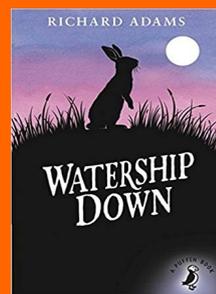
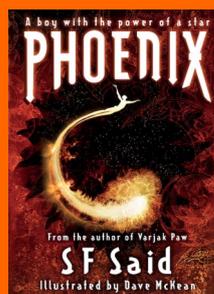
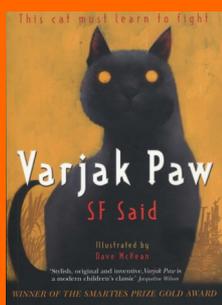


SF SAID

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT



WHY DO YOU READ?

I love books that thrill me and move me and fill my head with big ideas; books that introduce me to characters who feel like my friends, and take me to places I'll never forget—even to other worlds! Looking back, I think the books I loved when I was young did all those things. They were thrilling, but they also changed my life, shaped the way I saw the world, and became a part of who I am. So I believe the books you read when you're young are the most important ones of all. And that's why I've dedicated my life to writing books for young readers.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD BOOK?

My favourite childhood book was *Watership Down* by Richard Adams—an epic adventure about rabbits trying to survive in the wild. I could not stop reading that book. It changed my life, because I remember thinking it was the best book I'd ever read, and that one day I wanted to try and write something even half as good. And ever since then, that's what I've been trying to do.

WHICH OF YOUR OWN BOOKS IS YOUR FAVOURITE?

I had 90 rejections before I got my first book published. That book was *Varjak Paw*: a story about a cat who dreams of becoming a great warrior, and learns a secret martial art in his dreams. It will always mean something unique to me, because it was my breakthrough after many setbacks. On the other hand, I felt *The Outlaw Varjak Paw* was a bit better written than the first one, while *Phoenix* was a step up on both: an epic story about a human boy and an alien girl who must save the galaxy from the war between humans and aliens. It's a much bigger, more ambitious book, all about the meaning of the universe and our place in it. So it's one of those three books, anyway!!