



# I Wish I'd Written

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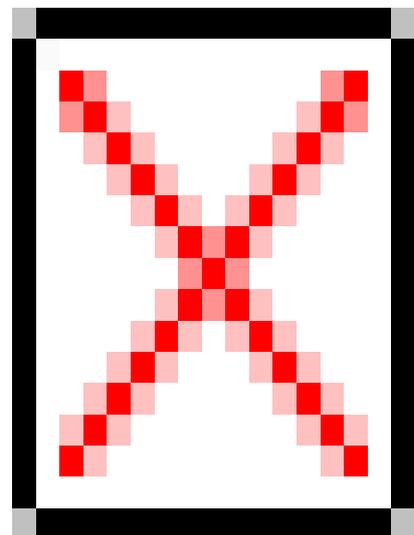
I Wish I'd Written

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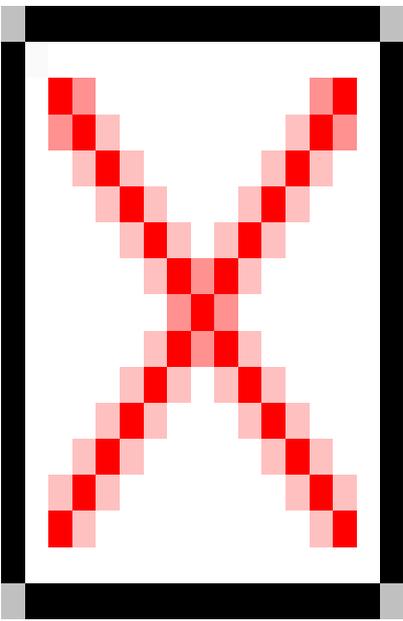
**Muhammad Khan** chooses

I Wish I'd Written **Muhammad Khan**

**Muhammad Khan** chooses the book that embodies the power of the imagination.



**Bridge to Terabithia** by Katherine Paterson is one of my favourite books. It's the story of a down-on-his-luck boy called Jess who forms an unlikely relationship with quirky new girl Leslie. At first his prejudices get in the way, but Leslie's upbeat personality and talent soon win him over. She introduces him to a fantasy world she names Terabithia and together they embellish it with their combined skills and imagination, forming a sanctuary from the outside world. One day, Jess is selfish and a terrible tragedy strikes, one he cannot stop blaming himself for.



There is much I can relate to in Jess. I was a compulsive artist, who used this talent to make up for an absence of friends. During the Christmas term in Year 1, it snowed heavily and at break time I met a girl who was full of life and jokes and happiness. There were no formal introductions; we simply played together in the snow and for the first time in my life I knew the joys of friendship. Then one day the snow melted and she vanished. I remember searching for two weeks, asking around if anyone had seen her or knew who or where she was. No one did. I have often wondered whether she joined the school for a single week or whether she had simply been a figment of my imagination. I pined for my friend when she'd gone, wounded by the constant reminder of friendships in the playground. These complex emotions are masterfully explored in **Bridge to Terabithia**.

Paterson's writing is never mawkish nor manipulative but brutally real. A child sees the beauty of fantasy worlds with the same eyes they view the hardships of life. The honesty with which Paterson captures this in her writing is what renders the book unforgettable and sublime. Perhaps what makes the story so visceral is that it was Paterson's response to the loss of her own son's childhood friend.

Muhammad Khan is an engineer, a secondary-school Maths teacher, and a YA author. His debut novel **I Am Thunder** was shortlisted for the YA Book Prize, won the Branford Boase First Novel Award and the 2018 Great Reads Award. His second novel, **Kick the Moon**, is published by Macmillan, as is his upcoming book **Mark My Words**, due August 2020.

[Bridge to Terabithia](#) [3] by Katherine Paterson is published by Puffin, (978-0141359786)

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