

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June

LO: Comprehension

## Malorie Blackman

Malorie Blackman is a popular British author who has written a multitude of award-winning books for children of all ages. In addition, she has also written a number of television scripts and a stage play. Malorie is renowned for addressing a range of issues within her books.



### Early Life

Malorie was born in Clapham, London on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1962. When she was younger, she enjoyed spending her Saturdays in the library devouring all sorts of books, ranging from myths and legends to classic stories and science fiction.

Malorie trained in computer science and later graduated from a school that specialised in film and television. After gaining these qualifications, she worked as a systems programmer before making the decision to turn writing into a full-time career.



### Writing Career

When reflecting upon the stories that she read as a child, Malorie said that she realised that none of the featured characters were Black people. Wanting to address this imbalance, she made the decision to start writing the books that she would have wanted to read when she was a child: sci-fi books, adventure tales, horror stories and more, all of which featured Black characters.

Malorie spent over two years sending stories that she had written to various publishers. After receiving a total of 82 rejection letters, Malorie received her first 'yes'. In 1990, her first book 'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories' was published. Written for young adults, the book contained a collection of horror and sci-fi stories.

Just two years later, 'Hacker' was published – this was Malorie's first book for children. 'Hacker' follows the story of a girl who uses her incredible hacking skills to attempt to break into a bank's computer files in order to prove her dad's innocence after he's accused of stealing one million pounds.

In 1997, Malorie's well-known book 'Pig Heart Boy' was published. In addition to being shortlisted for several awards, 'Pig Heart Boy' was later adapted into a six-part television series where it received an award for best children's drama.

Since the publication of her first book, Malorie has written a significant number of novels for young children, older children and young adults.



### Tackling Important Issues



Malorie strongly believes that books can encourage empathy by allowing people to view things from another person's perspective. She suggests that by representing a range of cultures, beliefs and ethnicities within stories, we can start to combat racism and discrimination by allowing people to walk in other people's shoes. In an interview conducted in 2016, Malorie said, "Books should be mirrors as well as windows."

1. Find and copy a word which means ' a large number of'.
2. What does the word 'devouring' mean in the section **Early Life** ?
3. What was Malorie's first job ?
4. What type of books does Malorie write and why ?
5. What award did Pig Heart Boy win ?
6. What do you think Malorie meant when she said 'Books should be mirrors as well as windows.' ?