

Hooked by Books



Proposal 2015

Xander Christou

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About me

I am Xander Christou, blogger and reviewer of [ForeverBookish](#). I have been reviewing books for almost two years and my reviews reach people all over the world. My blog gets about 2,650 views every month, and I write about two or three posts/reviews a week.

Introduction and Proposal

Last year, [I raised over \\$1300 to attend](#) BookExpo America 2014 in New York City. Over 45 people donated to help fund my trip, and I met authors, publishers, bloggers and all sorts of bookish people. I also spread the word about my blog. My experience at BEA was incredibly valuable because I learned a lot about the publishing process, saw firsthand how the book industry works and made many contacts. I was also invited to visit two publishing houses, Macmillan and HarperCollins where I met with people from all areas of publishing and got a taste of publishing from the inside. This will help me move towards my goal of working in the book industry and being an author.

As I fundraise to attend BEA again this year, I will also be spreading literacy by starting an initiative called **Hooked by Books**. My goal is to partner with publishers and a school from Austin and for every few dollars I raise for my trip, a book will be donated to a child who doesn't enjoy reading or doesn't have access to books. My mission is to spread the wonder of books to these kids, and get them hooked on reading at a young age. I want kids to discover how incredible books are and see them as enjoyable instead of boring so that they will keep reading more and spreading the word about amazing books.

This year I would like to go back to BEA but I want to share this wonderful opportunity AND my love of books with other children. Here's how it will work: for every \$3 I raise on my GoFundMe page, Hooked by Books will donate a book to a child in need of books. The fundraising goal for my trip is \$2100. My aim is to get publishers to sponsor a particular class or grade at a school and work with me by donating quality middle-grade and young-adult books that will inspire kids to read. I will focus on Travis Heights Elementary School, and I will personally select, read and review each book donated. That will spread the word about the book to the many readers who read my reviews, follow ForeverBookish and will want to read that book as well. I will also speak to each grade in the school about their particular book and why it was chosen. I think it will be a unique way to spread literacy. The fundraising aspect will allow me to attend BEA again this year, which will further my education and experience in the book trade, and help me better inform my readers.

Another component of **Hooked by Books** is to set up a stocked Little Free Library somewhere in Austin to provide people with a selection of books and a way to exchange them when they finish reading. I would like to get authors on board with this idea as well; I have

talked to R.J. Palacio and Gayle Forman about the idea and I hope to reach many more authors so they can spread the word about it.

Would you be interested in donating some books for this campaign? Please take this into consideration. It will help fuel kids' love of reading, and work towards the goal of keeping kids readers for life.

Me and the Bookish Community

When I moved to Austin four years ago and discovered Book People, I knew that it would be a big part of my life. I started attending author talks, literary camps, and was inspired by people who are passionate about books and reading at Book People. When I was in 5th grade, and had just started my book review blog, I asked to meet with Topher Bradfield, Book People's Kids Outreach Coordinator and Literary Camp Director. I wanted to propose being their Middle Grade reviewer as they didn't have one. Book People agreed to include some of my reviews in their Kids' newsletter, as well as put a link to my blog on their web page.

In January of 2014, I was invited to join the Teen Press Corps. As I was only 12 and thought I had a year to wait before applying, I was honored and excited. As part of the Teen Press Corps, I review books, blog, interview authors and intern for Book People. The Teen Press Corps is also responsible for live blogging the Texas Teen Book Festival. I helped out at the TTBF 2014 as part of the Teen Press Corps and also interviewed a few authors there.

I was also invited by the Literary Director of the Texas Book Festival to introduce author John Scieszka at the Festival this year. What an experience I will never forget! I wrote up an introduction and introduced Mr. Scieszka to a room full of readers in the Capitol building after interviewing him in the Green Room. I had also contacted a few other authors who would be at the festival and conducted interviews with them.

I want to give back and share my love for reading with kids everywhere; kids who don't love reading and who don't have access to books. I can't imagine a life without books; books have shaped me and made me the person I am. One day on the bus, I was reading as usual. All of a sudden an eighth grader loomed over me and said, "You like **reading**?" When I replied, "Yeah!", a look of shock crossed his face and he turned to a friend. "**You** like reading?" he asked. "No!" He turned to another kid, who answered, "Yes." "DANG! Why you like reading? I only read books with pictures and words this big." gesturing at the size of the words on the page. Obviously, reading for pleasure was a foreign concept to this kid at my school. These are the kids I want to reach, and I want to reach them early to show them the joy of reading before they decide it is not worth their time.

Authors I have Interviewed:

Tom Angleberger, Author of *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda*

Jonathan Auxier, Author of *Peter Nimble & His Fantastic Eyes*

Pseudonymous Bosch, Author of *The Name of This Book is Secret*

Shana Burg, Author of *Laugh With the Moon*

Eoin Colfer, Author of *Artemis Fowl*

Lindsay Cummings, Author of *The Murder Complex*

James Dashner, Author of *The Maze Runner*

Gayle Forman, Author of *If I Stay*

Brendan Kiely, Author of *The Gospel of Winter*

Emily Lloyd-Jones, Author of *Illusive*

Shannon Messenger, Author of *Let The Sky Fall*

Brandon Mull, Author of *Fablehaven* and *Beyonders*

Garth Nix, Author of *Sabriel*

Stephan Pastis, Author of *Timmy Failure*, Cartoonist of *Pearls Before Swine*

Jason Reynolds, Author of *When I Was the Greatest*

Rick Riordan, Author of *The Lightning Thief*

John Rocco, Author/Illustrator of *Blackout*, Illustrator of Rick Riordan's book covers

Jon Scieszka, Author of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*

John Corey Whaley, Author of *Where Things Come Back* and *Noggin*

Working with a School

The school I have selected for **Hooked by Books** is Travis Heights Elementary. Travis Heights is located at 2010 Alameda Dr. Austin, TX 78704. I chose to adopt an elementary school because there is a broader range of kids, and this is the prime time to get kids to love reading. In addition to giving each kid a book, I am going to visit the school and talk to each grade about the books I chose for them and why. I would also like to build a Little Free Library at the school. Here are the facts from the 2012-2013 TEA School Report Card and the TAPR Campus Profile on the Travis Heights [website](#):

- 64% of kids met or exceeded expectations in the STAAR, with 17% exceeding expectations
- 75.5% of the kids are economically disadvantaged (district average 63%)
- 53.4% of the kids are at-risk
- 23.3% of the kids are English language learners
- 532 students attending

I hope to work with the school's principal and librarian to bring Hooked by Books to Travis Heights Elementary in 2015.

The publishers I hope to work with are:

[Macmillan](#)

[HarperCollins](#)

[Penguin](#)

[Random House](#)

[Candlewick Press](#)

[Scholastic](#)

[Disney-Hyperion](#)

[Simon & Schuster](#)

[Quirk Books](#)

[Abrams](#)

[Little, Brown](#)

[Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](#)

Below is a chart of grade levels and a selection of books I have chosen for each grade. I will contact the publishers of each book to request book donations to correspond with my GoFundMe Page donations.

Grade	Title	Author	Publisher
K	Battle Bunny	Jon Scieszka	Simon & Schuster
K	Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs	Judi Barrett	Simon & Schuster
K	Shark School	Davy Ocean	Simon & Schuster
K	Junie B. Jones	Barbara Park	Random House
K	A Bad Case of Stripes	David Shannon	Scholastic
K	Mirette on the High Wire	Emily Arnold McCully	Penguin
K	Froggy Gets Dressed	Jonathan London	Penguin
K	Don't Let The Pigeon Drive the Bus	Mo Willems	Disney-Hyperion
K	Uno's Garden	Graeme Base	Abrams
1	Nick & Tesla's High Voltage Danger Lab	"Science Bob" Pflugfelder	Quirk Books
1	Professor Gargoyle	Charles Gilman	Quirk Books
1	Frank Einstein & the Antimatter Motor	Jon Scieszka	Abrams
2	The Maze of Bones	Rick Riordan	Scholastic
2	The Willoughby's	Lois Lowry	HMH
2	Timmy Failure	Stephan Pastis	Candlewick Press
2	Savvy	Ingrid Law	Penguin
3	Wonder	R.J. Palacio	Random House
3	"Who Could That be at This Hour?"	Lemony Snicket	Little, Brown
3	A Tale Dark & Grimm	Adam Gidwitz	Penguin
3	The Bad Apple	T.R. Burns	Simon & Schuster
3	The Name of This Book is Secret	Pseudonymous Bosch	Little, Brown
3	The Lightning Thief	Rick Riordan	Disney-Hyperion
4	House of Secrets	Ned Vizzini & Chris Columbus	HarperCollins
4	Keeper of the Lost Cities	Shannon Messenger	Simon & Schuster
4	The Forbidden Stone	Tony Abbott	HarperCollins

4	Three Time Lucky	Sheila Turnage	Penguin
5	The Colossus Rises	Peter Lerangis	HarperCollins
5	The Night Gardener	Jonathan Auxier	Abrams
5	Space Case	Stuart Gibbs	Simon & Schuster
5	The Iron Trial	Holly Black & Cassandra Clare	Scholastic
5	The Unwanteds	Lisa McMann	Simon & Schuster
5	The False Prince	Jennifer Nielsen	Scholastic

Hooked by Books Endorsements

“Xander Christou is a remarkable young man who loves books and has managed to quickly and singlehandedly establish himself as one of the brightest lights in the world of book bloggers. He first came to my attention when he crowdsourced a trip to the annual Book Expo conference in New York, and while here, he impressed me with his contagious enthusiasm for the transforming power of reading. Most importantly, he has an astonishing record (particularly for someone so young) for setting difficult goals and achieving them. I have no doubt that he will make “Hooked by Books” a big success.” —Tim Bartlett, Executive Editor, St. Martin’s Press

"Xander is a community energizer. His passion about literature and literacy is contagious--from his popular and thoughtful blog, to his attendance and enthusiasm at book events, to moderating for us at the Texas Book Festival--I wish I had half his gumption when I was his age."
—Steph Opitz, Literary Director, Texas Book Festival

“Xander of ForeverBookish is doing things with his life that I only thought about in my 20's. He is a dedicated reader who is passionate about literacy. Xander is a valuable member of Literary Lonestars, an online community of Texas YA-lit and kid-lit bloggers. We are fortunate to have him as an advocate!”
—Jen Bigheart, Outreach Supervisor, Westbank Community Library District;
PR Director, Texas Teen Book Festival

“Xander is a smart and thoughtful reader whose commitment to book reviewing is both remarkable and rare. Keep an eye on this guy--he's going places!”
—Jonathan Auxier, Author of *Peter Nimble & his Fantastic Eyes*

"Xander is a blogger to be reckoned with. He reads like a fiend and speaks his mind. He has a platform to connect directly with young readers like nobody else. Hooked by Books is a win-win for everyone involved!"

—Shana Burg, Author of *Laugh With the Moon*

"I recently had the pleasure of meeting Xander during his self-funded trip to BEA. His love of books, reading, and the world of publishing reignited my own passions for our wonderful industry, and it makes me so happy to know that there are young readers like him in the world. He is an inspiration to the blogging community and publishers alike, and it's wonderful to see that he's leading initiatives to provide books to other young readers and hopefully pass along the love of reading in doing so. I look forward to seeing what else he accomplishes in the future!"

—Erin Fitzsimmons, Cover Designer, HarperCollins

"When I first heard other authors talking about Xander Christou and his YA/Middle Grade blog, I figured he was a school librarian or journalist. When I had the pleasure of meeting him at the Texas Teen Book Festival and found out he was *twelve*, I was blown away. This young man is producing better and more voluminous work than we see on blogs produced by professionals. This is what happens when fans engage. It's awesome."

— Len Vlahos, Author of *The Scar Boys*

"It's so exciting when you meet a person with a big idea. It's even more exciting when you meet a young person like Xander Christou of Forever Bookish with an idea that gets books into the hands of kids that wouldn't have them. I am thrilled to be one of his supporters."

—Lindsey Lane, Author of *Evidence of Things Not Seen*

"What you need to know to your absolute core is that Xander is a change maker of the rarest kind. His passion for literature and the drive and heart to see it accessible to all kids inspires you to do better. My work as a novelist, filmmaker and activist for youth on the fringe has me meet many kids. Xander is in my top five to watch in America!"

—e.E. Charlton-Trujillo, Author of *Fat Angie*, Filmmaker of *At-Risk Summer*

"Xander is a leader in the promotion of reading for his generation. He is an incredible young man who is destined to do great things; I've been so impressed by his passion for literature and the efforts he makes in introducing those books to the public at large."

—John Rocco, Author/Illustrator of *Blackout*, Illustrator of Rick Riordan's book covers

"It's rare to meet an individual who radiates passion and enthusiasm for any cause at any age, which makes Xander Christou all the more extraordinary. He is a middle schooler who not only loves to read, but who believes that everyone else should, at least, be given the opportunity to love to read as he much as he does. From the first handshake, Xander is an individual who you like and admire immediately. I believe he can be successful in any endeavor he undertakes."

—Gillian Redfearn, Key Account Manager, Macmillan Publishing

"As a teacher and writer who has travelled and toured the country, few kids have inspired me as much as Xander has. He has an old soul's vision, curiosity, and intelligence, and his passion for reading should be a model for us all. I'm thrilled to hear of Xander's latest project to inspire that same passion for reading in others. I believe it will be as successful as his projects with Book People in Austin (where I first met Xander, when he interviewed me, Jason Reynolds, and John Corey Whaley about our recent novels), and his well read blog, ForeverBookish. I can't wait to hear more about Hooked by Books."

—Brendan Kiely, author of *The Gospel of Winter* and the forthcoming *The Last True Love Story*

"Xander puts most adult book bloggers/reviewers to shame. A truly insightful and enthusiastic literary journalist."

—John Corey Whaley, author of *Where Things Come Back*; Printz winner

"Xander is a celebrity in the Austin book world. He has been attending literary events, meeting authors, and soaking up literary and publishing wisdom for years. He writes an erudite blog on kids' books, and he's a charming young man—a real pleasure to talk to.

His idea, to provide books to kids in local Austin schools, strikes me as too good to ignore. I hope you'll support it, so that children in all walks of life can know the joy of owning a book--and, if we're lucky, get hooked on the experience."

—Adam Gidwitz, author of *A Tale Dark And Grimm*

"Xander Christou is a talented and professional blogger, a true inspiration to young people who are passionate and driven. As a young adult author, it's been a joy to see a reader who is so deeply engaged with the work, and he's made fantastic contributions to my own reader outreach efforts. I have no doubt he will make his mark on the publishing industry one day."

—Heather Demetrios, author of *Something Real*