

## BOOK REVIEWS - MARCH 2019

World Book Day is a registered charity on a mission to give every child and young person a book of their own. Designated by UNESCO as a worldwide celebration of books and reading in over 100 countries all over the world. The 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019 was the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of World Book Day, allowing children to dress up as their favourite characters, i.e. Harry Potter, Star Wars, Toy story, but the main aim is to get children reading.

This got me thinking back to my own childhood and my introduction to reading when I was in Primary School. Enid Blyton was my favourite! *The Famous Five*, *The Secret Seven*, *Malory Towers*, *The Twins at St. Clare's*, I so wanted to go to boarding school!! I progressed to *Little Women*, *What Katy Did*, *Black Beauty*, I loved and enjoyed all these books and many more.

The author and book that stands out for me, from nearly 50 years ago, when I had just turned a teenager, is Judy Blume – ***Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret***. Published by Bradbury Press 1970.

This is a coming of age young adult novel as Margaret Simon finds herself moving house, new school and new friends. She finds herself talking to God, as she doesn't have a faith with her Father being Jewish and her Mother a Christian. As she struggles to define a religion she can join, she turns to God, and talks about everything, religion, bra's, periods, boys and kissing. It is funny, emotional, extremely well written, especially exploring the taboo subjects of that time. A book well before its time but welcomed. The author has written over one hundred novels, most of which I have read, but this is my all time favourite. Great read.

**BIRD BOX** by JOSH MALERMAN (*published by Harper, March 2014*).

The story unfolds in the present day with flashbacks 4 years earlier when it all started. Malorie, 4 years ago, is single and pregnant when the world as she knows it, abruptly changes. An unknown presence is surrounding the community, and with only a few survivors all they are aware of is that if anyone catches sight of this presence outside, they instantly turn mad, killing themselves and others. People blacken their windows and hide away. Malorie is trying to save her children by training them in surviving tactics wearing blindfolds as she prepares them for the day when they are ready to escape this madness. People start grouping together again, looking towards a future, but, with limited resources and no way of learning the cause of this mysterious presence how dangerous is the walk through the forest to reach the river, blindfolded? Will Malorie save her children and reach survival and a new beginning? Interesting read.