



Judges announced for Hachette Children's Novel Award 2021

The children's author Zanib Mian; Waterstones children's category specialist Georgina Mitchell; literary agent Hellie Ogden; and Hachette Children's Group's senior commissioning editor, Tig Wallace, will judge the Hachette Children's Novel Award in 2021.

The Hachette Children's Novel Award was founded in 2019 to search for brilliant new books for children from the North of England. It is offered in partnership by New Writing North and Hachette Children's Group, and is aimed at debut writers of middle-grade/young teen fiction who currently live and work in the North of England.

The Hachette Children's Novel Award will be given to one writer of a complete but as yet unpublished children's novel. The winner will receive a £5000 advance and a publishing deal for their book with Hachette Children's Group, whose prestigious fiction list includes authors such as: David Almond (*Skellig*); Cressida Cowell (*Wizards of Once* and the *How To Train Your Dragon* series); Jessica Townsend (*Nevermoor* and *Wundersmith*); Will Mabbitt (*Embassy of the Dead*); Patrice Lawrence (*Orange Boy*); Onjali Q. Raúf (*The Boy at The Back of The Class*); and Piers Torday (*The Last Wild* series and *The Lost Magician*).

The award forms part of the Northern Writers' Awards, the pioneering writer development programme produced by New Writing North with support from Northumbria University and Arts Council England. The awards are now open for entry until 18 February 2021.

Middlesbrough writer and film-maker James Harris won the award in 2019, for his middle grade novel, *The Unbelievable Biscuit Factory – a laugh-out-loud, middle-grade tale about a biscuit factory that isn't what it seems* which will be published by Hachette Children's Group in April 2021.

The 2020 award was won by Leeds-based writer Hannah Durkan. Her debut, a middle grade fantasy adventure, will publish in 2022.

Zanib Mian is the author of the Planet Omar series, published by Hachette Children's Group. Her books have featured on BBC's CBeebies *Bedtime Stories* and the *Guardian* for their contribution to diversity in children's literature. She launched Sweet Apple Publishers with a clear commitment to publishing inclusive books, many of which she has authored herself.



Zanib Mian said: 'I'm honoured to be asked to judge this prize, where I will have the opportunity to discover new voices in children's literature! It wasn't long ago that a prize got me a fantastic book deal with Hachette. To think that I will be part of another writer's journey to this point is extremely exciting!'

Tig Wallace is a Senior Commissioning Editor at Hachette Children's Group, where he works across middle grade, YA and crossover fiction, with authors including Mitch Johnson, Ben Brooks, and Leigh Bardugo.

Tig Wallace said: 'I'm thrilled to be working with New Writing North. Their awards form a brilliant, much-needed programme of dedicated outreach, all-round support, and championing of writers from the North of England. We have already seen such great talent emerge through NWN's work – including authors we're proud to be publishing at HCG – and I can't wait to find out who will be discovered this year.'

Georgina Mitchell is the Children's Category Support at Waterstones, having joined the Piccadilly Head Office team in 2017. She is also a member of the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize panel, which champions the very best in new children's literature.

Georgina Mitchell said: 'A northerner myself, I know the talent that the North of England has to offer and this year I am excited to be a judge for the Hachette Children's Novel Award, supporting that very talent and encouraging diversity in children's publishing. Every child should be able to see themselves in the books that they read, and every author should have the chance to tell their story. To be a part of the Northern Writers' Awards and to give northern children and writers that opportunity is an honour.'

Literary agent Hellie Ogden represents fiction, children's books and non-fiction at Janklow & Nesbit agency. As an editorially focused agent, she has a keen interest in helping to develop and nurture debut writers.

Hellie Ogden said: 'New Writing North is an organisation I have followed for a long time and I am so admiring of the work they do, so I'm chuffed to be involved in the panel and read amazing work from emerging writing stars.'

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Will Mackie, Senior Programme Manager (Writing and Awards) at New Writing North said:

‘New Writing North have an ideal partner in Hachette Children’s Group, who combine their unrivalled expertise and extraordinary passion for children’s books with great professionalism. It’s a genuine delight to be working alongside the Hachette team again as we enter the third year of this special award. Individually, each member of this year’s judging panel brings their own specialism and perspective and it’s exciting to see how they’ll work together to facilitate a life-changing opportunity for the winning writer.’

Ends

For all media enquiries, please contact Laura Fraine laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com
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Notes to editor

The Northern Writers’ Awards are produced by New Writing North with support from Northumbria University and Arts Council England. The full suite of awards is made possible by a range of vital partnerships with Arvon, Bonafide Films, Channel 4, Hachette Children’s Group, Lime Pictures, The Literary Consultancy, Madeleine Millburn Agency, Newcastle University, The North Literary Agency, Oneworld Publications, Saraband, The Society of Authors, University of York, as well as generous donations from individual donors.

The winners of the Northern Writers’ Awards, including the Hachette Children’s Novel Award, will be announced in June 2021.

About Hachette Children’s Group

Hachette Children’s Group is one of the largest children’s publishers in the UK, with an excellent track record in creating bestselling and award-winning books for children. The Group aims to cater for every child, with baby and pre-school books, picture books, gift, fiction, non-fiction, series fiction, books for the school and library market and licensed publishing and comprises the imprints Hodder Children’s Books, Orchard Books, Orion Children’s Books, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, Quercus Children’s Books, Pat-a-Cake, Wren & Rook, Franklin Watts and Wayland Books.

The Group publishes a wide range of authors, illustrators, series and licenses including: Cressida Cowell, Kes Gray, Jim Field, Jessica Townsend, Onjali Raúf, Kiran Millwood Hargrave,

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Matthew Syed, Bryony Gordon, David Almond, Lauren Child, Patrice Lawrence, Dermot O'Leary, Francesca Simon, Alex T. Smith, Zanib Mian, Nadiya Hussain, Giles Andreae, Piers Torday, Rainbow Magic, Beast Quest and Pokémon.

Hachette Children's Group is also the publisher of author Enid Blyton, and the owner of Enid Blyton Entertainment. hachettechildrens.co.uk @hachettekids

Judges' bios

Zanib Mian

Zanib Mian's books have featured on BBC's CBeebies *Bedtime Stories* and the *Guardian* for their contribution to diversity in children's literature. Zanib studied Molecular Cell Biology at University College London and went on to teach Science in secondary schools before she made the decision to give up the career to create change within children's publishing. She felt that diverse characters from all minorities and backgrounds weren't being fully represented in books for young children. She launched Sweet Apple Publishers with a clear commitment to publishing inclusive books, many of which she has authored herself. She regularly features in the Bradford Literature Festival, was commissioned to write an opera for The Mahogany Opera Group, and is also on the panel of judges for the prestigious Young Muslim Writers Awards.

Georgina Mitchell

Born and bred in West Yorkshire, Georgina is the Children's Category Support at Waterstones, having joined the Piccadilly Head Office team in 2017 after three years studying English Language and Linguistics at the University of York and one year working in the Children's section at the Leeds branch. In addition to her role, she is a member of the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize panel, which champions the very best in new Children's literature. She currently works in London and lives in Cambridgeshire, but still refuses to pay more than £3.00 for a pint and cooks Yorkshire puddings at the weekend, proving that you can take the lass out of Yorkshire...

Hellie Ogden

Hellie represents fiction, children's books and non-fiction and enjoys novels with bold storytelling, moving prose and vivid, thought-provoking characters. As an editorially focused agent, she has a keen interest in helping to develop and nurture debut writers. Hellie featured in the *Bookseller* Rising Stars List and was shortlisted for the Kim Scott Walwyn Prize. She represents a number of *Sunday Times* bestsellers and award-winning

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writers across genres. She often speaks at writing conferences and mentors debut writers. Follow her on Twitter @hellieogden.

Tig Wallace

After a stint as a runner on the James Bond movies, Tig Wallace started his publishing career interning at Penguin, HarperCollins, and Bloomsbury. After a brief and eye-opening experience at Condé Nast involving a dead dog and Cold War boiler suits, Tig joined the team at Penguin Children's as editorial assistant, just before the merger with Random House. Tig spent six years at PRH, working on books and brands including the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series and the Waterstones Prize-shortlisted *This Mortal Coil*. Now a senior commissioning editor at Hachette, Tig works across middle grade, YA and crossover fiction, with authors including Mitch Johnson, Ben Brooks, and Leigh Bardugo.

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