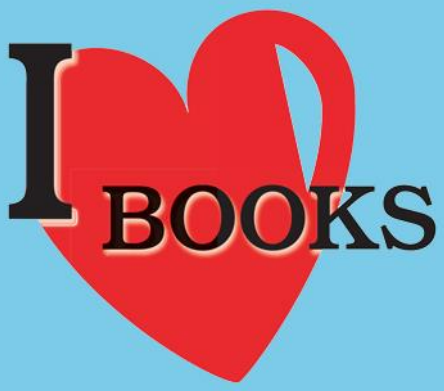


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Written by

John Agard

Illustrated by

Michael Broad

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Chapter 1
Up to No Good

Shona hated bats.

She didn't hate all forms of creepy-crawlies. She loved the feel of ladybirds on her fingers. That felt like summer had sprouted tiny spotted wings in the palm of her hand.

And when Shona helped her grandmother in the garden, she would put on rubber gloves and pick off all those slugs that made their yucky trail up Granny's pots of herbs. Granny grew

rosemary, bay leaf, marjoram, lemon balm, chamomile, and all sorts of strange herbs that sat like bursts of green on the concrete slabs in their back garden.

And once in a blue moon, Shona's dad would get into one of his fishing moods. Then he'd dig out his gear from the shed and Shona would be at his side with a tub of earthworms she herself had collected.



Even spiders she could live with, as long as those 8-leggers stuck to the corner and stayed out of the bath.

But bats? Bats were a no-no!

"Hate" was a strong word to Shona's ears, but somehow the word "dislike" didn't get to the bottom of her feelings. Horrid, night-time beasties with their fluttery mouse-heads!

Yes, the plain and simple truth was that Shona hated the sight of bats. To her, they seemed spooky and up to no good.

To cut a long story short, she'd rather aliens invaded Planet Earth than face bats in any shape or form.