

## **LABYRINTH ROAD IMPRINT, LED BY LIESA ABRAMS AT RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS, TO LAUNCH INAUGURAL LIST IN FALL 2022**

**New York, NY (September 9, 2022)**—**LABYRINTH ROAD**, a new Random House Children's Books (RHCB) imprint led by Vice President and Editor in Chief Liesa Abrams, will launch its first list in Fall 2022, it was announced today by Mallory Loehr, Executive Vice President and Publisher, Random House Books for Young Readers.

**LABYRINTH ROAD's** publishing will focus on middle-grade and young adult titles, particularly contemporary middle-grade fantasy series and high-concept literary YA novels. Featuring works from both debut and well-known creators, the imprint is committed to publishing diverse voices and inclusive stories, with a focus on LGBTQIA+ representation.

Prior to joining RHCB in November 2020, Abrams was Vice President, Editor at Large, at Simon & Schuster, following her time there as Editorial Director of the Simon Pulse imprint. Over the course of her career, Liesa has worked with a wide array of talented creators, helping to grow established authors and break out new voices. With her keen eye for talent, Abrams acquired many now-bestsellers in the middle-grade category when they were debuts, including Rachel Renée Russell (*Dork Diaries*), James Riley (*Story Thieves*), and Shannon Messenger (*Keeper of the Lost Cities*). In young adult, Abrams acquired and edited bestselling works by Tracy Deonn, Scott Westerfeld, Kiersten White, and Lynn Weingarten, among others. During Abrams's time at Simon and Schuster, the Simon Pulse imprint gained a reputation for its dedication to pushing and redefining boundaries and amplifying a diverse array of voices—and that same emphasis is at the heart of **LABYRINTH ROAD**.

In Abrams's words: "Labyrinth Road is a home for books about epic journeys—both fantastical and emotional—that allow readers to explore our world and imagined worlds. Labyrinths offer a way to get safely lost; they have twists and turns, but they don't have dead ends. The books on our list will be those in which readers can escape where they are, while feeling seen for who they are."

The imprint's inaugural lists (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023) will include two young adult novels and three middle-grade books by a varied list of both debut and award-winning authors.

***The Epic Story of Every Living Thing* by Deb Caletti** (on sale 9/13/2022 | Ages 14 and up)—A fiercely feminist young adult novel about a teen who travels to Hawaii to track down her sperm donor father, from the award-winning author of *A Heart in a Body in the World*. The book has received five starred reviews to date, including a review from *Kirkus* calling it, "[a] gorgeous coming-of-age novel."

***Sir Callie and the Champions of Helston* by Esme Symes-Smith** (on sale 11/8/2022 | Ages 8-12)—A thrilling middle-grade series opener that explores identity and gender, set in a magical medieval world filled with dragons, shape-shifters, and witches. Nonbinary debut author Esme Symes-Smith wishes to equip queer kids with the best tools to navigate their gender identity.

***Heroes of Havensong: Dragonboy* by Megan Reyes** (on sale 1/24/2023 | Ages 8-12)—A timeless fantasy debut following four unlikely heroes bound together by the Fates themselves to save their world from being destroyed, from a debut author with a fresh take on magic and an accessible, contemporary voice.

***Dear Medusa* by Olivia A. Cole** (on sale 3/14/2023 | Ages 14 and up)—An intimate, fourth-wave feminist novel-in-verse that follows a sixteen-year-old girl coping with sexual abuse as she grapples with how to reclaim her story, her anger, and her body in a world that seems determined to punish her for the sin of surviving. Olivia A. Cole is a trusted voice on key issues. She has a strong social media presence and has been praised for her modern feminism and the way she tackles racism in her work.

***Momo Arashima Steals the Sword of the Wind* by Misa Sugiura** (on sale 4/4/2023 | Ages 8-12)—An exhilarating middle-grade fantasy series about a girl who sets out to save her Shinto goddess mother—and the world—by facing down demons intent on bringing chaos, from the award-winning author of three young adult novels who is making her middle-grade debut.

Additional titles slated for release at a later date include the heartwarming queer love story *The Rules of Us*, written by Jennifer Nissley; a middle-grade fantasy novel, *Spellbinders: The Not-So-Chosen One* by acclaimed author Andrew Auseon; *Blood City Rollers*, a graphic novel by debut writer V. P. Anderson, illustrated by illustrator-by-day and roller-skater-by-night Tatiana Hill; bestselling author/illustrator Emma Steinkellner's new graphic novel series Tales from Gumbling; and middle-grade fantasy series launch *Alex Wise vs. the End of the World* by Terry J. Benton-Walker.

**Liesa Abrams** has been an editor of books for tweens and teens for more than twenty-five years. She began her career at the company now known as Alloy Entertainment, where she worked on long-running franchise series such as Sweet Valley High, before becoming a founding editor of the Razorbill imprint at Penguin Young Readers, and then moving to Simon and Schuster. In her years at Simon and Schuster, Liesa launched the blockbuster #1 bestselling Dork Diaries series from then debut author Rachel Renée Russell. Other debut authors whose books Liesa edited and helped build into *New York Times* bestsellers include James Riley (Story Thieves), Shannon Messenger (Keeper of the Lost Cities), and Coretta Scott King–John Steptoe Award winner Tracy Deonn (*Legendborn*). Liesa also edited bestselling titles from Brandon Mull, Lisa McMann, Jodi Lynn Anderson, Suzanne Young, Lynn Weingarten, and Scott Westerfeld. Her focus on editing timely stories revolving around themes of identity and self-discovery in the YA space is reflected in the Michael L. Printz Honor Book *A Heart in a Body in the World* by Deb Caletti, the Sydney Taylor Honor Book *The Last Words We Said* by Leah Scheier, the Amelia Bloomer List title *The Nowhere Girls* by Amy Reed, and the multiple books she's edited that have been named ALA Rainbow List Top Ten selections, including Shaun David Hutchinson's *Brave Face* and Sarah Gailey's *When We Were Magic*.

**Labyrinth Road** is a home for middle-grade and young adult books spanning a range of genres, focusing on series and accessible fantasy. Abrams is focused on bringing high-concept, commercial stories built on foundations of deeply relatable characters where the stakes are as intensely emotional as they are epic and urgent. Labyrinth Road is also dedicated to publishing authors, not just books, supporting and launching debut voices as well as growing the careers of established writers. Representation is a priority for the imprint, especially LGBTQIA+ and intersectional identities. Labyrinth Road books will offer young readers an escape from life's challenges, allowing them to get lost in the story while knowing they are safe and seen and that there's a road back out to the other side.

**Random House Children's Books** (rhcbbooks.com) is the world's largest English-language children's trade book publisher. Creating books for toddlers through young adult readers, in all formats from board books to activity books to picture books, novels, and nonfiction, the imprints of Random House Children's Books bring together award-winning authors and illustrators, world-famous franchise characters, and multimillion-copy series. Random House Children's Books is a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

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