

PRESS RELEASE

Praise from Black Bristol councillor for new children's book about the Slave Trade

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Salisbury, UK, 11 November 2017 – a new children's time-travel adventure about the Slave Trade has been praised by Cleo Lake, Green Party councillor for Cotham Ward in Bristol.

Set in Bristol in the 18th century, *Slaves for the Isabella* explores Britain's part in the Slave Trade and the enslavement of Africans, in a way that children can understand and relate to.

Speaking outside City Hall on 10th November, the day that slave trader Edward Colston is controversially celebrated in Bristol, Councillor Lake said, "This whole topic is very contemporary, it's something that keeps coming round and it's not going to go away. *Slaves for the Isabella* is a great way in for younger people to understand some of the history. It has a very accurate depiction of Bristol with regard to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and it's engaging and gripping. What I particularly like is the way that it expresses the sentiments, attitudes and emotions, both of the time, and on reflection back from the contemporary to the past. So it has the angle of critical thinking for young people, which I like."

She did sound a note of caution, however. "Some of the language is problematic for me. The question is how schools will be able to manage that." Author, Julia Edwards, explains: "There are a number of racist incidents in the book, and I chose to make the aggressors speak in a way that is deeply insulting. I did think about that extremely carefully, and writing those sections made me really uncomfortable. But I felt it was important not to soften the harsh reality of racism. It had to be shocking, and I hope that my readers will understand that this kind of language is abhorrent from the way my hero reacts against what he hears."

Councillor Lake continued, "This is a topical debate, and *Slaves for the Isabella* adds to that debate. It's a discussion that needs to happen, and that needs to happen with young people. But it's important too that people understand that the history of people of African descent did not start with enslavement, our development was interrupted by that episode but it was a blip on a long timeline of advancement and civilisation. Understanding the greatness of ancient Africa is also important for young people of African descent to reimagine their place in the future."

Slaves for the Isabella is the fifth book in *The Scar Gatherer Series*, a sequence of time-travel adventures for 8 to 12 year olds, spanning British history from Roman times through to World War Two. The first five books are available from booksellers, as well as directly from the series website, www.scargatherer.co.uk. A wealth of additional series-related material for children, including background information on the Slave Trade, is also available from the website.