

## Beverley Naidoo

Carnegie winner Beverley Naidoo grew up in South Africa under apartheid. She says: ‘As a white child I didn’t question the terrible injustices until I was a student. I decided then that unless I joined the resistance, I was part of the problem.’ After leaving the University of Witwatersrand, she was detained without trial and later went into exile in Britain where she studied at the University of York, worked as a teacher, education adviser and writer. She married another South Africa exile and, while bringing up a family, received her Ph.D from the University of Southampton for research into white teenagers’ responses to literature and racism. She has received a number of honorary doctorates for her fiction for young people.

Her first children’s book, *Journey to Jo’burg*, was banned in South Africa until 1991 but it was an eye-opener for thousands of readers worldwide. *Chain of Fire, No Turning Back*, a short story collection *Out of Bounds* and a stage play *The Playground* all explore challenges for young people in her birth country. She has won many awards for her writing, including the Carnegie Medal for *The Other Side of Truth* about two refugee children smuggled to London who also feature in *Web of Lies*. Her novel *Burn My Heart* (Children’s Africana Book Award) is a story of friendship, loyalty and betrayal set in 1950s Kenya during the Mau Mau rebellion against British rule, and has toured in the UK as a stage-play. Her work has been widely translated.

Her writing for younger children includes a poetry alphabet of her birth country *S is for South Africa* with photographs by Prodepta Das (Children’s Africana Honor Book), *Baba’s Gift* written with her daughter Maya, illustrated by Karin Littlewood, and an African retelling of *Aesop’s Fables*, illustrated by Piet Grobler (Parent’s Choice Silver Award, USBBY Outstanding International Book List, 2012). One of her great pleasures is watching her grand-daughters enter the world of books.

Her writing for adults includes a recent biography *Death of an Idealist: In Search of Neil Aggett*, the remarkable story behind the only white activist to die in apartheid detention.

See also [www.beverleynaidoo.com](http://www.beverleynaidoo.com)