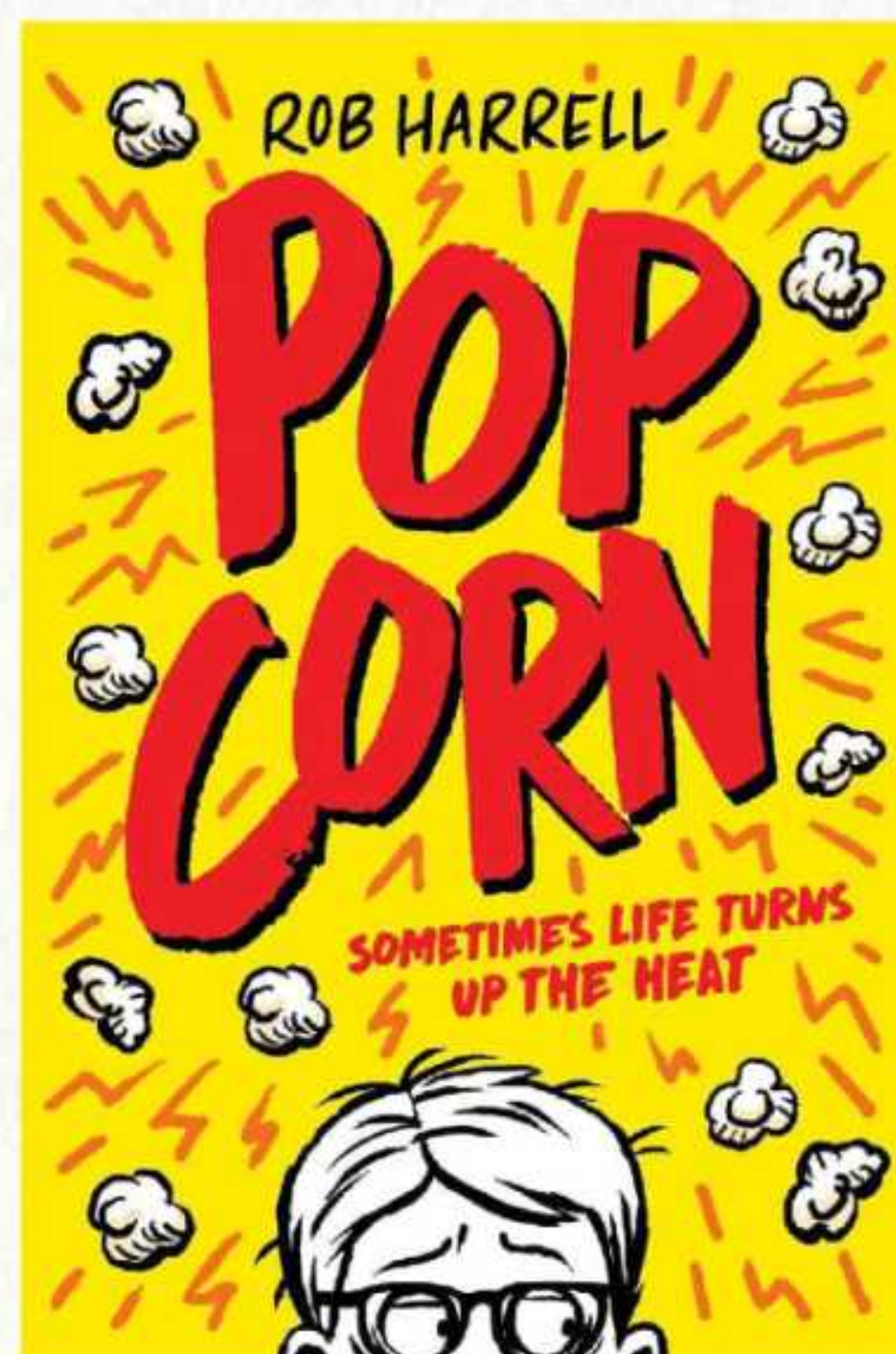
THE SPINDLE OF FATE
Aimee Lim



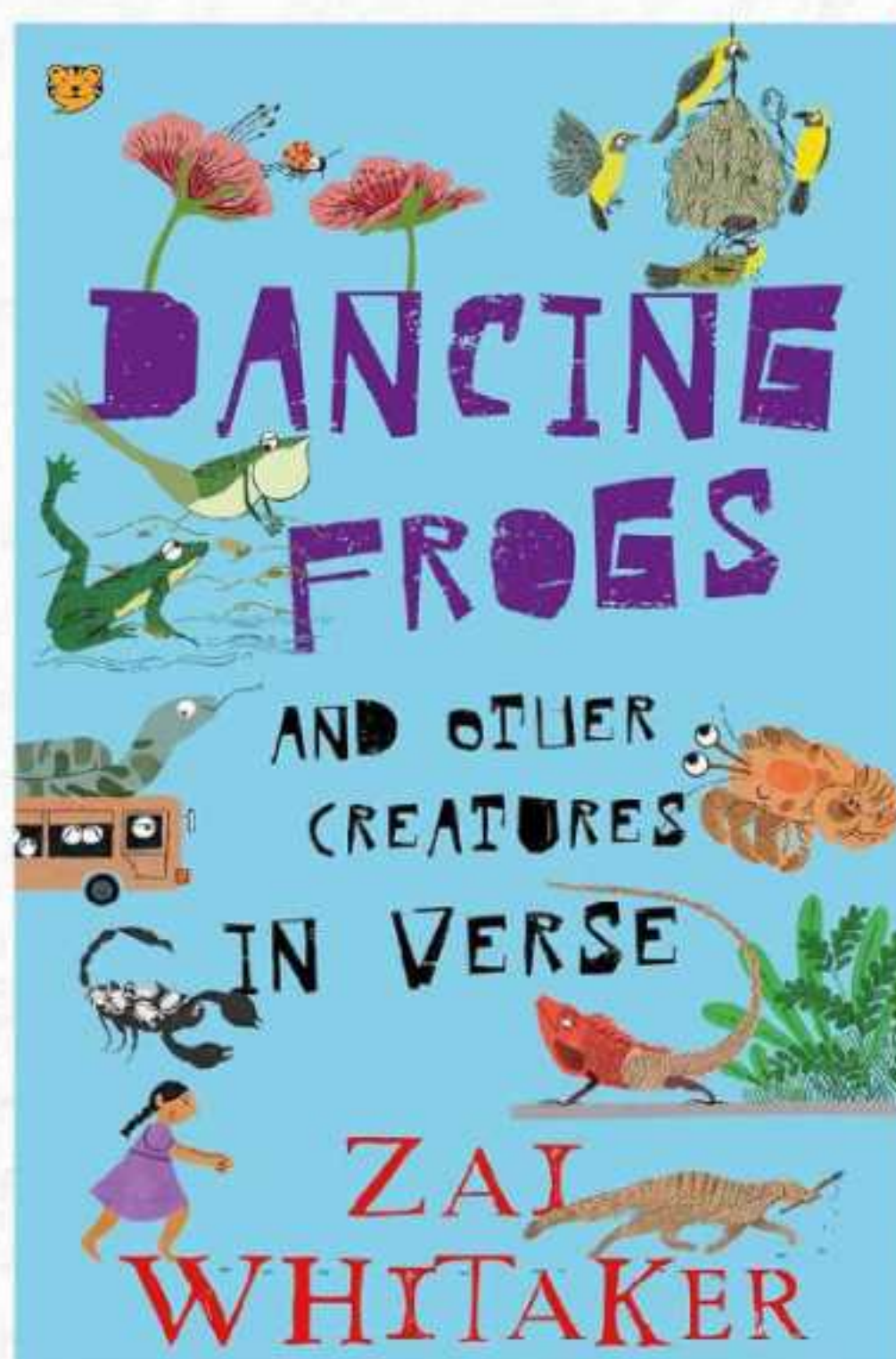
DEFANGED
H. E. Edgmon



GLOAM
Jack Mackay



POPCORN
Rob Harrell



**DANCING FROGS AND
OTHER CREATURES IN VERSE**
Zai Whitaker



AUTHOR Interactions



Timings : 5.30 - 6.00pm

01



Pádraig Kenny
16th July Thursday

02



Brogen Murphy
Wainwright Prize
20th July Monday

03



Allie Millington
Golden Kite Award
23rd July Thursday

04



Anna James
27th July Monday

06



Paro Anand
Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar
03rd Aug Monday

07



Philippa Leathley
06th Aug Thursday

05



Piers Torday
Guardian Children's Fiction Prize
30th July Thursday

10



Huw Aaron
Waterstones Children's Book Prize
17th Aug Monday

08



Devika Cariapa
Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar
10th Aug Monday

09



Pii Van Martin
13th Aug Thursday



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