

2020 Scottish Teenage Book Prize shortlist announced

Graphic novel joins the shortlist for the first time

Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing, has revealed today the shortlist for the 2020 Scottish Teenage Book Prize. In the first year that comics and graphic novels have been eligible for the Scottish Teenage Book Prize, *Rok of the Reds* by John Wagner, Alan Grant and Dan Cornwell has been shortlisted. Joining the comic book on the shortlist are Tanya Landman's *One Shot*, and Akemi Dawn Bowman's *Starfish*.

Recognising the rich tradition of comics and graphic novels in Scotland, the judging panel also highly commended BHP Comic's graphic anthology, *Full Colour*. This anthology brought together a team of young Scots from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to be mentored in creating comics.

THE SCOTTISH TEENAGE BOOK PRIZE 2020 SHORTLIST IS:

- *One Shot* by Tanya Landman (Barrington Stoke)
- *Rok of the Reds* by John Wagner, Alan Grant and Dan Cornwell (BHP Comics)
- *Starfish* by Akemi Dawn Bowman (Ink Road)

The Scottish Teenage Book Prize, now in its fourth year, was set up to celebrate the most popular teen books by authors in Scotland. It is run by Scottish Book Trust with support from Creative Scotland. Shortlisted authors receive £500 and the winner receives £3,000.

Scottish Book Trust encourages teenagers of all ages to get involved, by reading the three shortlisted books and voting as part of their class or book group by 7 February 2020. The winning title will be announced on 27 February 2020, in an exclusive video available to classes who are registered to vote.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said: "We are thrilled to be running the Scottish Teenage Book Prize for a fourth year. The shortlisted titles are an example of Scotland's exciting talent in the teenage fiction genre. We hope that inclusion of comics and graphic novels for the first time will encourage even more young people to engage with the prize by discussing and voting for their favourite book. Congratulations to all the shortlisted authors."

Alan Bett, Literature Officer at Creative Scotland, said: "Congratulations to all 2019 Scottish Teenage Book Prize shortlistees. I'm sure they are delighted that their work is being celebrated by the very people they write for and that it has connected with these younger readers. Creative Scotland is highly supportive of an award that commends the writers and illustrators creating work for teenage readers in Scotland and also recognises those same readers as the true arbiters of quality for the books they read."

Quotes and information on the shortlisted titles:

Tanya Landman was born in Kent and worked in a bookshop, an arts centre and a zoo before turning her hand to writing. She quickly established herself as a brilliant historical novelist with a particular gift for giving a voice to the voiceless. Her novel *Buffalo Solider* won the 2015 Carnegie Medal.

Commenting on her nomination, Tanya Landman said: "I'm utterly thrilled to be shortlisted for the Scottish Teenage Book Prize! My husband died in 2017 and for a long time I thought I'd never write another word. *One Shot* is the book that broke the block, so it's wonderful to know that there are people out there who love the story as much as I do!"

Comic legends **John Wagner** and **Alan Grant** have worked in partnership since 1980, after meeting while working at D.C. Thomson in the 1960s. **John Wagner** is the often labelled the Godfather of British comics. Alongside co-creator Carlos Ezquerra he created notable comics *Judge Dredd* and *Strontium Dog*. Alongside Pat Mills he co-created the longest running and most successful science fiction comic of all time in 2000AD. **Alan Grant** is a Scottish comic book writer known for writing *Judge Dredd* in 2000 AD as well as various *Batman* titles. He is the co-creator of the characters Anarky, Victor Zsasz and the Ventriloquist. **Dan Cornwell** is a comic artist based in Sussex. He has worked on titles such as *Judge Dredd*, 2000AD, *100% Biodegradable* and most recently *Rok Of The Reds*.

Commenting on their nomination, John Wagner said: "We are delighted to be on the Scottish Teenage Book Prize shortlist. In many ways graphic novels, and comics more generally, can be a helpful and easy route into better reading, so it is pleasing when their literary value is recognised."

Alan Grant said: "My grandmother taught me to read and write when I was 4 years old, using *The Beano* and *The Dandy* as her teaching tools. It instilled in me a love of comics which has lasted all my life. So it's brilliant to learn that *Rok of the Reds* is on the Scottish Teenage Book Prize shortlist...a real honour."

Dan Cornwell said: "We worked incredibly hard to make *Rok of the Reds* as good as possible and one of the best feelings I have is seeing children and younger people in general reading it."

Akemi Dawn Bowman served in the US Navy for five years and has a BA in social sciences from UNLV. Originally from Las Vegas, she currently lives in Scotland with her husband, two children, and their Pekingese mix.

Commenting on her nomination, Akemi Dawn Bowman said: "I'm incredibly honoured to see *Starfish* on the shortlist for the Scottish Teenage Book Prize. I found out while walking around a bookstore, which was very fitting, and immediately jumped around with excitement behind one of the shelves. Knowing Kiko's story is still reaching readers all this time after its release means the absolute world. I'm very, very grateful!"

Notes to editors:



For all media enquiries including photos of the launch or the authors, please contact Keara Donnachie on keara.donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com or 0131 524 0184 / 07956 773 749.

Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home.
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland's diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.

In addition to the funding we receive from the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland, we need the constant support of trusts and foundations, corporate sponsors and individual donors.

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