

26 April 2023

THE 2023 BEST NEW BOOK FOR SHARING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, ANNOUNCED BY BOOKTRUST

- **BookTrust, the UK's largest children's reading charity has announced the winner of the BookTrust 2022-23 Storytime Prize**
- **BookTrust Storytime is designed to support families with children under five to share books and stories and engage with their local libraries**
- **BookTrust Storytime is one part of BookTrust's Early Years portfolio of support running across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.**

Announced at a virtual event on Wednesday 26 April, **'Can You Tickle A Tiger?'** by Gemma Cooper (writing as Bobbie Brooks), illustrated by Carrie Hennon and published by Imagine That has been recognised as the best new book for sharing with young children by BookTrust and awarded the prestigious 2022-23 BookTrust Storytime Prize. The winning book, one of a selection of six shortlisted titles, was voted for by librarians and families who participated in BookTrust Storytime. BookTrust Storytime ran in over 2000 libraries across the country.

Now in its second year, BookTrust Storytime was designed to support libraries across England and Northern Ireland to inspire and engage families with children under the age of five to share stories and visit libraries as part of their family reading journeys.

With this programme, BookTrust supports children from families with lower incomes as these children have more to gain from developing a regular reading habit that can be lifechanging. Evidence shows that sharing stories and reading together in the early years has been proven to bring children wide-ranging benefits that positively impact their health and mental wellbeing, education, creativity and gives them the best start in life.¹

Through the programme, BookTrust provided libraries with six specially shortlisted books that are great for sharing with babies and children in their early years and a specially designed suite of resources that libraries used to create a range of experiences, to attract new families and introduce them to fun, lively and inclusive story sharing experiences.

The resources include activity sheets to accompany the shortlisted books, materials that encourage exploration of libraries and certificates and sticker books that librarians use to engage children and bring Storytime sessions to life. For the duration of the programme, BookTrust also supported libraries with additional digital resources which they used flexibly to create interactive, memorable experiences for families that keep them returning to their local libraries.

2,319 libraries and 145 English local authorities participated, creating an important boost for thousands of new families on their shared reading journey.

This year the programme ran for nine months, giving libraries the time to engage with families on different occasions and with a range of activities. It was designed in partnership with families, libraries and local authorities, aiming to deliver experiences for families which built up their confidence and enjoyment of sharing books with their children and inspired them to read outside of the library sessions.

One parent taking part at North Northants library said:

“The stories that are read at these sessions are all so nicely chosen. We always try to take the book away at the end of the session to share with Daddy after work.”

A Library Manager from London added:

“It has enabled me to put together a programme of Storytime events for two plus months, introducing Storytime to a whole new audience and giving the library team an opportunity to meet with the community. The children have really enjoyed the three titles we've read so far and are enjoying the colouring sheets, stickers and photo frame at the events. The stories are diverse and exciting, allowing the children to chat amongst themselves while we are all colouring together. Personally, I'm enjoying delivering these events in partnership with BookTrust, it's so lovely seeing the enjoyment the children are experiencing at these sessions.”

Diana Gerald, Chief Executive of BookTrust continued:

“BookTrust Storytime is part of our wider approach to offer families from low-income backgrounds, multiple opportunities to share stories with their children throughout their early years, so they can enjoy the lifechanging benefits of reading. In this second year, it's encouraging to see so many libraries working closely with local groups and their wider communities using the BookTrust Storytime shortlisted books and resources creatively to encourage new families into their libraries.

“A fantastic storytime experience needs brilliant librarians who are experts in supporting children and families and a fabulous selection of books that capture the imagination and curiosity of even the youngest children. We're incredibly grateful to all our library and local authority partners and all the shortlisted authors and illustrators for their continued support.

*“Congratulations to Gemma and Carrie on their wonderfully interactive book **Can You Tickle A Tiger?**, a truly deserving winner of the BookTrust 2023 Storytime Prize which children and families will want to keep enjoying together.”*

Gemma Cooper (Bobbie Brooks), author of Can You Tickle A Tiger? said:

“Carrie and I had so much fun creating the book. When we were developing ideas, we both had the same idea at the same time and shouted ‘Tickle!’ at each other! That idea influenced the bright illustrations and the rhyming words, as well as the tactile felt trails on every page, and we had great fun imagining which animals children would love to tickle. So to learn that children and families have voted for the book in this way is just wonderful.

“We are both delighted that ‘Can You Tickle a Tiger?’ has won the BookTrust 2023 Storytime Prize, and we appreciate all the important work that BookTrust and libraries do to support children in accessing stories and books in their local libraries. We hope that this prize rightly shines a spotlight on the amazing work that librarians do in supporting their communities and encouraging a love of reading for all.”

Carrie Hennon, illustrator of Can You Tickle A Tiger? added:

“For me, knowing it is children and families who have enjoyed reading and interacting with our book that have voted, is the best approval, EVER!”

“Thank you so much, I cannot tell you how much this means to Gemma and I. We enjoyed every second working together to create this book. I distinctly remember illustrating the tiger on the cover with a big smile on my face and loving the job I do.”

ENDS

Press contact

Please contact our press office for images, further information and interview requests:
press@booktrust.org.uk

Notes to editors

1. Benefits of reading: [benefits-of-reading---booktrust-2023.pdf](#)
2. BookTrust Storytime started in England and Northern Ireland in September 2022 and will end in May 2023.
3. 2,319 libraries participated, 952 received resources and 1,560 received copies of the shortlisted books.

About BookTrust

BookTrust is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative, their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach over two million children across the UK with books to help develop a love of reading. Our Patron is HRH The Queen Consort and our President is the children’s author Sir Michael Morpurgo OBE - booktrust.org.uk

About BookTrust Storytime

BookTrust Storytime is a library experience piloted by BookTrust to learn how the UK’s largest children’s reading charity can best support families, especially those with lower incomes, engage with their local public library and develop an ongoing reading habit. The pilot activities were designed in collaboration with librarians, local authorities and families across the UK to test new ways of inspiring families with children aged 0-5 to engage in shared story experiences through their local library and to celebrate the best books to make sharing stories a regular part of family life.

About the BookTrust Storytime Prize

The BookTrust Storytime Prize celebrates the best books for sharing with babies and children under five. For the second year the Prize has been incorporated into the wider BookTrust Storytime Pilot.

Shortlisted books

- **WINNER:** Can You Tickle A Tiger? By Gemma Cooper (Bobbie Brooks) and illustrated by Carrie Hennon (Imagine That) was voted as the winner of the £5,000 prize.

The other titles shortlisted for the 2023 Prize were:

- Nature Trail by Benjamin Zephaniah & Nila Aye (Orchard Books);
- The Duck Who Didn't Like Water by Steve Small (Simon and Schuster Children's Books);
- The Horse That Jumped by Thomas Docherty (Farshore, Harper Collins);
- Red Lorry, Yellow Lorry by Michelle Robinson & Jez Tuya (Anderson Press);
- Zoom: Farm Adventure by Susan Hayes & Aviel Basil (What on Earth Books)