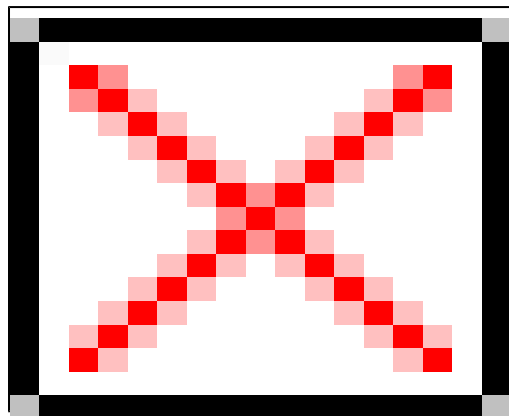




# SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2021 BRANFORD BOASE AWARD

By *AndreaMReece*

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The shortlist for the **2021 Branford Boase Award** is announced today, Thursday 29 April 2021. Established in 2000, the **Branford Boase** is awarded annually to the author of an outstanding debut novel for children. Uniquely, it also honours the editor of the winning title and highlights the importance of the editor in nurturing new talent.

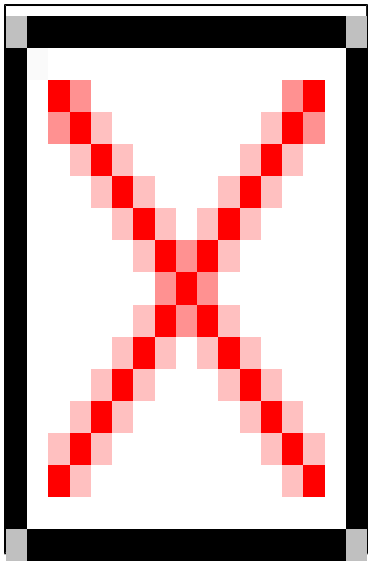
Founded to commemorate author **Henrietta Branford** and influential Walker Books editor **Wendy Boase**, the **Branford Boase Award** is recognised as 'the one to watch' with an impressive record of identifying exceptional authors at the start of their careers. Winners and shortlisted authors include **Siobhan Dowd**, **Meg Rosoff**, **Philip Reeve**, **Frank Cottrell-Boyce**, **Frances Hardinge**, **Patrick Ness** and **Marcus Sedgwick**. The 2020 winner was [Liz Hyder](#) [1].

Seven books have made the shortlist. They include Jenny Pearson's **Costa**-shortlisted comic road-trip **The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates**; Elle McNicoll's 'own voices' novel, **A Kind of Spark** (**Blue Peter Book Award Winner** and **Blackwell's 2020 Book of the Year**); and Danielle Jawando's hard-hitting YA novel **And the Stars Were Burning Brightly**. For the first time in the award's history, a verse novel has been shortlisted, Manjeet Mann's YA story **Run, Rebel**.

**Julia Eccleshare**, co-founder of the award and chair of the judges says, 'These seven books showcase all that children's fiction can be. Here are stories that explain and provoke; reassure and challenge; that present the world through different eyes, or make us recognise what we knew but didn't understand; and, of course, they entertain, all readers, and on repeated readings.'

The shortlist for the 2021 award in full with judges' comments:

[When Life Gives You Mangoes](#) [2]

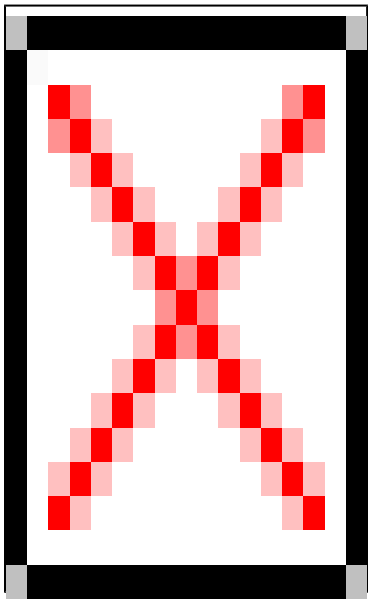


by Kereen Getten, edited by Sarah Odedina (Pushkin Children's Books)

*Clara lives in a small village on an island, where it seems nothing much happens. There is a mystery though: why can't Clara remember what happened when she was playing in the sea last year? The truth when it emerges is shocking for readers, and a gentle story of rural life on a Caribbean island is suddenly taut with uncertainty.*

**?deals beautifully with grief, guilt, friendship, all as part of the story?**

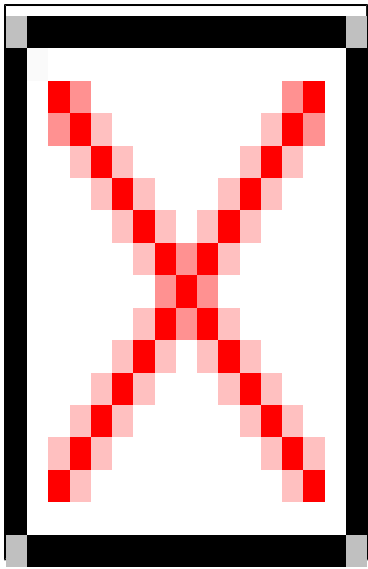
[Witch](#) [3] by Finbar Hawkins, edited by Fiona Kennedy (Zephyr)



*Finbar Hawkins sets his gripping story in 17th century England, where witches were feared and hated by the general population. Evey has always suppressed her magical powers but things change when her mother is murdered by four witch-hunters. Consumed by a desire for revenge, she sets out to track the killers down, acknowledging what and who she is in the process.*

**?I loved the language, the setting, the relationships. It's deliciously dark?**

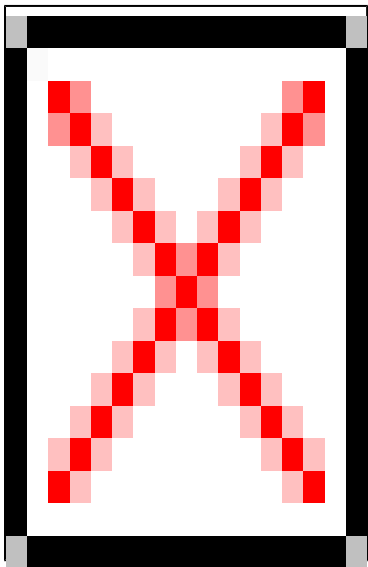
[And the Stars Were Burning Brightly](#) [4] by Danielle Jawando, edited by Jane Griffiths (Simon and Schuster)



*Seventeen-year-old Al Bryant is intellectually voracious, a reader, a painter. He seems strong, modest but confident, and generous spirited; everything's to play for. His suicide therefore is not just shocking, it's incomprehensible. Al's brother Nate and Megan, a girl in Al's class, need to understand it. As answers come, the revelations are savage, but Megan and Nate are guided by the beacon which Al's life becomes.*

**?this book took my heart, smashed it, then put it back together?**

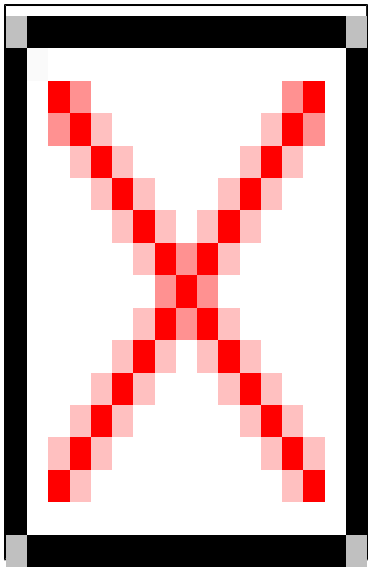
[A Kind of Spark](#) [5] by Elle McNicoll, edited by Eishar Brar (Knights Of)



*Addie is autistic and finds school difficult to navigate at the best of times, and it's worse when her one friend seems to reject her. Fortunately, her family understand, especially big sister Keedie, who is also autistic. The story opens out when Addie's class begin to study local history and learn about a group of so-called witches. Though they lived hundreds of years ago, Addie identifies with these misunderstood, persecuted women, and determines to do something for them.*

**?brings a brand new voice into children's books?**

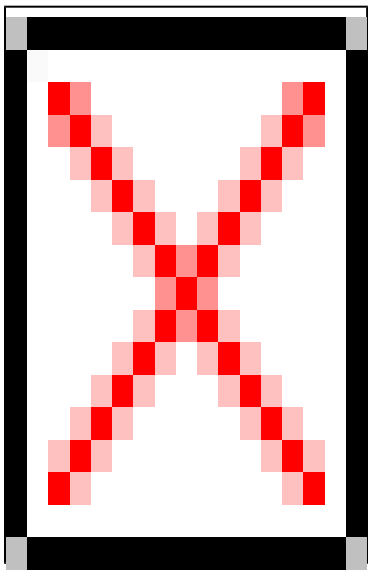
**Run, Rebel** by Manjeet Mann, edited by Carmen McCullough (Penguin)



*Amber Rai is only truly alive when running and shows potential. But her abusive father refuses to allow her on the track. Her mother is powerless to help, held back by illiteracy and lack of English and also a victim of Amber's father. But together, Amber, her mother and her sister Ruby can take small steps to freedom. A powerful, moving verse novel.*

**?wonderful storytelling?; ?full of hope despite the dark subject matter?**

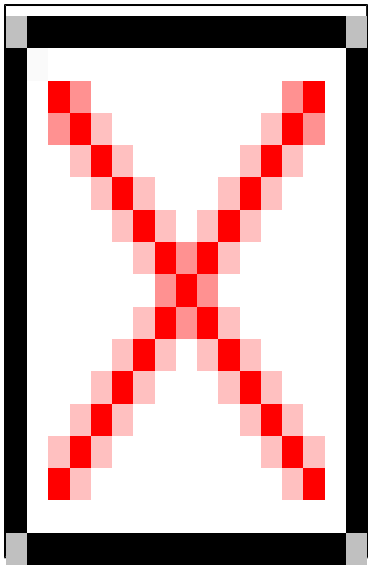
**Orphans of the Tide** by Struan Murray, edited by Ben Horslen, illustrated by Manuel Sumberac (Puffin)



*Set in the last city of a drowned world, the book opens with a dead whale washing in with the tide, only for a mysterious boy to climb out alive. The City's religious authorities believe his body to house The Enemy, the god responsible for putting the world in its watery grave. However, our protagonist Ellie, a young inventor, is sure he's innocent, sparking a thrilling adventure to find out the truth.*

**?the experience was like reading *His Dark Materials* for the first time?**

**[The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates](#)** [6]by Jenny Pearson, edited by Rebecca Hill and Becky Walker, illustrated by Rob Biddulph (Usborne)



*When Freddie sets off on a secret journey that will take him half-way across the country, his two best friends come too; they have their own reasons for wanting to escape home for a bit. Together the three boys get into and out of some extraordinary scrapes, inadvertently becoming heroes in the process, and Freddie experiences what might be an actual miracle. A wonderful road-trip adventure.*

**?wonderfully funny with some terrific visual gags?; ?I?m going to read it whenever I feel a bit down?**

The judges are **Zoey Dixon**, YLG Librarian of the Year 2020; **Scott Evans**, teacher, consultant and founder of [TheReaderTeacher.com](http://www.thereaderteacher.com) [7]; **Natasha Radford** of **Chicken and Frog** bookshop, Brentwood; and **Liz Hyder**, author of **Bearmouth**, winner of the 2020 **Branford Boase Award**. The panel is chaired by **Julia Eccleshare**, children?s director of the Hay Festival.

The winner of the **Branford Boase Award** will be announced on Thursday 15 July. The winning author receives a cheque for £1,000 and both author and editor receive an inscribed plaque.

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**Source URL (retrieved on Oct '21):** <http://imap.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/shortlist-announced-for-the-2021-branford-boase-award>

#### **Links:**

- [1] <http://imap.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/243/childrens-books/articles/an-interview-with-branford-boase-award-winner-liz-hyder>
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- [3] <http://imap.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/245/childrens-books/reviews/witch>
- [4] <http://imap.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/241/childrens-books/reviews/and-the-stars-were-burning-brightly>
- [5] <http://imap.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/242/childrens-books/reviews/a-kind-of-spark>
- [6] <http://imap.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/243/childrens-books/reviews/the-super-miraculous-journey-of-freddie-yates>
- [7] <https://www.thereaderteacher.com/>