



# JANUARY: Young Adult



*Charming as a Verb* is a novel set in New York City and follows teen charmer Henri “Halti” Haltiwanger. Halti is liked by all he meets thanks to the smiling mask he puts on. He’s the perfect image of a first-generation American child of Haitian immigrants: he attends the prestigious FATE Academy, is a star debater and works part-time as a dog walker for wealthy New Yorkers. However, his easy demeanour hides his ambition to attend his dream college: Columbia University. Then Corinne Troy, the only person immune to his charms, blackmails him after finding out the whole dog walking side gig isn’t 100% legit. What does

she want? Lessons on improving her social image at school.

The humour found in Philippe’s debut can be also found in this book but there’s also a deeper dive into the experience of being a Black immigrant child of working class parents. It’s easy to reduce the story to a discussion about class and the feeling of trying to keep up with those who’ve financially have a head start especially within the context of education. However, there’s an intersection of class and race within the book that displays how difficult it is to separate the two experiences as well as how class doesn’t suddenly remove the structural barriers created by racism. It does all this while also being filled with family, friends and teen romance. This is why it was chosen as the Book-of-the-Month for January 2021.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Ben Philippe** is a New York-based writer and screenwriter, born in Haiti and raised in Montreal, Canada. He is the author of the William C. Morris Award-winning novel *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager*.







# March: Middle Grade



In *Treaty Words: For As Long As the Rivers Flow*, Mishomis teaches his granddaughter to listen to the nature around them while also telling her about treaties: the first ones between the earth and the sky, the ones between the Indigenous peoples and the British, and what treaties are meant to be.

It's a fantastic Book-of-the-Month pick for March 2021 because of the ongoing conversations around treaties in what we know as Canada (but also Turtle Island more broadly) and what Canadian settlers owe the Indigenous peoples of these lands in the

truest understanding of treaties and reconciliation. Craft does a great job at making this accessible to not just middle grade readers but also teens and adults who would benefit from understanding the land they currently live on. Swinson's art is beautiful and flows in its simplicity and great use of colour. It's perfect for a story that encourages taking our time with nature.

## ABOUT THE CREATORS

**Aimée Craft (Writer)** is an Anishinaabe/Métis lawyer from Treaty 1 territory in Manitoba. She is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Common Law, University of Ottawa and a leading researcher on Indigenous laws, treaties, and water.

**Luke Swinson** is an Anishinaabe illustrator who is a member of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. He lives in Kitchener, ON.







































