

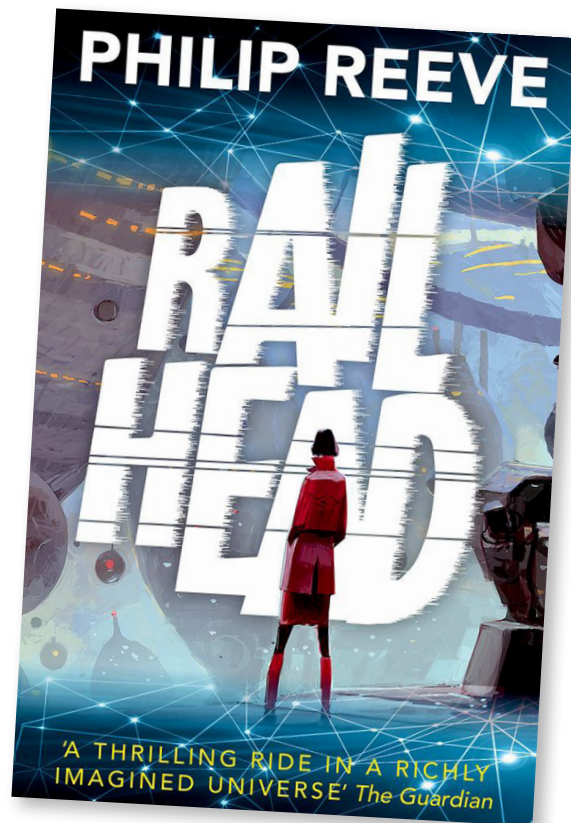
RAILHEAD

by Philip Reeve

Oxford University Press

Shortlisted for the 2017 Kate Greenaway Medal and the Amnesty CILIP Honour

'Engaging and fast-paced with clever use of humour. The book explores what it is to be human and some harsh criticisms of society in subtle ways' – Judging panel



We all have the right to take part in the government of our country.

Article 21, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Railhead is set in a world where artificial intelligence is a reality. The Guardians control the secrets of science and technology, and Motoriks are doing jobs that humans used to. All teenage thief Zen Starling wants to do is ride the rails but he becomes embroiled in a plot. One that might liberate humanity or be the devastating actions of a terrorist.

‘He wanted to share those secrets, and they would not allow it.’

Narrator

HUMAN RIGHTS THEMES IN THIS STORY

Mental health; gender identity; right to privacy; LGBTI rights; right to marry; right to participate in government; activism and resistance; right to safety.

YOU CAN TALK ABOUT...

Control and participation

- Should there be an Empire run by Corporate Families?
- If you could design a replacement system, what would it look like?

Power and information

- Those in power choose what people have a right to know and what governments should keep secret. Why do The Guardians not want humans to know their secrets? Does this happen in our world?
- Do you think Raven was right to try to rebel against The Guardians?
- How important is it to be able to access information?

Taking action

- Why is Raven prepared to use violence and to risk destroying everything?
- Would you describe him as a hero or a villain?
- How do you feel about Zen's tactics?

Diversity

- Why does the author make most of the characters 'brown' or 'dark-skinned' with white people as a minority?
- Flex expresses as male and female and says 'Inside, we're not really male or female'. What are the differences between men and women?
- How do you feel when Flex asks Zen if he would change gender if he could?

Finally...

- Are sentient droids really anything other than people made from different materials? They can think, feel and create. Should Motoriks have the same rights as humans?

ACTIVITY

Write a Universal Declaration of Motorik Rights.

RESEARCH

Find out about Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, so-called whistle-blowers who took great risks to expose human rights abuses.

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.

For a simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights go to www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr

For more free educational resources from Amnesty International go to www.amnesty.org.uk/education



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