

A note from the author:

I started writing *Lost for Words* at a time when libraries seemed somehow to be the softest of targets for ‘austerity’, when trained librarians and primary school libraries were being talked about as hopeless luxuries. I wanted to write a book that pointed out that libraries are vital: to all sorts of people for all sorts of reasons, and most of all to children. Every child deserves to spend time surrounded by more books than they think they will ever read. Nothing else could give a child more sense of how big and grand the world is, or how big and grand their own mind is. So the library came first, and my rather reluctant hero Dallas followed – a girl who sorely needs to believe that she can change something for the better. I didn’t know yet that by the time the book was published a schoolgirl would have become a global figure for inspiring huge numbers of her peers to lead climate protests across the world; I didn’t know that children of all ages would be banding together – in real life! – to save libraries. But I knew that I wanted to write about a library being important to a child who had already lost a lot – and I wanted to say that, given half a chance and a proper exposure to books, today’s children are going to be the ones who save the world for everyone.

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