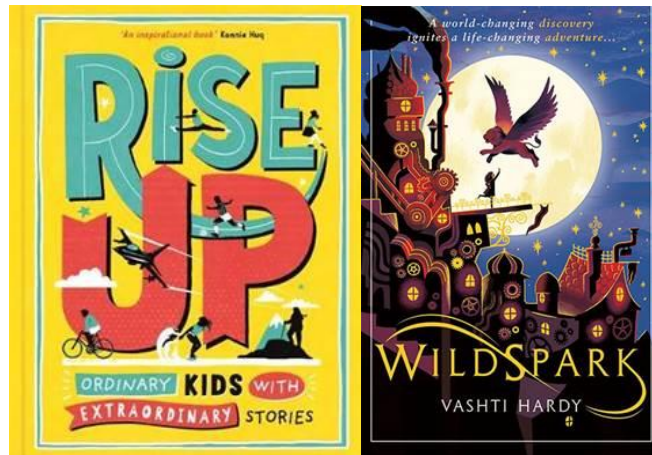


UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 00:01 THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020

Wildspark and Rise Up triumph to be crowned best book with facts and best story of 2020 in the Blue Peter Book Awards



Themes of survival, determination and adventure feature as the 2020 Blue Peter Book Awards winners are revealed. Taking the top spot of **Best Book with Facts** is *Rise Up: Ordinary Kids with Extraordinary Stories* by Amanda Li and illustrated by Amy Blackwell honoured with the **Best Story** is *Wildspark* by Vashti Hardy.

Skilfully mixing elements of science fiction, adventure and fantasy, *Wildspark* draws you into a world where the spirits of dead people can be harnessed and given new life in mechanical animals.

Author Vashti Hardy says: “It’s a dream come true for *Wildspark* to win the Best Story category in the 20th year of the wonderful Blue Peter Book Awards. It’s the most spectacular honour to join such a stellar list of past winners. Firing young imaginations, inspiring big dreams, and connecting through story is a deeply magical thing, and I’d like to send my enormous thanks to Blue Peter, BookTrust, the fabulous judges, and all the brilliant young readers who voted. If only childhood me watching Blue Peter after school could see me now!”

Rise Up tells tales of extraordinary stories of survival and is a fantastic and inspiring book, sharing the stories of normal kids from across the world and their amazing achievements.

Author Amanda Li says: “It’s the most incredible honour to receive this award, particularly as *Rise Up* has been chosen by Blue Peter viewers from schools around the UK. To know that children have loved reading a book that I’ve written, is a fantastic feeling and makes me feel so lucky to be an author. Blue Peter has been a part of my life since I was a kid, so I am thrilled to be recognised by this iconic TV programme. I will wear my Blue Peter badge with immense pride. *Rise Up* is all about ordinary kids who’ve done something extraordinary in their lives. If someone ordinary like me can win this amazing award, it just goes to show that anyone can!”

Illustrator Amy Blackwell says: “It’s so exciting knowing that these incredible stories get to be seen by and shared with so many young readers. If I’d had this book when I was younger, reading their stories of courage, compassion, ingenuity and their ability to become such forces of nature would have been such an inspiration. They really show that anything is possible and that’s such an important message for a growing mind. I’m thrilled that I got to be a part of bringing this book to life!”

The winning titles were voted for by over 300 children from 12 schools across the UK. Managed by [BookTrust](#), the UK’s largest children’s reading charity, the Blue Peter Book Awards honour amazing authors, imaginative illustrators and the best books for children, published in the last 12 months.

Diana Gerald BookTrust CEO says: “BookTrust is proud to be working with Blue Peter showcasing yet another year of amazing talent that’s out there in the children’s books world, with two very worthy winning books this year and a very strong contending shortlist. Congratulations to Vashi, Amanda and Amy.”

Judges for the 2020 award included TV Presenter and Actress Meryl Fernandes, the award-winning poet, performer and author Joseph Coelho, publishing booktuber expert Jean Menzies and Blue Peter Editor and non-voting chair Ellen Evans.

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 17:30 ON THURSDAY 5 MARCH

This year, to celebrate 20 years of brilliant children’s books, Blue Peter asked the audience to vote for their favourite Blue Peter Book Award book from the last two decades. Thousands of viewers from across the country voted and we can reveal that the winning book is J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*.

Blue Peter Editor, Ellen Evans, says:

“Through the Blue Peter Book Awards we want to show how reading is fun and enjoyable, can help you feel better, can help you empathise, find out new facts and, through imagination, experience something beyond everyday life! J.K.Rowling and Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone is truly a wonderful and worthy winner.

“I loved reading our audience’s comments online talking about their favourite books and sharing their love of reading.

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These are just a few quotes from Blue Peter fans on the website:

“I chose *The Boy at the Back of the Class* because as soon as I read it I loved it.”

“In the end I voted for.... the Gruffalo! As a young child, it was one of my favourite story books, it's an absolute classic!”

“Harry Potter because it gives you a sense of adventure and magic.”

“I voted for Matilda as it is a great story for girl’s rights.”

“Mortal Engines any day.”

“Varjak Paw for the win. Vote for Varjak!”

“Nothing beats Private Peaceful!!!”

“I voted for Roof Toppers for I read it when I was 10 and I fell in love with it.”

“I voted for the story of Tracy Beaker because she’s so much like me.2

“Mr Gum 100%!! It's the funniest book on Earth!”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/joinin/bp-book-awards-vote-for-your-favourite-childrens-book>

Blue Peter is live on CBBC and BBC iPlayer on Thursdays at 5.30pm.

Keep up-to-date with the awards at www.booktrust.org.uk/bluepeter and on Twitter by following @Booktrust and #BPBA

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Notes to Editors

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 3.9 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. booktrust.org.uk

About Blue Peter

Blue Peter is the longest running children’s magazine programme in the world. As well as the Book Awards, the show’s family of presenters, live studio home, amazing competitions, incredible challenges, live music, interviews with celebrities, access behind the scenes, pets, makes and bakes, free games online and most importantly its commitment to the audience are all long standing elements of this iconic show. www.bbc.co.uk/bluepeter

Schools that took part in the judging process

- Clifton School (North West England)

- Carrickfergus Model Primary School (Northern Ireland)
- St Agatha's R C Primary (Scotland)
- Zaytouna Primary School (East Midlands)
- Buckingham Preparatory School (London)
- Grangetown Primary School (North East England)
- Ocklynge Junior School (South East England)
- Oreston Community Academy (South West England)
- Brynmill Primary School (Wales)
- St Nicholas CE VA Priory Primary School (East of England)
- Firs Primary School (West Midlands)
- Worlaby Academy (Yorkshire and The Humber)

Shortlist for the 2020 Blue Peter Book Awards

Best book with facts:

- Fanatical About Frogs by Owen Davey
- How to be an Astronaut and Other Space Jobs by Dr Sheila Kanini and Sol Linero
- Rise Up: Ordinary Kids with Extraordinary Stories by Amanda Li and Amy Blackwell

Best story:

- Owen and the Soldier by Lisa Thompson and Mike Lowery
- Vote for Effie by Laura Wood
- Wildspark by Vashti Hardy

Shortlist for the top ten books of the last 20 years

- The Boy at the Back of the Class – Onjali Q. Raúf
- The Gruffalo – Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Axel Scheffler
- Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone – J. K. Rowling
- Matilda – Roald Dahl, illustrated by Quentin Blake
- Mortal Engines - Philip Reeve
- The Outlaw Varjak Paw – SF Said, illustrated by Dave McKean
- Private Peaceful – Michael Morpurgo
- Rooftoppers – Katherine Rundell
- The Story of Tracy Beaker - Jacqueline Wilson, illustrated by Nick Sharratt
- You're a Bad Man, Mr Gum – Andy Stanton