

AWLA CHILDREN'S & YA RIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS
March 2016
Contact Adrian Weston, AWLA,
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AWLA handles a range of fiction for Middle Grade through to YA readers. 2016 sees the agency's largest list of works in these categories.

I am thrilled to have new titles from three winners of the Scottish Children's Book Awards, Alex Nye, Claire McFall and Philip Caveney, as well as a multitude of other award winners and recipients of short listings for major prizes. And that's not to mention exciting debuts from brand new voices.

There are voices from other cultures and countries. Stories of love, heartbreak and loss and novels of great adventure and excitement compel the reader to go on. Magic, fantasy and gritty reality all rub shoulders, but the common thread across these titles is their quality and energy.

For more information, contact Adrian Weston at AWLA Ltd via email: adrian@adrianweston.com and check on the website www.adrianweston.com for news.

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Author: BUTTERS, Simon
TITLE: THE HOUNDED
Category: Fiction: YA
Client: Wakefield Press
Publication: ANZ Late 2016 (tbc)
Rights Sold: ANZ
All Other Rights Available

A sharp, contemporary, sad and engaging piece of writing with a fantastic protagonist in the form of Monty, riddled by self-doubt, low self-esteem and depression - and accompanied in life by an imaginary black dog.

Eliza wasn't at the bus stop that morning. The bus drove right on past and all Eliza's friends peered out to see where she'd gone. It was a mystery. A scandal. Eliza's disappearance was the hottest trending topic online. People knew something was up, but what?

Nobody knew she was with me, Montgomery Ferguson, the lowest of the low. So it was that I first got to hang out with Eliza Robertson, the hottest girl in school with a heart of sheer contempt.

I couldn't have been happier.

On his fifteenth birthday, Monty is at rock bottom. Ignored by his parents, bullied at school, and with a brain that's prone to going walkabout, he's all by himself.

Until he meets the black dog for the first time.

It's just like any other dog, except that only Monty can see it. And it talks. And Monty's not sure whether it's a friend – or a foe.

But the black dog gets him talking to pretty, popular Eliza Robertson for the first time. It takes him to places he's never been. And eventually it will take him, and the people around him, to the very edge.

Black Dog is a book about depression and working out who you really are, from one of Australia's most acclaimed and prolific children's television writers.

About the Author: Simon Butters is a screenwriter in film and television. His credits include: Wicked Science, Scooter: Secret Agent, H2O Just Add Water, Pirate Islands: The Lost Treasure of Fiji, The Elephant Princess, Lightning Point, Mako: Island of Secrets and Sam Fox: Extreme Adventures among others. Simon was the inaugural winner of the Australian Writers' Guild John Hinde Science Fiction Award for his film Min Min.

THE HOUNDED is Simon's first novel and was shortlisted for the 2014 Adelaide Festival Unpublished Manuscript Award.

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Author: CAVENEY, Philip
TITLE: SLITHER
Category: 9-13 Fiction
Client: AWLA Direct
Status: On UK Submission
Rights Sold: All Rights Available

SLITHER is a fast paced fantasy adventure with a 16 y.o. central character Zach who, after his mother has died, has relocated with his father to Cornwall to live in the house that belonged to his (perhaps mad) late grandfather. Zach finds a faerie stone which brings, it seems, extraordinary luck ... but with a terrible price/consequences.

As Zach and his new friend, a local girl called Pepper, test the stone's powers it seems that their fortunes are turning around. But the Slithers, sinister reptilian agents of the Bucca Dhu, want to reclaim the stone. As Zach and Pepper dig further into the magic and unearth the terrible fate that befell Zach's grandparents (once in possession of the stone) it seems the good luck and power is a very poisoned gift and they are accelerating towards an awful fate of their own. On a night of freakish weather, a sign of the Bucca's presence, the book comes to its tumultuous finale.

About the Author: Philp Caveney is an award-winning and highly accomplished novelist who has had four YA novels published by Fledgling (CROW BOY, WATCHERS, SEVENTEEN COFFINS and ONE FOR SORROW) the rights for which are also available. His acclaimed Sebastian Darke series has sold widely in translation. He is also the author of the Alec Devlin series (Red Fox). He has just won the 2016 Scottish Children's Book Awards for The Piper (written as Danny Weston).

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Author: CAVENEY, Philip
TITLE: THE CALLING
Category: Fiction: 13+
Client: Fledgling Press
Publication: UK Spring 2016
Rights Sold: UK
All Other Rights Available

A new novel from the winner of the 2016 Scottish Children's Book Awards (under his pen name Danny Weston) ...

THE CALLING is an intriguing crime novel in a contemporary setting. A boy wakes up on a train to Edinburgh. He is shocked to discover that he has no idea who he is or how he came to be on the train – and once off it, he finds himself immersed in the chaos of the Edinburgh Fringe. After a day of wandering the crowded streets, he falls asleep and is woken by the sound of bells tolling midnight – only to discover that this is the night of The Calling – a magical yearly event when all the statues of the city come alive. He is the only human ever to witness it. He quickly makes a couple of allies – the Colonel, the bronze cavalryman of the Scots Grey's monument, and the intrepid explorer David Livingstone. They christen the boy 'Ed Fest' and take him to Parliament Square to meet Charles II, the king of the statues, who isn't particularly fond of 'Softies' (humans). He assigns Sherlock Holmes to investigate the boy's case, discover his real identity and to get back to his home and family. But as the 'bronze' detective begins to decipher the clues, he discovers that 'Ed' is on the run from a sequence of terrible events; ones that could threaten his very existence.

THE CALLING is a magical story set during Edinburgh's most exciting annual event – and nearly all of its characters can be observed, standing on plinths in the heart of the city, waiting for next year's Calling.

About the Author: Philp Caveney is an award-winning and highly accomplished novelist who has had four YA novels published by Fledgling (CROW BOY, WATCHERS, SEVENTEEN COFFINS and ONE FOR SORROW) the rights for which are also available. His acclaimed Sebastian Darke series (Andersen Press) has sold widely in translation. He is also the author of the Alec Devlin series (Red Fox).

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Author: DAYKIN, Chloe
Title: FISH BOY
Category: Middle Grade Fiction
Client: The BIA
Publication: UK Autumn 2016
Rights sold: WEL – Faber & Faber
Italian Language - Giunti
All Other Rights Available

WINNER OF A 2014 NORTHERN WRITERS' AWARD

Rooftoppers, *Skellig* and *A Monster Calls* collide in this quirky, otherworldly, watery story.

"Distinctive, appealing, really well written, moving, funny. Strange, but very grounded in a real and believable world. Great voice, deftly-drawn characters. This is the real thing."

David Almond

Told in the inimitable voice of Billy Shiel, whose "mind moves in and out like the sea" and whose "skin moves up and down like the waves", *Fish Boy* is the tale of a lad who must come to terms with the trials that make his life a misery, through trusting in the wisdom of David Attenborough and the power of the earth, because nature is magic.

Billy is a lonely boy, obsessed with swimming in the sea, which is where he goes to submerge himself and his problems and let the water wash them far, far away. Dad has to work extra hours to make ends meet, as Mum is unable to work due to a mysterious illness; playground bullies seize on Billy's 'otherness' as reason to make his life ever more miserable. But when new boy Patrick Green - "fingers like steel, strength of a bear" - starts at school and a mackerel swims up to Billy's face, blows bubbles into his *Vista Clear Mask* goggles and says *Kezdodik Kezdodik Kezdodik* his whole world changes...

"Very accomplished writing - well paced with a very realized, complex voice - rooted and real, yet drifting towards sadness"

Jackie Kay

"Literary fiction in the tradition of David Almond; the writing and voice are in perfect balance"

Ann Coburn

Fish Boy is Chloe Daykin's first novel. Chloe graduated with an *MA in Creative Writing* from Newcastle University in Sept 2014 with distinction.

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Author: KERR, Jane
TITLE: The Elephant Walk
Category: Fiction: 9-12
Client: Annette Green Authors' Agency
Publication: September 2016
Rights Sold: WEL - Chicken House
French Language
All Other Rights Available

THE ELEPHANT WALK has all the hallmarks of a classic in the making. Set in 1872, it tells the story of the wager between rival menagerie owners James Jameson and Arthur Albright. When Jameson buys the African elephant, Maharajah at a bankruptcy auction in Edinburgh his plan to transport the animal by train to his Belle Vue Zoological Gardens in Manchester hits a snag when the elephant destroys the freight carriage. Rashly, Jameson bets Albright that the elephant will walk to Manchester within seven days – the winner will take all of his rival's menagerie of animals.

During the excitement of the auction a young, mute pickpocket – known only to us as 'Boy' – is apprehended, losing all his stolen goods and knowing only too well the retribution that awaits him from his violent master Scatcherd. But at a moment of crisis he suddenly discovers some kind of affinity with the distressed elephant and before he knows what is happening he is enlisted to star in the marketing spectacle of the elephant walk, disguised as the Indian 'Prince Dandip'.

As the perilous journey proceeds, Boy meets and befriends the ebullient Hetty and her father, has his life saved by Maharajah, comes up against the sinister Crimple, and nurses a growing suspicion that their progress to Manchester is being followed very closely by someone who does not wish them well.

This is a tremendously rendered story, based on true events orchestrated by real life Victorian entrepreneurs. With deeply engaging characters, a rattling plot and very thought-provoking themes, 'The Elephant Walk' is a highly accomplished debut.

Jane Kerr is a producer for BBC Radio at MediaCity in Salford and has over twenty years' experience in print and broadcast journalism. The Belle Vue Zoological Gardens loomed large in her childhood and the locally iconic story of the elephant walk compelled her to write this novel.

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Author **LIM, KH**
TITLE: **WRITTEN IN BLACK**
Category: **Fiction, Middle Grade**
Client: **Monsoon Books**
Publication: **Singapore, 2016**
Rights Sold: **English Language: Singapore & SE ASIA**
 ANZ
 All other rights available

A darkly humorous coming-of-age novel set in Brunei on the island of Borneo, *Written in Black* offers a snapshot of a few days in the life of Jonathan Lee, attending the funeral of his Ah Kong, or grandfather, and still reeling from the drama of his mother leaving for Australia and his brother getting kicked out of the house and joining a rock band.

Annoyed at being the brunt of his father's pent-up anger, Jonathan escapes his grandfather's wake in an empty coffin and embarks on a journey through the backwaters of Brunei to bring his disowned brother back for the funeral and to learn the truth about his absent mother. On a quest that takes him across the little-known Sultanate, past gangs of glue-sniffing poklans (Brunei's teenage delinquents), cursed houses and weird shopkeepers, Jonathan discovers adventure, courage, friendship and, finally, himself.

About the Author:

KH Lim was born and raised in Brunei. He attended medical school in the UK and qualified in 2008. When he isn't pretending to be an author, he works as a doctor in Singapore, where he currently resides.

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Author: MARJARA ,Eisha
TITLE: FAERIE
Category: Fiction, YA
Client: Arsenal Pulp Press
Publication: North America, Summer 2016
Rights Sold: North America - APP
All Other Rights Available

A bold, moving YA novel about a South Asian teenager struggling with anorexia.

Just days before her eighteenth birthday, Lila has resolved to end her life. The horror of becoming an adult, and leaving her childhood behind, has broken her heart.

Faerie, a novel for young people, is the fierce yet gently unfolding story of a hyper-imaginative girl who is on a collision course to womanhood. She likens herself to a half-human fairy creature who does not belong in the earthly world; but in the cold light of day she is a psychiatric patient at a hospital, where she is being treated for anorexia—her sickness driven by the irrational need to undo nature and thwart the passage of time.

Lila tells the story of how she ended up on the Four East wing: we flashback to her childhood in the '80s, growing up in a small town as an overweight brown kid of Punjabi immigrant parents: her father, a literary scholar whom she idolizes, and her mother, a housewife—"the most female of all females who found comfort in cooking." *Faerie* weaves these passages with Lila's downward spiral into life-threatening illness, her budding sexuality, and her complicated recovery in hospital that comes with a price. Written with candour and heart-breaking lyricism, *Faerie* is a plaintive love letter to the bold, flawed splendour that is childhood.

My mother saw herself in me, but I wanted to hold up a very different mirror. I was going to slim myself into my wings and take a leap of faith into the faerie world where I spent every waking daydream. The circumstances were ripe, summer was on its way, and no time like yesterday to start something new. Or shall I say, to recover something old.

About the author: Eisha Marjara has written and directed several award-winning films, including the critically acclaimed NFB docudrama *Desperately Seeking Helen* and the German-Canadian film *The Tourist*. Her latest film is the multi-award-winning *House For Sale*.

You can see more about Eisha at her website: eishamarjara.com

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Author: McFALL, Claire
Title: FERRYMAN
Category: Young Adult
Client: The BIA
Rights Sold: WEL - Templar/Hot Key
Mainland China - White Horse, Beijing
Turkish Language - Yapi Kredi Yayinlari
Film & TV
All Other Rights Available

WINNER: SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD

Highly acclaimed in the UK and a massive best seller in the Chinese market where the book has remained at the top 10 of the sales charts constantly since its publication in Mainland China in Autumn 2015. McFall is the only writer in translation to be named in the top 10 most influential writers in China for 2015, and at number 2 in the translated fiction chart behind *The Kite Runner* ever since its release. A major international film deal is in place, details to be announced shortly.

The first in a trilogy, *FERRYMAN* is a tear-jerking YA romance, with strong themes of self-discovery and sacrifice, between a dead girl and her 'Ferryman', charged with guiding her through limbo and on to her after-life.

"I exist because you need me"

When ballsy, pragmatic Dylan pulls herself free from a train wreck and emerges onto an almost deserted Scottish hillside, relief turns to frustration as her enigmatic new companion Tristan leads her on a mysterious and arduous journey. As they progress, frustration turns to love and then to despair as the realization slowly dawns on Dylan that she is not the only survivor of the train wreck, but the only casualty. Meanwhile, Tristan, with whom she is falling ever more deeply in love, is not and never has been a human boy.

Praise for *Ferryman*:

"Touching, often funny and sometimes harrowing first novel about first love set in the mythologically and philosophically fruitful territory between life and death... It seems [McFall] has imagined *The 39 Steps* crossed with *The Lord of the Rings*"

Guardian

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Ferryman was also:

- Long-listed for The Branford Boase Award
- Nominated for The Carnegie Medal
- Short-listed for the Grampian Book Award
- Long-listed for the UKLA's YA Book of the Year Award
- Short-listed for the inaugural Hampshire Independent Schools Book Award

THE FERRYMAN TRILOGY: Books Two and Three in the trilogy are in development and news of these titles will be released soon>

About the Author: Claire McFall writes, in essence, all about first love and difficult decisions. Her novels take straightforward romantic narratives and hurl them into unusual and extreme settings, blurring accepted genre boundaries and creating new sub-genres of her own. Claire grew up just south of Glasgow, in the heart of Celtic and Rangers country, where she now teaches English.

Author: McFALL, Claire
Title: Black Cairn Point
Category: Fiction: YA
Client: The BIA
Publication: Spring 2015
Rights Sold: Hot Key: WEL
Mainland China
All Other Rights Available

From the Scottish Children's Book Award winner (*Ferryman*), a chilling and unforgettable supernatural thriller with a twist that is hard to shake.

NOW: Broken, defensive and damaged, Heather is imprisoned in a secure unit, her friends brutally murdered and subject to a savage interrogation.

THEN: Heather is a happy-go-lucky teenager, about to go camping with her friends at Black Cairn Point. Unwittingly, they awaken a terrible evil, which picks them off one by one.

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Author: MOHAMED, Stefan
TITLE: BITTER SIXTEEN TRILOGY
BITTER SIXTEEN (Book 1, 2015)
ACE OF SPIDERS (Book 2, 2016)
STANLY'S GHOST (Book 3, 2017)
Category: Fiction: YA Crossover Urban Fantasy
Client: The BIA
Publication: Summer 2015
Rights Sold: WEL - Salt Publishing
All Other Rights Available

"Stefan Mohamed really stands out from the crowd - a delightfully funny, surreal and original new voice with a great storytelling gift."

Andrew Davies, multi-BAFTA and Emmy award-winning screenwriter

The Times – *Children's Book of the Week*

"Never mind writing about superpowers, debut author Stefan Mohamed clearly has them himself." - Alex O'Connell, The Times

BITTER SIXTEEN (Bitter Sixteen Trilogy Book 1)

Stanly (no 'e') feels trapped in his sleepy Welsh village. He has always felt different but never special – despite having a wisecracking, talking beagle (and die-hard Bogart fan) for a best friend. Then, on the eve of his sixteenth birthday and in the midst of a crushing migraine, everything changes: as the pain in his skull reaches a crescendo, he spontaneously levitates above his bed.

As Stanly tests his new powers, he discovers that they include flight and telekinesis. They also bring a new confidence which, perversely, helps him finally to fit in at school, where he lands the lead role in the school play and a budding romance with his co-star Kloe. But a series of cryptic phone calls from his cousin Eddie lead to the knowledge that Stanly is not the only one in the family with unusual abilities. A confrontation on the opening night of the play reveals his powers to the whole school, forcing Stanly to flee to London, where he is able to explore the true nature of his gifts. Teaming up with Eddie and his empowered friends Connor and Sharon, Stanly gets a job at a comic shop run by the eccentric Skank and tries to juggle this new life with his rapidly-developing abilities and his feelings for the girl he left behind.

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ACE OF SPIDERS (Bitter Sixteen Trilogy Book 2)

Publication: March 2016

A year on from the events of *Bitter Sixteen*, Stanly is frustrated. Being London's resident superhero is not as exciting as he was expecting, and he's bored. Fighting crime on the streets sounds good in theory but is difficult in practice, and they have heard nothing from the Angel Group.

All that changes when an assassin tries to kill Stanly, setting in motion a chain of events that leads to the discovery that Mr Freeman – believed dead a year ago – is alive and back in London. Stanly strikes up an uneasy alliance with Freeman, agreeing to help him take his revenge on the Angel Group and foil plans to open a portal to a dimension filled with terrible monsters.

Stanly and his friends must call upon every ounce of their strength as they battle to stop the army of monsters that has been unleashed on London. After an apocalyptic battle, Stanly ends up facing duplicitous Mr Freeman alone in a parallel dimension. Now he must decide whether he is willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to protect those he loves, before it's too late.

STANLY'S GHOST (Bitter Sixteen Trilogy Book 3)

Stanly is stuck in a supernatural slumber in another dimension, and experiences a series of bizarre dreams about alternate versions of himself in odd locations. Suddenly he is brought back to his world, where he discovers that five years have passed, although he looks and feels as though he has barely been gone a day. London has been rebuilt after the monster attack and the Angel Group – rechristened Angelcorp – has, by all accounts, become a benign pseudo-government, overseeing the city's infrastructure and keeping the peace.

Confused and alienated – although his powers are greater than ever – Stanly tries to readjust to life in a world that has moved on without him. Angelcorp wants his help investigating a group of superpowered criminals who have developed a drug which bestows dangerously unstable powers upon its users. As Stanly throws himself into London's murky underworld, he must wrestle with the enormity of his powers, and adapt to the new psychic battle lines that have been drawn in his absence.

About the Author:

Stefan Mohamed is a 26-year-old author, poet and sometime journalist. He graduated from Kingston University in 2010 with a first class degree in creative writing and film studies, and later that year won the inaugural Sony Reader Award, a category of the Dylan Thomas Prize, for his novel *Bitter Sixteen*. He lives in Bristol, where he works as an editorial assistant, writing stories and performing poetry in his spare time.

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Author: NYE, Alex
TITLE: DARKER ENDS
Category: 13+ Fiction
Client: Fledgling Press
Publication: Christmas 2015
Rights Sold: Fledgling: UK/C
All Other Rights Available

DARKER ENDS is the third title by Alex Nye, again inspired by the landscape and history of Scotland. This time Glencoe is the background story, and the ghosts of the recent past mingle with the dark events of 1692, when the leader of Clan Campbell authorized the genocide of a whole community as they slept in their beds before dawn...

Those who survived – women and children – struggled their way up into the lowering mountains of Glencoe, but what happened to them? Did they live to tell the tale?

Today, two children, a brother and sister, wait in a lonely inn for their parents to come home, while a storm closes in. They have only lived at the inn for three days. Maggie, the eldest, seeks to reassure her younger brother, who is asthmatic and nervous. When a stranger's car is marooned in the river below, and he knocks at their door for shelter, the long night darkens. All is not what it seems, and Maggie and Rory are about to learn what became of the so-called 'survivors' of Glencoe.

About the Author: Alex Nye is an award-winning children's author. She grew up in Norfolk by the sea, but has lived in Scotland since 1995 where she finds much of her inspiration in Scottish history. At the age of 16 she won the W H Smith Young Writers' Award out of 33,000 entrants, and has been writing ever since. Her first children's novel, CHILL, won Scottish Children's Book of the Year Award.

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Author: PLOWDEN, Sophie
TITLE: JACK DASH AND THE MAGIC FEATHER
Category: 7+ Fiction
Client: The BIA
Publication: September 2015
Rights Sold: Catnip: WEL
All Other Rights Available

Jack Dash and the Magic Feather marks the debut of a chaotic, surreal, anarchic, fast-paced and side-splittingly funny new voice for younger readers.

Jack Dash never wanted to move in the first place - not that his parents ever listen to him. All they seem to care about is getting the house ready for the Big Visit from Mr Quibble, his dad's new boss and the town of Curtly Ambrose's fantastically corrupt mayor. He's also having trouble with his new neighbour, Coco McBean. She's impetuous, infuriating, omnipresent and just won't take no for an answer.

When Jack finds a golden quill in an old desk, he discovers that whatever he draws with it comes to life. He could have anything he likes! He starts with a toy racing-car, which turns out to be big enough to drive (if only he'd remembered to draw an engine). When Coco starts poking her nose in, he draws a guard dog to keep her out and ends up with Sardina, a sea-lion with a bladder problem. He draws a vat of fish to keep her quiet, but they soon begin to stink the house out and his parents make an emergency appointment with the Pest Controllers. If Jack doesn't hide the evidence fast, his secret will be discovered. Reluctantly, he enlists Coco's help.

Chaos spirals into disaster. Coco drops the car and half a ton of rotting fish out of Jack's bedroom window; the Pest Controllers arrive and Sardina goes missing. In the midst of it all, Mayor Quibble arrives and quickly sees that something of Jack's is the key to untold riches. Mistakenly taking Sardina for the golden goose, Quibble resolves to steal her for his own nefarious purposes. Jack and Coco must bury their differences and act fast in order to save Sardina and foil the dastardly Quibble, but just when he needs it most, he loses the feather. Time is short: Jack must choose between saving Sardina and getting his magic feather back.

JACK DASH is the first in a series of adventures featuring Jack Dash and Coco McBean.

Sophie Plowden studied Drawing & Painting at Edinburgh College of Art. As well as writing, she paints and teaches art part-time in both secondary and higher education. She has exhibited her work widely, including six one-person shows in London. She lives in Islington with her husband and her fifteen-year-old son. ***Jack Dash and the Magic Feather*** is her first book.

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Author: REID, Raziel
Title: WHEN EVERYTHING FEELS LIKE THE MOVIES
Category: Fiction: YA/Crossover
Client: Arsenal Pulp Press
Publication: US May 2015, UK May 2016
Rights Sold: USA/Canada Arsenal Pulp
UK/C Little, Brown/Corsair
German Language Albino Verlag
All Other Rights Available

"Raziel Reid is a really extraordinary guy. He's got a great thing going."
—Anne Rice

WHEN EVERYTHING FEELS LIKE THE MOVIES, a gay YA novel by Raziel Reid is receiving huge publicity in its home territory, Canada, right now. The book won the Governor General's Literary Award for children's literature in November, the highest honor for children's and YA titles in the country. Then in January, it was named as one of 5 books competing for the CBC's Canada Reads crown.

Inspired by a true story, When Everything Feels Like the Movies is an edgy, extravagant novel for young people, full of gender-bending teen glamour, dark mischief, and enough melodrama to incite the paparazzi. A boy who smells like Chanel Mademoiselle, calls Blair Waldorf his biggest childhood influence, and reads Old Hollywood star biographies like gospel doesn't have the easiest path to travel in life, but somehow, Jude paves his own yellow brick road and makes us all wish we could join him over the rainbow.

Already in its fourth printing in Canada since October, it launched in the US in April 2015 and is going to be a global sensation.

RAZIEL REID is a graduate of the New York Film Academy. He's performed off-Broadway, worked as a go-go dancer and wrote and acted in the short film End Point. Raziel grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba and currently lives in Vancouver where he is an anti-social columnist and creator of the pop culture blog Blitz & Shitz on DailyXtra.com. He is 24 years old.

Follow him @razielreid.

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Author: SNOWDEN, Ruth
Title: THE GHOST OF BLACK MONK HALL
Category: Middle Grade Fiction
Publication: Under UK General Submission
Client: AWLA Direct
All Rights Available

When Bad Gran downsizes and sets up as a psychic investigator to supplement her old age pension, Chloe is keen to get established as her assistant. It definitely beats spending the summer holidays hanging around with Mum and baby Alice; besides, Chloe has a secret ulterior motive - she is desperate to learn more about spells to boost her love life and Bad Gran seems to know all about that kind of thing.

They soon discover that Bad Gran's new home, Hob Cottage, is a veritable hub of psychic activity. Tilly the cat keeps mysteriously vanishing, even when she's kept indoors; and a mischievous entity that only Alice can see properly keeps playing tricks on them. As if that isn't enough, they find a spooky secret passage in the cellar, leading to who knows where; and a weird ancient fertility stone turns up in the garden and subsequently gets stolen from inside the cottage.

After a few false starts they embark upon their first case - investigating a ghostly, hooded visitation at nearby Black Monk Hall. Bad Gran inevitably crosses swords with established local witch, Middy, who is definitely a force to be reckoned with. Meanwhile Chloe, distracted by unrequited love for Shane Robertson, realises that Bad Gran has got into terrible danger and helps to rescue her in the nick of time.

Despite Chloe's vervain love spell going hideously wrong, things are mostly resolved in the end. The ghost mystery is solved in two alternative ways – take your pick; the malevolent kombucha plant is evicted from the cottage; and the threatening surfeit of giant marrows is safely made into jam. But Bad Gran still hasn't solved the mystery of the tiny yellow socks that she discovered at the bottom of the laundry basket....

About the Author: Ruth Snowden, based in the North West of England, is a highly regarded author on Psychology (Freud & Jung, Hodder) and the author of the children's book THE ISLAND THAT WASN'T THERE (Piccadilly Press), THE GHOST OF BLACK MONK HALL is her latest title. Other children's titles available include THE MOON TREE.