

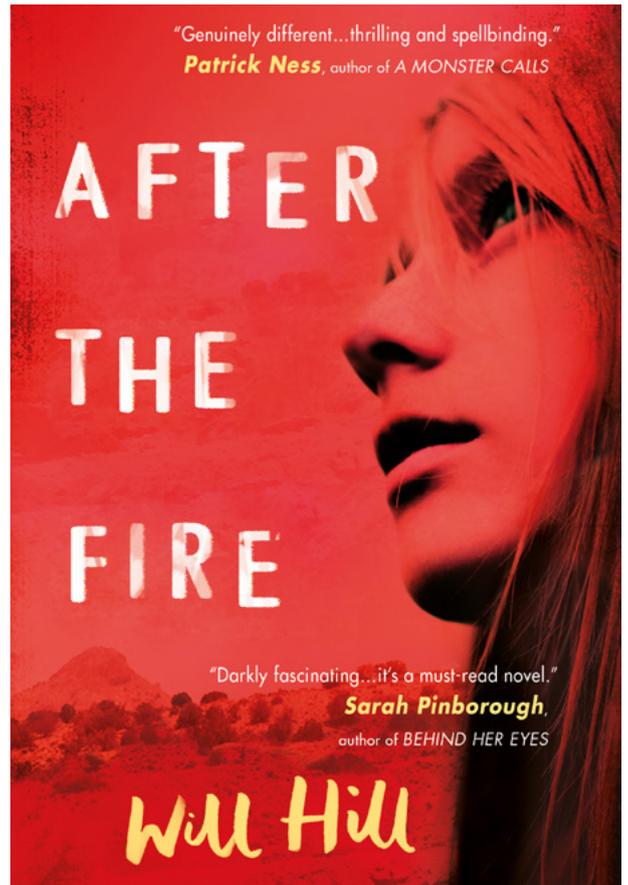
# AFTER THE FIRE

By Will Hill

Usborne Books

2018 Carnegie Medal shortlist,  
eligible for Amnesty CILIP Honour

**‘An utterly compelling, dark and morally complex read that demands the reader engages with issues and experiences beyond their knowledge... thoroughly absorbing.’ Judging panel**



## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**Article 18:** We all have the right to believe in what we want to believe, to have religion, or to change it if we want

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

We meet 17-year-old Moonbeam after the fire. Now in a treatment facility, her door is locked, her routine is dictated and her social time supervised. She must put her trust in two strangers and question everything she believed in.

Inspired by a real-life American cult, *After The Fire* is about faith, survival, acceptance and freedom. It highlights the government's responsibility to protect people from cruel, degrading treatment and how people can violate the rights of others. It also explores the right to freedom of expression and our own beliefs, and what it means to discover that your whole life has been a lie.

### HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS STORY

The right to make up our own minds; to have a religion and change it if we want; to safety; to a good life; to be protected by the government; to privacy; to healthcare;

to be free from torture and slavery; to freedom of movement; to choose whether to get married and who to; to education and information; to peace and order.

### YOU CAN TALK ABOUT...

#### Moonbeam

- Moonbeam is... (describe her character).
- Would you have been as brave as her?

#### Information and truth

- Why did Father John ban TV and books?
- 'Tell me what I'm doing here and what's going to happen' (Moonbeam). What is the impact of Dr Hernandez withholding information?
- Why isn't Luke told who his biological parents are? How does that damage him?
- How important is it to access information?
- 'It made me see that everyone lies' (Moonbeam). Do you believe this?
- Does it matter if people lie?

## Liberty

- Should children under 18 have the right to refuse treatment and leave the hospital? If not, who should make those decisions?
- Moonbeam says 'I don't know what is going to happen to me. I don't even know where I am.' Is it right to withhold information from her in the hospital? Are all her rights respected?
- Moonbeam is locked in her room on The Base and in hospital. What's the difference?

## Responsibility and power

- Who was responsible for the safety of the children on The Base?
- When people say 'it's for your own good' how can we ensure they mean it and are right?
- How do you feel about Luke when you learn about his childhood?
- Do you believe people are good or bad? Can good people do bad things?
- Could Nate have acted differently?

## Violence

- Why were the parents on The Base violent towards their children?
- Why does Father John beat Luke? Why doesn't Luke turn against him?
- 'If I actually thought he was dangerous' – why can't Nate and Dr Hernandez see what Moonbeam sees?
- What would you have done when Moonbeam is told to fight Lucy?

## Faith

- Why did people believe in Father John?
- Why did he behave this way? Did he believe he was a prophet? Does it matter?
- Why do people put so much faith in abusive leaders?
- How do you respond when people talk to you about their faith? Are people respectful of your beliefs?

- Who was there for Moonbeam? Who could she trust?
- Do you agree with Moonbeam or Dr Hernandez about hope?

## Women's rights

- Talk about how the girls and women are portrayed.
- At 18 Moonbeam has to marry Father John – what do you think about this? And her mother's consent?
- Were the night-time visits consensual? How are the girls and women more vulnerable than the boys and men on The Base?
- Do the women of The Base have any choice after the Third Proclamation?
- 'She's a girl... she needs to do what she's told' (Jeremiah). How difficult will it be for him to change his attitudes towards women?
- How can we help people challenge the prejudices they have been brought up with?

## ACTIVITY

Chapters are divided into Before and After. Now write a chapter A Year Later. What has happened to Moonbeam?

## RESEARCH

Download the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and read through the rights. According to this convention, what are the obligations of the adults including Nate, the government and Agent Carlyle both before and after the fire? Why hasn't the USA signed this agreement?

**'I believed in him, and in the Legion, with all my heart, and part of me misses – will *always* miss – the certainty that came with that.'** *Moonbeam*

## WE ARE ALL BORN FREE AND EQUAL

The atrocities of World War II sparked a determination to protect the rights of all human beings everywhere. On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble says it must be shared, learned by children and be a part of all our lives.

When using these notes, you can download for reference:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights simplified version, especially useful for younger children [amnesty.org.uk/udhr](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [unicef.org/crc](https://www.unicef.org/crc)

For more free educational resources from Amnesty International go to [amnesty.org.uk/education](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)



The CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Children's Book Awards

