



CRESSIDA COWELL ANNOUNCED AS NEW WATERSTONES CHILDREN'S LAUREATE

Books are transformative because of their unique ability to develop three key magical powers: intelligence, creativity and, most important of all, empathy. Words are power; let's take magic seriously. **Cressida Cowell, Waterstones Children's Laureate**

Cressida Cowell, the bestselling author and illustrator of the **How to Train Your Dragon** and **The Wizards of Once** series and the author of the **Emily Brown** picture books has today been crowned the Waterstones Children's Laureate 2019-2021. At the award ceremony at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London, she pledged to be 'a Laureate who fights for books and children's interests with passion, conviction and action'.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Waterstones Children's Laureate, awarded once every two years to an eminent children's author or illustrator to honour outstanding achievement in their field.

Each Laureate brings their own 'to-do' list to the role. The eleventh Laureate unveiled the **Cressida Cowell Waterstones Children's Laureate Charter**, a ten point list to help ensure that books and reading are available to absolutely everyone. The charter asserts that every child has the right to:

1. Read for the joy of it
2. Access NEW books in schools, libraries and bookshops
3. Have advice from a trained librarian or bookseller
4. Own their OWN book
5. See themselves reflected in a book
6. Be read aloud to
7. Have some choice in what they read
8. Be creative for at least 15 minutes a week
9. See an author event at least ONCE
10. Have a planet to read on

At the ceremony, Cowell spoke about the importance of school libraries and her plans to campaign for these to be made statutory, and, along with public libraries and librarians, funded properly. Cowell also spoke about helping to develop children's creative intelligence in the context of the cultural industries and the value they add to the UK economy and beyond, arguing for creative space on the curriculum. She stated that 'Practical magic, empathy and creative intelligence, is the plan.'

Cowell was presented with the silver Laureate medal by the outgoing **Waterstones Children's Laureate**, Lauren Child.

Nicholas Tucker talks to Cressida in the [new issue of Books for Keeps](#) [1].

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[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/237/childrens-books/articles/cressida-cowell-children?s-laureate-2019-?-2021>