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Leading children's reading charity, announce the BookTrust Storytime book of the year for children under five

Children's book *Are You a Monster*, by Guilherme Karsten and published by Happy Yak has been recognised as the best new book for sharing with young children, by the UK's leading children's reading charity, BookTrust.

Are You a Monster, which is also illustrated by Karsten, was awarded the prestigious BookTrust Storytime 2024 Prize at an award ceremony today. The awards, which are now in their fifth year, were virtually attended by a host of authors and stakeholders from the children's book sector.

The winning book was voted for by librarians and families up and down the country and won against a selection of five other shortlisted titles.

The announcement of the book of the year, is part of the BookTrust Storytime 2023-24, an annual programme which this year was run in over 2500 libraries in England and Northern Ireland and last year reached approximately 50,000 children under the age of five.

The charity funded programme, which is free to the public, is designed to support children experiencing disadvantage as these children have the most to gain from becoming regular readers¹. The programme supports libraries across the UK to encourage families with children under the age of five to visit libraries and begin their reading journey.

Families who have not used library services before often face barriers such as lack of transportation, economic barriers like being worried about paying surprise fees and social barriers including feeling nervous about entering a library for the first time. However, research found that 71% of libraries said BookTrust Storytime helped support their work engaging with children under five and 70% of participating families returned to their local library after their initial visit.²

Instilling the skill and love for reading in children has impact long into adulthood. Reading regularly with a child from as young as two weeks old has a measurable impact on their development including better mental health, educational outcomes, empathy and creativity, and mitigating socio-economic inequalities.³

Diana Gerald MBE, CEO of BookTrust, said: "We're committed to helping every child, no matter what their family background, become regular readers and reap the benefits which come from reading for pleasure. We know that reading is not only beneficial for a child's development but also provides joy through sparking imagination and encouraging bonding with adults. BookTrust Storytime is built around the very best in children's literature and giving children access to positive reading experiences such as this can be lifechanging.

"We're incredibly grateful to all our library and local authority partners who share our vision for a future where all children can access books and develop a love for reading. Many congratulations to Guilherme and the other shortlisted authors who have created books that families can keep enjoying together."

¹ <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/impact-and-research/Research/the-benefits-of-reading/>

² <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/news/news-2023/booktrust-brings-50000-children-into-over-2000-libraries-with-its-storytime-programme-and-announces-the-shortlist-for-the-2024-booktrust-storytime-prize/>

³ [Reading in the Early Years: supporting generational cycles of readers | BookTrust](#)



Reflecting on the win for *Are you a Monster*, Guilherme said: "Winning this award is like a dream come true. It's a celebration of the power that books have to be a source of learning, connection and fun - lots of fun."

Libraries who took part in the Storytime programme were provided with five specially shortlisted books for children under five and resources that enabled them to create their own interactive, memorable experiences for families that keep them returning to their local libraries.

The full shortlist included a collection of books that cover foundational aspects of early years learning and development, selected by a panel of expert librarians from across the country:

Zeki Rise And Shine by Anna McQuinn & Ruth Hearson (Alanna Max), The Perfect Present by Petr Horáček (Otter-Barry Books), Just Breathe, Bear by Christianne C. Jones & Oriol Vidal (Raintree Publishers) and I Am Happy by Michael Rosen & Robert Starling (Walker Books).

-ENDS-

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About BookTrust

We are the UK's largest children's reading charity. We get millions of children reading, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds. We do this because research shows that children who read regularly are happier and healthier. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school, are more creative and enjoy more success in life. This is why we work with families, supporting them to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age.

Some of our key activities include:

- BookStart programmes for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers which provides families with books and resources to help foster a love of shared reading from the earliest age.
- Our writer-in-residence programme which gives a platform to some of the best children's writers and illustrators in the country to champion the power of books. Past writers in residence include Michael Rosen, Nick Sharratt, Onjali Q. Raúf and Dapo Adeola.
- Supporting the work of the Children's Laureate (currently Josep Coelho). Former Laureates include Jacqueline Wilson, Malorie Blackman, Anthony Browne and Quentin Blake.

BookTrust has long-term partnerships in place with every local authority in England and with the national government in Wales and works with thousands of local partners.

For more information about Storytime: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/bookstart/families/toddler-and-pre-schooler-family-hub/booktrust-storytime-for-families/>

References

1. <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/impact-and-research/Research/the-benefits-of-reading/>
2. <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/news/news-2023/booktrust-brings-50000-children-into-over-2000-libraries-with-its-storytime-programme-and-announces-the-shortlist-for-the-2024-booktrust-storytime-prize/>
3. [Reading in the Early Years: supporting generational cycles of readers | BookTrust](#)