



## Boy In The Tower

*Polly Ho-Yen*

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*When they first arrived, they came quietly and stealthily as if they tip-toed into the world when we were all looking the other way.*

Ade loves living at the top of a tower block. From his window, he feels like he can see the whole world stretching out beneath him.

His mum doesn't really like looking outside - but it's going outside that she hates.

She's happier sleeping all day inside their tower, where it's safe.

But one day, other tower blocks on the estate start falling down around them and strange, menacing plants begin to appear.

Now their tower isn't safe anymore. Ade and his mum are trapped and there's no way out . . .

## Boy In The Tower Details

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Author : Polly Ho-Yen

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## From Reader Review Boy In The Tower for online ebook

### Olivia Henderson says

I really enjoyed this book even though it is not the usual style I would go for. I loved the unusual storyline and how it was told from a young boy's point of view. I felt like I really connected with the characters in the book and could imagine what it would be like to be in their position. The only thing I didn't enjoy so much was the resolution to the problem. I felt like it happened too quickly without much explanation and description of the journey the characters took. Can't say too much about this without giving the plot away! But overall I would definitely recommend this book - for UKS2 (and adults!).

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### Mathew says

I was so surprised to find that this is a debut, so well structured is the plot and real are the characters. Seen through the eyes of Ade, a young boy who lives at the top of a tower block with his mother, the Wyndham-esque story of a strange, menacing disaster which threatens the city of London and its residents into extinction is gripping.

Two elements of the story really impressed me: the unraveling of the narrative and characterisation. Like a fine Hitchcock, the author takes a long time to reveal the enemy, leaving the reader guessing and wondering as to what it looks like and what its purpose is. So many books these days feel as if they are obligated to rush into the action but Ho-Yen proves that with interesting characters and a strong control of suspense this does not have to be the case at all.

Through the short chapters, Ade shares with us his thoughts and feelings, his habits and fears and his role in the book is made all the more interesting by his emotional absence of his mother. There are moments when he feels as real a person as someone you meet. His monologues and observations of life are ones which some children will associate with and these are elements which I think draw us to him so strongly.

As with the enemy itself, Ho-Yen never spoon-feeds the actions and thoughts of those characters who are involved in Ade's life and the book is far richer for it. As with all well-written first-person narratives, we only know what Ade knows and as the world around him changes we feel as confused and frustrated as to the actions and character of the people he lives with. Each character is complex and carries with them their own story and I love the fact that Ho-Yen respected the reader enough to hold enough back to have them asking questions.

I found Boy in the Tower is be an engaging and absorbing read. The short chapters keep the reader gripped and as the enemy's gradual, patiently written reveal means that the pace and tension grow to a point where the book is simply unputdownable. I would recommend it to Year 5 (end of)/6+. I had plenty of questions that I wanted to ask the author and talk around these questions in class would prompt some great discussions.

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### Graine Milner says

I read this a few years ago, and loved it - it's a story that's stayed with me and stood out in my mind. Such a

clever idea, and so well-written. I'd highly recommend this, especially for Y7/8 readers.

## 16GubikD says

It was a good book but some things seemed way too convenient that reminded you that you are reading a book. I think the ending was okay but the main threat should have been explained more. I like the characters but the mum should have been explained as well. Why does she not want to leave the room? But it was a good book nevertheless.

Holly says

This book was a book I just couldn't put down. There were a lot of tense moments and it was a very good book to read. I was reading it and I told myself "maybe two more chapters" and I ended up reading five! I don't want to spoil what happened so I won't say much more but I definitely recommend reading this book.

## **Abdollah zarei says**

## Simon Smith says

As a fan of Wyndham I loved this human Sci-fi. Well structured and plotted. Loved the characters. Thought Ben may take us in a Z for Zachariah direction but it didn't go that way. Fantastic story.

## **Jack Cleaver says**

I thought it was a good book got all the way through and I rate it 4 stars

## Michelle says

I first heard about **The Boy in the Tower** at blogger brunch and when I found it on netgalley had to request it. It sounded like it would be a quick but great read and I couldn't wait to dive in.

Ade lives in a tower block with his Mum, who we quickly learn is agoraphobic. He does a lot of things for himself, shopping, cooking, etc, so when the Bluchers strike he is left to try and deal with the beginnings of this invasion, but also try to keep himself and his Mum safe.

When I began reading **The Boy in the Tower** I wasn't hooked like I thought I would be. Honestly, I carried on reading to find out more about these strange plants, and wondered what would happen to Ade and his Mum. I felt like the lead up and introduction to these plants and what was going on felt too long, and when the 'real stuff' starts to happen it felt over far too fast. I wanted to know more about the plants, the reason for their appearance, and why they did what they did. But I didn't get any of that, just that the plants are there, that they damage building and kill people.

I did however like the underlining plot of **The Boy in the Tower**. Of having strong friendships, trusting others in times of need, and also helping out, working as a team to survive. So while I was disappointed in the story and the plot itself, as a whole **The boy in the Tower** was an okay read.

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## Pippa Wilson says

Shortlisted for the Blue Peter Book Awards 2015 and the Waterstones Children's Book Prize.

Longlisted for the Branford Boase Award 2015, and the Redbridge Children's Book Award 2015.

Also nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal.

This middle grade story is framed with a foreword and afterword from a boy called Ade. We are immediately introduced to the "bluchers", which are strange plants, and the fact that Ade is an observer from his perfect viewing post: his window from the top of his tower block. Ade's voice is quickly established in the first person. We understand straight away that Gaia is a special friend, and his comments about what happened 'Before' forewarns you that something significant is going to happen.

The action starts in the ordinary, urban world, and is recounted in the past tense. At this stage I was thinking the story reminded me of one of Jacqueline Wilson's stories: a child dealing with a challenging contemporary domestic situation. The familiar setting of school and home highlights the difficulties that Ade faces. His life is far from ideal with his Mum unable to leave the flat very often; but we learn that his neighbours are looking out for him.

As the story progresses, that sense of normality slowly crumbles away, especially when the buildings in Ade's neighbourhood begin to fall. We learn the cause of Ade's mum's agoraphobia, and feel Ade's sense of powerlessness. We see how resourceful he becomes in the face of adversity. We understand that Gaia helps him through all this. But before long anxiety in the community grows to the point where Ade is left to deal with his Mum alone. From Part 2 the story is told in the present tense, drawing us into the immediacy of the situation.

Polly Ho-Yen tells this story in a very simple, relaxed and pragmatic way. We see how Ade deals with this life changing situation through the detail of the mundane daily tasks and minutiae of practicality. For example, how Ade, Dory and Obi deal with toilet arrangements, drinking water and food when they are effectively trapped. (When I was a child I always got annoyed in stories that they glossed over these details!) The story unfolds in a relaxed manner reflecting the calm and stoic way that Ade deals with strange and stressful situations. Anchored to his flat by his mum who refuses to leave, he cannot escape, and therefore has to carry on regardless. In short, he has to drop childhood and take on the role of carer, and take care of himself.

As the danger to Ade grows, and the sinister nature of the bluchers becomes more scary, we see what he's really made of. All the time we are wondering how on earth he is going to escape the inevitable doom unscathed. When Ade faces his most dangerous fate, we are terrified with him, knowing what an ordeal he has endured to survive to that point. The suspense is almost suffocating, and not only do we care about Ade and Mum, but also his new found friends who have helped each other.

But if you want to know the ending, you'll just have to read it yourself!

This is above all a story about friendship, about resilience and loyalty. Old-fashioned values in a daunting world. I think you'd like this if you enjoyed Valentine Joe by Rebecca Stevens or The Last Wild by Piers Torday.

This a perfect book for young people to read alone, but would also be an excellent choice to read aloud to Year 5 or 6.

Pippa Wilson  
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### **Avid says**

What a wonderfully written book. I feel so connected to Ade, and what he went through. I rocketed through the last 100 or so pages, such was the drama and building of suspense.

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### **Robin Stevens says**

An absolutely top drawer science fiction story that doesn't pull any punches. It's a dark, complex, terrifying world, and Ade's story (think Day of the Triffids meets Pigeon English) had me on the edge of my seat. Incredibly impressive stuff.

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### **Terri says**

This is a delightful, heartfelt, well-observed, kids' sci-fi novel set in Camberwell, which if you're anything like me will make you cry quite a lot. Ade, the little boy at its heart, is already bravely dealing with acting as a carer for his mum and feeling left out at school, and things get much worse when 21st-century Triffids turn up.

It's set in a tower block community and, though it was written way beforehand, it's hard not to think of Grenfell when reading it, even though the threat in this case doesn't involve fire. Ade's life feels so accurately described that you empathise with him very quickly, and really want good things to happen to him and his little found family of other survivors.

It's joy to read and strongly recommended for both kids and adults.

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### **Alex Peachman says**

This is a really unusual book. It's about what happens to a boy who lives in a tower block when an environmental catastrophe occurs, and how he manages to survive with the help of his neighbours. It sounds rather gloomy, but it's actually rather uplifting and it's a compelling read. Highly recommended.

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### **Miriam says**

Utterly brilliant! Was totally gripped!

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