

● **What are Grace and Arthur up to in the new book?**

Vick: In the first book, *Listen Up*, we saw them solve the mystery of the school using their radio shows. This time they take it up a level because there's a rival school involved, more mysteries to solve and even more student media to get involved in. There's a student paper and a massive competition where they could be broadcasting nationally, so it's all to play for.

● **What inspired this storyline?**

Roman: We came up with the storyline while sat on a train on our way to a school. Vick was holding a cake and flowers and trying to write down my ideas.

Vick: It was my birthday; I don't just carry around cake and flowers everywhere I go! We were doing this amazing school tour with our last book, and it was during this time that we wanted to do a second book. Ro has so many ideas and is so exuberant with them and I try to get it all into some kind of structure on my laptop. We wanted to show the ways that kids can use their voices if they believe in something and also to stand up for something. In this book there are protests going on over the park, which is under threat of being destroyed. The kids don't want this, so they use their voice to save the park. We wanted to show the way you can use your voice, that if something in our society isn't right, you should stand up for what you believe in. I think that in 2020 and 2021 it means more than ever.

● **When you do school tours, what kind of feedback do you get from the kids?**

Roman: Kids are just the best. They love being able to solve the mystery; solving mysteries is something that it doesn't matter what age you are, it's a lot of fun in a book. So that's definitely one thing. Vick and I will do a little bit of reading from the book. Vick's a good reader, so she'll read it out and I'll try and act it out, and there's always a bit where she'll make me fall over a million times. The kids love it. It means a lot to us to be able to go there and see the enjoyment of something we've been a part of.

Vick: Also, afterwards we get to have a chat with



KIDS ARE THE BEST!

RADIO DJs and best buddies Vick Hope and Roman Kemp also write books for kids. Their second novel, *Shout Out*, is out now, so they told us all about it!

them and I love hearing what their favourite subjects are. Seeing so many kids come over and saying they really love maths or science or design and technology. When you see how different their answers are, there's something really special about that. You don't want them to feel that they have to follow certain paths; at that stage they can do anything. They can do everything. And they are, that's why all their answers are different. It's the best time.

● **What is your writing process for these books?**

Roman: This one was quite funny! Y'know, I'm not a great writer, I'm not very academic. I struggled with reading books and I've always struggled in that sense. Vick is a fantastic writer and someone who reads an astronomical number of books, so when it comes to brainstorming ideas, I mind-blurt everything down onto a page and Vick will make sense of it. But with this one, it came together in terms of a story and I had to say to Vick: "I'm really sorry, I'm not going to have a phone: I'm leaving the country for four weeks because I'm on *I'm A Celeb!*" So Vick really had her work cut out on this one and she really

pulled through because there are deadlines that you have to hit. When I came back out of it, she was like: "Don't worry, I've sorted it!"

● **Are the characters based on you?**

Vick: There are definitely parts of us in them and parts of friends we had growing up, friends we have now, teachers we knew. That's where we got inspiration from. I think we wanted to show that everyone is different and that's a really spectacular thing. Everyone's got different skills and we should celebrate how unique every child is, but also show that when they work together, that's when they're most powerful. Work as a team, that's when you solve a mystery.

● **What was school like for you?**

Roman: School for me was about friends and playing football. I went to a very posh school, so I did subjects like classical civilisation and I loved that. It's all mythology, it's all made-up stories. I loved doing drama at school, but it was always about the social aspect. It was where I learned how to talk to people!

Vick: I was quite academic but I don't think I was very proud of it. I was a bit embarrassed to be, I guess, a bit of a swot. I basically wanted to do everything. Every play, every drama club, every sport, every dance class. I just liked to get involved and I loved to learn. I still do. But I didn't realise that was a good thing until recently. The problem I did have was that I was quite opinionated, so if I didn't agree with the teacher, I used to argue, which is not a good trait.

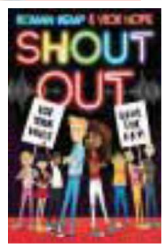
● **Looking back, what advice would you give your 11-year-old self?**

Vick: I think we always say this, but you're going to be okay. Don't worry. There are so many things that we get stressed about, and are constantly looking at the future or worrying about the past, but actually you'll be fine. All the things you get to do on a daily basis, enjoy them and revel in them. Live in the present, live in the moment.

Roman: Mine would be: you're never going to sign for Arsenal, so make sure you pay attention in science. And worry less!



Shout Out by Roman Kemp and Vick Hope is out now



CHARITIES SUPPORTED BY FIRST NEWS



COOK WITH OMARI

TOP TIP!
Always wash your hands before you start cooking!

MEET Omari McQueen, the 12-year-old star of CBBC's cooking show, *What's Cooking, Omari?* Omari shared his top vegan cooking tips and one of his favourite recipes with *First News!*

"Hi First News, I'm Omari and I am 12 years old. I started cooking when I was seven, which was when my mum got sick, so my dad taught me how to cook. I introduced my mum to a vegan-based diet to make her feel better! Here are my tips for being a top chef, some interesting facts and a recipe from my TV series!"

OMARI'S YUM PLUM AND BLACKBERRY CRUMBLE

A plum and blackberry base with nutmeg, caster sugar and golden syrup, topped with an oatly biscuit and sugar crumble. Garnished with sliced plums.

INGREDIENTS

- 150g/handful of blackberries
- 3.5 plums
- ½ teaspoon of nutmeg
- 50g brown caster sugar
- Sprinkle of icing sugar
- 2 tbsp/squeeze of golden syrup
- 150g plain flour
- 100g vegan butter
- 125g/handful of oatly biscuits

METHOD

1. Put blackberries, 2 plums, nutmeg, 2 tsp caster sugar and golden syrup into a blender and mix.
2. Pour mixture into a baking dish. Set aside.
3. Crush oat biscuits until they are a fine texture.
4. Mix the crushed biscuits with the flour, then add sugar.
5. Add two large spoons of vegan butter. Mix.
6. Add nutmeg and mix again until crumbly.
7. Spread crumble on top of the plum and berry mixture.
8. Slice remaining plums to decorate top of crumble.
9. Bake in the oven for 20 mins at 170°C.
10. Once baked, dust with icing sugar and serve.



TOP TIP!

You can make this recipe vegan or non-vegan.



Young Omari



Omari teaching his brother to cook

TOP TIPS!

Write down your favourite meals and look for their vegan alternatives. There are lots of great vegan egg, dairy and meat replacements available in the shops.

Courgette is technically a fruit, although it is treated and commonly referred to as a vegetable.

Jackfruit is a great alternative to meat and that's why I love it!

To stop bananas from over-ripening, wrap the stem with tape. This makes them last longer and stops them getting all squishy.

The kitchen is like a science lab and it's fun to experiment with new flavours! Try out different seasonings and spices. Check the label before buying, as some herb and spice mixes can contain additives or extra salt.

Try different types of fruits and vegetables, even the funny-looking ones! Remember that trying new foods is all part of experimenting with your taste buds.



Behind the scenes of *What's Cooking, Omari?*



Tune into *What's Cooking, Omari?* on CBBC and BBC iPlayer from Sunday 10 January at 9:30am
The book, *Omari McQueen's Best Bites*, is out now from Scholastic

THIS WEEK

1 The list of authors writing the official books for World Book Day 2021 has been announced. This March you'll be able to buy the special £1 books from a host of top authors, including Katherine Rundell, Derek Landy, Jonny Duddle, Zanib Mian, Tom Fletcher and Julia Donaldson. World Book Day is 4 March, and this year there will be lots of online events for everyone to join in with!



2 The Young Songwriter of the Year competition for budding young songwriters is now open. The competition is open for 8 to 18-year-olds and songs must be under 4.5 minutes long and written by you. The rules for entering can be found at songacademy.co.uk along with a list of the fab prizes on offer and the full list of all-star judges.

3 It's been confirmed that there will be a third series of *His Dark Materials* on BBC One. The drama is based on the book trilogy by Philip Pullman. The third series is expected to be based on the third book in the trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*. Production of the new series will start this year!

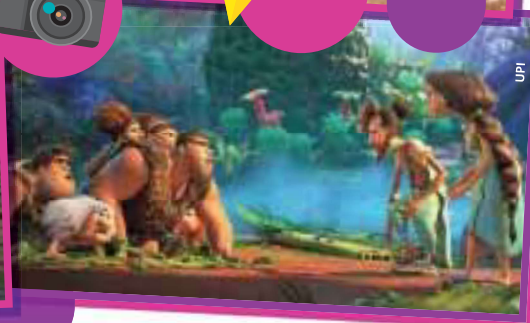
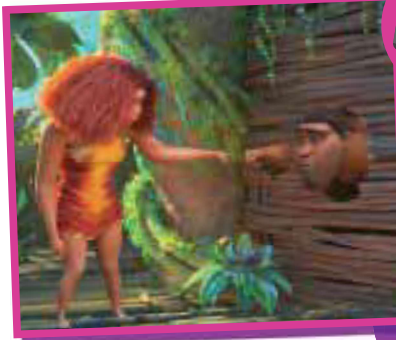


PICS OF THE WEEK

THE Croods are moving house in the hilarious second film about the cave family.

Eep and her family are still looking for a safe place to call home, and when they crash through a mysterious wall, their new adventures begin. For the first time, the Croods meet other humans, the Bettermans, who have developed a more civilised way of living. Will the Crood family swap sleep piles for showers and a life as farmers? You'll have to watch to find out! If you enjoyed the first film, you'll love this one.

The Croods 2: A New Age is released on 26 March.



SUPER POWERS

THE stars of Netflix's new superhero flick, *We Can Be Heroes*, talked to us about superpowers!

● YaYa Gosselin (plays Missy Moreno)

"I think my favourite superhero power of one of the kids is Guppy's. She can move water, mould water, make water into what she wants. And also Rewind and Fast Forward; they work as a team and I think that is really special."

● Vivien Lyra Blair (plays Guppy)

"If I could have a superpower I would like to be able to speak to animals, so I could hear their thoughts and I could help them with any troubles. That is my best dream, to help animals."

● Lotus Blossom (plays A Capella)

"Everyone has such awesome superpowers. I think I'd probably like Wild Card's powers because he has all the powers and it would be awesome to have every power in the world."



● Isaiah Russell-Bailey (plays Rewind)

"I really like my power in the film; rewinding and manipulating time is really cool, but there's another power that I really like, which is the ability to take powers, so no matter what happens I can still have any power I wanted."

● Dylan Henry Lau (plays Slo-Mo)

"I think my favourite power is A Capella's because she actually sings. It's a very weird power because everyone can sing, but she sings really good and she can move objects. That's crazy."

● Akira Akbar (plays Fast Forward)

"I really like my power, fast forwarding time, but I also really like to have teleportation. I could just snap my fingers and I'd be anywhere!"

● Christian Slater (plays Tech-No)

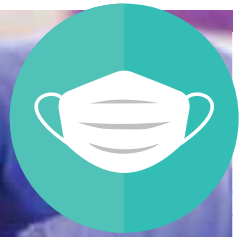
"If I had a superpower in real life, it's pretty obvious, I'd certainly want to be able to fly! You ever have those flying dreams? They're so exciting! I enjoy those and if I could have that skill or power I'd be happy!"

● Nathan Blair (plays Wild Card)

"I'd love to time travel – you can do so much with it. People would usually use that to do bad, but I would use it to do good and go back and correct people's wrongs. But I wouldn't want to mess with it too much because that power comes with a lot of responsibility!"

We Can Be Heroes
is out now on Netflix!

PREVENTING PANDEMICS



DOCTOR Peter Daszak is the president of EcoHealth Alliance, an organisation that studies new viruses and ‘emerging diseases’ (like the coronavirus that causes COVID-19), and is one of the world’s leading experts. We talked to him about why pandemics start and why there’ll definitely be more, but also what we can all do to help prevent them in the future.

A scientist in Thailand taking samples from a bat, as part of a hunt to find out where the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 came from

● **The word ‘unprecedented’ [never seen before] has been used a lot by politicians to excuse the slow response to this pandemic. Would you say it was unprecedented?**

We’ve had pandemics like this, just a long time ago. The 1918 influenza pandemic did exactly what this one is doing. So no, we knew what would happen, I just don’t think we expected it. People just aren’t good at preparing; it’s in our human nature. Like if you’re getting ready for an exam, you know you’ve got to do the revision but you say: “I’ll start in an hour”. But every now and again you don’t do enough and you fail, and that’s what we’ve done here. A government’s job is to get ready and make the world a safer place for its citizens, but some governments failed in that with this pandemic.

● **In the UK, the preparations were for a flu-like disease. Was that a reasonable guess?**

Most preparedness plans are built around flu. And there’s a reason for that: flu caused the big 1918 pandemic and we get seasonal flu every year. But if we only use that as the model for everything we do, then when a new disease emerges that’s different, we’re caught by surprise. We’ve been working in China for 15 years before COVID, looking for coronaviruses that come from bats that could infect people, so we were working on the exact thing that



Red Cross workers wearing masks during the 1918 flu pandemic

happened. During that time we’ve found evidence of hundreds of new viruses in wildlife around Southeast Asia, especially in China. We talked to the US government; we talked to the World Health Organization. Some folks listened – the Chinese government took this very seriously and they



had a system ready to catch new cases of pneumonia, the illness that you get with COVID. I don’t think most people took the risk seriously.

REDUCE CONSUMPTION

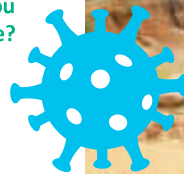
● **You’ve said that demand from consumers in rich countries drives things like deforestation and increases the risks of pandemics. Do you think that message has got across to people?**

We’ve been saying that for decades. These viruses are in wildlife where they don’t really do anything. But every now and again one gets into people and it causes really significant disease. So how do you reduce that contact between people and wildlife? Well, think about the things involved in COVID: the wildlife trade, people hunting and eating wildlife, using wildlife for medicine, farming them, shipping them around the world. Or deforestation, building roads into remote areas, bringing people into contact with populations of wildlife – these are the things that drive pandemics. We know that, but what we haven’t done is try to reduce our global footprint to reduce the risk of pandemics. If we don’t do anything, we’re going to see more and more pandemics. But we can reduce our global footprint individually and that will help. If we start working to become more sustainable to prevent pandemics, we also have an impact on conservation because we’re going to be consuming less wildlife as food or medicines, and we’re going to have an impact on climate change, because deforestation is also part of climate change. We can make a significant difference by realising that these things are all linked.

● **Do you think younger people will be more open to reducing their consumption?**

Yeah, I really do. The climate campaigns are exactly what we need to do around consumption for pandemic risk. They’re the same things that drive climate change, like deforestation and over-consumption of meat, driving cars every day. And climate change itself drives pandemic risk. So I do hope that the next generation is really going to take this seriously. I’ve said in the past that the metals in smartphones are part of the problem because we

have mines in forests that drive pandemic risks. You can’t just throw away your phone, but what you can do is put pressure on the people who produce them, and you can be more activist about it and say: “Find a solution. Come up with an alternative. Have more sustainable products or I’m not going to buy them”.



A Chinese mine where rare earth elements are extracted for use in gadgets such as smartphones

● **How likely is another pandemic?**

It’s not something to be scared of in everyday life, but it’s a fact that if we continue exploiting the planet in the way we’re doing, we’re going to see more pandemics, they’ll emerge more often and they’ll spread more quickly. And we can deal with it. We’ve dealt with this pandemic; we’ve not done a really good job of it, but vaccines are here and we will be safe eventually. But my concern is that we’ll see more and more pandemics, so we need to rethink our relationship with nature, and prevent pandemics instead of just waiting for them to happen.

● **Do governments realise that?**

I worry that it’ll be back to business as usual after this pandemic. It’s quite surprising to think that might happen, but people have a short memory, especially politicians who’ve got urgent budget requests for everything else. They need to spend money on healthcare for the elderly, for cancer, and people quickly forget. In five years there’ll be less interest in spending money to prevent future pandemics.

DESIGN FUTURE VACCINES

● **So how do we prevent the next pandemic?**

We know new viruses are out there, but finding them will cost money – but it’s not that expensive