

PRESS KIT: A RELUCTANT WITCH'S GUIDE TO MAGIC

SHORT BIO

Shivaun Plozza is the award-winning author of *Frankie*, *Tin Heart*, *The Boy, the Wolf, and the Stars* and *A Reluctant Witch's Guide to Magic*. Her writing has been short-listed for the CBCA Book of the Year, YALSA's Top Ten Best Young Adult Books of the Year, and the Gold Inky. She won the Davitt Award for Best Young Adult Crime Novel in 2017.

STANDARD BIO

Shivaun Plozza is an award-winning author of books for children and young adults. Her debut novel, *Frankie*, was a CBCA Notable Book and won a number of awards, including the Davitt Awards and a commendation from the Victorian Premier's Literary Award. Her second novel, *Tin Heart*, sold in four foreign territories, received two starred reviews, and was nominated to ALA'S Best Fiction for Young Adults list. She has written two middle grade fantasy novels, *The Boy, the Wolf, and the Stars* and *A Reluctant Witch's Guide to Magic*, both sold in multiple territories. She is a frequent contributor to anthologies, and when she is not writing she works as an editor and manuscript assessor. She lives in Victoria, Australia, with her cat, Fenchurch.

50-WORD BIO

Shivaun Plozza is the award-winning author of *Frankie*, *Tin Heart*, *The Boy, the Wolf, and the Stars* and *A Reluctant Witch's Guide to Magic*. She won the Davitt Award for Best YA Crime Novel in 2017 and has been short-listed for numerous prizes, including the CBCA Book of the Year.

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PRODUCT INFORMATION

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Genre: Fantasy (junior fiction/middle grade)

Keywords: Magic, adventure, mystery, humour, cats, witches, friendship, self-esteem.

SHORT BLURB

Willa Birdwhistle does *not* want to be a witch . . . When she's told she must choose a coven, she's certain it's a mistake. But it's not, and she has only one year to learn how to control her wild magic - or she'll explode!

Can Willa master her magic and unravel a mystery to save her city, her friends and herself?

STANDARD BLURB

Kiki's Delivery Service meets Cressida Cowell in this funny, quirky middle grade fantasy about a non-magical girl who discovers she does, indeed, have magic—and she must choose between two warring witch covens or she'll explode!

Willa lives in the Wild, in a city squished between two warring witch covens. The non-magical Wildians spend their days dodging wayward spells—from raining frogs to dancing chickens—all because of the witch war raging around them.

Being stuck in the middle of a magical war means the Wildians hate witches—none more so than Willa, whose parents were turned into clouds by a misplaced curse. Willa spends her days with her army of cats, dreaming of an end to the war and her parents' return.

So when Willa is accused of being a witch after witnesses catch her accidentally stopping a spell mid-air, she's certain there's been a mistake. She can't be a witch! Yet Willa is dragged to the palace, where she's given one year to master her volatile magic and choose a coven to join. If she doesn't, she'll explode.

But her attempts to control her magic are interrupted when a rogue witch begins nefarious spells against the Ordinary Folk. What does the witch want and what does it have to do with Willa? She must unravel the mystery to save her city, her friends, and herself.

PHOTO

Download a high resolution author photo [here](#).

Preview:



Author photo credit: © Peta Twisk

BOOK COVER

Download a high resolution copy of the book cover [here](#).

Preview:



Book cover illustration by: Wendy Tan (Instagram: @wendytansaw)

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

'Witch wars': These two words randomly popped into my head at 9:22am on October 14, 2019 and I knew there was a story in them. I know the precise time because I immediately opened my phone and wrote a note: 'Land divided into three. Two warring witch covens and the non-magical folk stuck in the middle of their war.' The plot flowed from there with surprising ease.

I wanted to write a story with a classic, timeless feel, a story with plenty of humour, action and a unique magical system. I also wanted to focus on friendship—especially negotiating new friendships, craving friendships, and letting yourself come to rely on your friendships.

I created a world where magic has to be tamed or else you'll explode as a means to explore themes of creativity. I wanted to look at the way we too often lose our wilder, more creative impulses as we grow up, usually as a result of external, societal pressures. I remember being teased for being 'different' as a child, for not fitting into a neat box—I was the 'weird art kid' trying to express myself through music, clothes, hair, art and struggling to find my place because of it. So I wrote this story thinking of any child feeling the pressures of fitting in. I wanted to say to them and to child-me: don't contain your magic, let it run wild.

Maybe this all makes the story sound too serious? Because, honestly, I also wanted the chance to write some fart jokes for once. So I did. Snot jokes, too. I started writing this book at a time of massive upheaval—the beginning of a global pandemic—so more than anything I wanted to make myself laugh, and I wanted to feel joy and comfort. I wanted somewhere to escape to, and this story world with its frog rain and spaghetti hair and mischievous books and a hundred cats became that place for me. I hope it can become that place for readers, too.

REVIEW QUOTES

(Quotes are updated as they come in)

"... intrigue, danger, and fast-paced, heart-stopping adventures, with loads of twists and turns ... Exciting and highly imaginative."

–Kirkus Reviews

"Juxtaposing Willa's earnest internal growth with an absurd and bureaucratic magical realm, Plozza ... creates a sense of alienation in the tween, even as she establishes new bonds, in this offbeat read with an archetypal heroine."

–Publisher's Weekly

"Plozza's absorbing novel is full of inventive (and occasionally hilarious) magic; the spell casting, via wild exclamations and intricate dance steps, is particularly entertaining. A bewitching introduction to an original magical world."

–Booklist