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PRESS RELEASE

THE QUEEN CONSORT SPEAKS TO THE CHILDREN'S LAUREATE JOSEPH COELHO TO MARK WORLD BOOK DAY

To mark World Book Day, The Queen Consort sat down with Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho to discuss their shared love of books, the importance of reading in childhood, and the joy of reading to loved ones. A video of this conversation, recorded last month in the Clarence House Library, is being released by BookTrust to mark World Book Day 2023.

The Queen Consort has a longstanding commitment to supporting literacy, championing the importance of reading and is a long-time supporter of BookTrust. As Duchess of Cornwall, Her Majesty became Patron of BookTrust in 2011, taking over the role from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

On the importance and benefits of reading, during the conversation **Her Majesty said:**

"When you see the pure enjoyment that children are getting out of reading, and if you get that at a very early age, it's going to help you so much in future life... the more books you read, the more you are going to understand about different places, different cultures, different ways of life."

Her Majesty, a life-long reader, also recalls the emotional impact of some of the books she read as a child, including *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell and *Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Of *Black Beauty*, **Her Majesty said:**

"I have to admit, in the end, I ended up probably being a sort of pony-mad child with *Black Beauty*, which I howled over, night after night after night."

Of *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, **Her Majesty and Joseph said:**

Her Majesty: "I remember going to bed at night and having quite bad dreams about them. I think as children [...] you don't want to be scared too much, but it's that sort of frisson of just being a little bit frightened."

Joseph Coelho: "Books are a safe space, where you can be a little bit scared, and it's ok. You can close the covers, get under your duvet!"

Children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho also shared one of his favourite childhood books with Her Majesty, 'There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly' by Pam Adams and his fond memories of his reception teacher reading it again and again. Joseph says the story that was "a little bit silly and felt a little bit naughty" and delighted him every time it was read.

Her Majesty goes on to recount to Joseph how adventure stories inspired her and her siblings to camp, and reflects on how books can transport you into different worlds.

In the video, Her Majesty also tells Joseph about reading to her grandchildren and how nurturing this habit helped them to become 'bookworms'. The Queen Consort explains how reading together was a wonderful bonding experience.

Following the conversation, Joseph Coelho, Children's Laureate, said:

"Stories stay with us: tales of bravery visit us when fear peeps round the corner, comedies sprinkle us in smiles on a train ride to work. Characters become our friends and our confidantes, and worlds explored through the imagination, incredibly, share space with our memories. A story shared transports reader and listeners alike on a joint adventure never to be forgotten.

"When we open a book there's no telling where it may take us or the profound impact it may have on our lives, and so, it is an honour to mark World Book Day by talking to Her Majesty about the meaning and memories of stories, and a love of reading."

Diana Gerald, Chief Executive of BookTrust said:

"Sharing stories is a fantastic way to spend time as a family and the benefits of reading together are huge. Children of all ages and backgrounds can benefit from the positive impacts of reading, as it sparks inspiration, enhances creativity, empathy and supports good mental health. Introducing children to classic stories while also discovering new tales and adventures is a brilliant way of creating a reading habit that can carry a child through life.

"As a long-time supporter of BookTrust and a true advocate for children's reading, Her Majesty's experiences of shared reading both as a child herself and with her grandchildren really brings home the point that every family can benefit from reading together."

At BookTrust, we know that shared reading is important because reading with children, especially in their early years supports bonding and early childhood skills such as language and cognitive development. Establishing a reading habit as early as possible is vital to building an innate love of reading that grows with the child to become a longstanding habit, which then ensures they can enjoy the range of transformative and profound benefits reading can bring.

ENDS

Notes to editors

Footage and images of the conversation, recorded in the Clarence House Library, are available. Please note the 0001hrs, Thursday 2nd March embargo applies to all material.

Footage of The Queen Consort and Joseph Coelho's World Book Day conversation can be downloaded at the following WeTransfer link: <https://we.tl/t-gwcaVhbpdJ>

In regard to the usage of the above footage, please adhere to the Terms of Release below.

Footage terms of release

1. Copyright in the footage vests in BookTrust. Publications are asked to credit BookTrust.
2. The footage is being made available by way of licence on condition that:
 - a) The footage shall be solely for news editorial use only;
 - b) No charge should be made for the supply, release or publication of the footage;
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 - d) The footage must not be digitally enhanced, manipulated or modified in any manner or form and must include all of the individuals in the footage when published.
 - e) The footage shall not be used after 31st October 2023, without prior permission from Book Trust and Buckingham Palace.
3. Any questions relating to the use of the footage should be first referred to BookTrust and Buckingham Palace and before publication.

A series of photographs of The Queen Consort and Joseph Coelho from the conversation are available via Getty Images and all terms must be adhered to. Please note the credit to Chris Jackson / Getty Images. **The images are also embargoed until 0001hrs, Thursday 2nd March.**

For any queries on the photographs, please contact: rebekah.seymour@gettyimages.com.

Background information

The Benefits Of Reading

BookTrust has found that there can be too much focus on how reading can improve children's literacy and academic performance. However, the benefits of reading are wider than this and the evidence shows that children who read are more likely to:

- Overcome disadvantage caused by inequalities
 - Disadvantaged children who achieve highly at the end of primary school are twice as likely to have been read to at home in their early years, compared to their peers.
- Be healthier and happier children with better mental wellbeing and self-esteem
 - Children aged 3-5 who are read to at bedtime sleep longer, and sleep plays a crucial role in development such as motor skills, attention, behavioural regulation and resilience.
- Do better at school and make more progress across the curriculum
 - A child who is read to aged 1-2, scores higher in reading, spelling, grammar and numeracy skills at age 8-11.
- Develop creativity and empathy
 - Children who are read to at age three make greater progress in creative development at the end of Reception than those who are not.

Joseph Coelho

Waterstones Children's Laureate since 2022, Joseph Coelho is an award-winning performance poet, playwright and children's author based in Kent. His debut poetry collection *Werewolf Club Rules* (Frances Lincoln, 2014) was the winner of the CLPE CLiPPA Poetry Award 2015. His work has poetry and performance at its heart, drawing on over 20 years' experience running dynamic creative literacy sessions in schools.

He aims to inspire young people through stories and characters they can recognise and explores themes including fear, courage, diversity, gratitude, empathy and loss. Throughout his career he has highlighted the power of poetry and reading, championing and campaigning for local libraries and spotlights new voices and diversity throughout his work.

[UK Children's Laureate](#)

BookTrust

BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity, dedicated to getting children reading because the evidence shows that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative.

Over the past 30 years, BookTrust has worked with partners across England, Northern Ireland and Wales to reach millions of children with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading as it is proven that reading can transform lives, support early language development and contribute to better educational outcomes. Books are delivered via health services, libraries, schools and early years practitioners - supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage and sustain the reading habit.

BookTrust's programmes are designed with children and families at their heart and are grounded in extensive research. It has a deep understanding about how to establish good reading habits early in life and this is reflected in its work with families, particularly those facing disadvantage.

booktrust.org.uk

Children's Laureate

The Waterstones Children's Laureate is the foremost representative of children's literature, awarded biannually to a renowned writer or illustrator in recognition of exceptional talent. Managed by BookTrust – the UK's largest children's reading charity – and sponsored by Waterstones, this prestigious role celebrates creativity and storytelling, promotes the vital importance of reading and children's literature, and champions the right of every child to enjoy a lifetime enriched with books and stories.

Each Laureate brings their own passion and creativity to their tenure. The tenure of the current Waterstones Children's Laureate (2022-2024) – Joseph Coelho, is focused on three major projects:

- 'Bookmaker Like You' will showcase new talent within the industry and spotlight their work, so that children are introduced to a range of creatives that truly reflect everyone in our diverse society, and ensure that every child can see themselves as a bookmaker.
- 'Poetry Prompts' will celebrate the power of poetry in all its forms, breaking down the fear often associated with reading and writing to show why poems are for everyone, and the joy that writing, reading and performing poetry can bring.

- Coelho is also championing local libraries, highlighting the vital role they play within the community and inspiring a love of reading in young people, by completing his 'Library Marathon' to join a library in every local authority in the UK, and encourage even more people to register with their local library.

Social media

Royal Communications

Twitter: @royalfamily

Instagram: @theroyalfamily

Facebook: The Royal Family

Waterstones Children's Laureate

Twitter: @UKLaureate / @JosephACoelho

Instagram: @josephcoelhoauthor

BookTrust

Twitter: @Booktrust

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World Book Day

Hashtag: #WorldBookDay

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