

SOPHIE McKENZIE



THE MEDUSA PROJECT

READERS' DISCUSSION POINTS

From whose point of view is the story told? How does that affect the way the story develops and how the reader feels about the characters?

Who are the main characters in the story? Does your opinion of them change as the story develops?

Do you have a favourite moment or scene in the book?

Is the book exciting? How does the author go about building excitement and tension as the story develops?

In *THE SET UP*, when Nico discovers his powers, he is tempted to use them for his own gain. Would you be tempted in the same way? How would you draw the line between what is a 'good' or 'bad' use of these abilities?

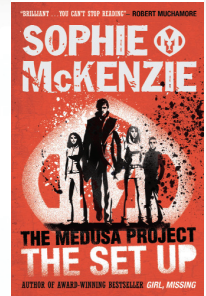
How do the characters feel about their psychic powers? Do they see them as a blessing or a curse?

How are the adult characters portrayed in the books?

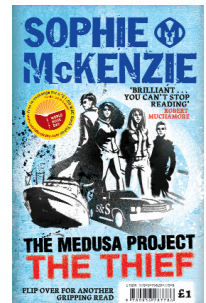
Who are the villains or 'bad guys' in *THE SET UP*, and do they change as the story progresses?

Which character has the best psychic power in your opinion, and why?

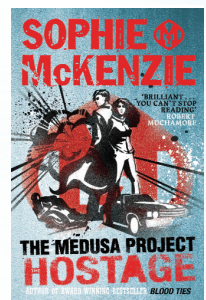
What power would you like to have, and why?



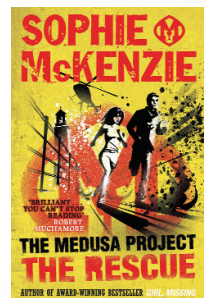
THE SET UP
by Sophie McKenzie
ISBN 978-1-84738-525-3 £6.99 PB



THE THIEF
by Sophie McKenzie
World Book Day title £1



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FURTHER ACTIVITIES:

END AMEND

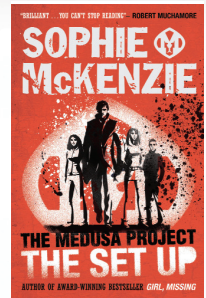
Can you imagine an alternative ending to any of Sophie's books in *THE MEDUSA PROJECT* series?

THE GIFTED FIFTH

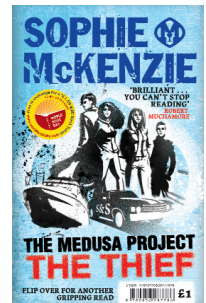
Imagine you were a fifth teenager with the Medusa gene. What power would you like to possess and what would you use it for? Write a short story about meeting the other characters and about using your power.

GOOD VS. BAD

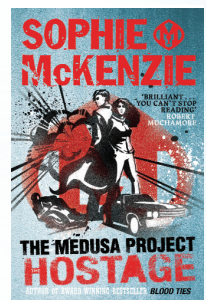
Can you divide the characters in the books into two columns – heroes and villains. Are there any clear-cut villains? Or does your perspective change as the story progresses? How do you judge who's good and who's bad?



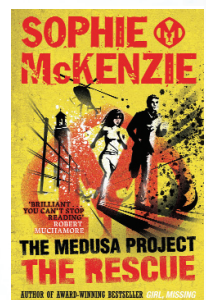
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AUTHOR FACT FILE

NAME:
Sophie McKenzie

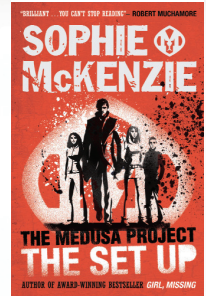
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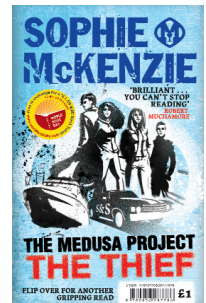


TOP 5 FACTS ABOUT SOPHIE MCKENZIE

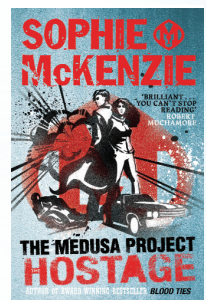
- BIGGEST PHOBIA:** rats
- FAVOURITE SINGER:** Bob Dylan
- EARLIEST MEMORY:** having my photo taken when I was nearly three
- MOST PLAYED SONG FROM THE 2496 ON MY COMPUTER:** Solitary Man by Johnny Cash
- TOP HOBBY:** boxing



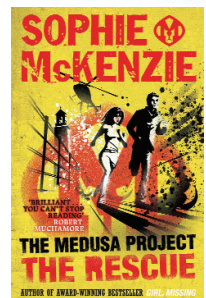
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AUTHOR Q&A

THE MEDUSA PROJECT

Can you describe *THE MEDUSA PROJECT* in one sentence for new readers?

A series of books about a group of teenagers with psychic powers, who are brought together to form a crime-fighting force.

Where did you get the idea for the series from?

The idea developed over quite a long period of time – mostly because I was fascinated by what it would feel like to have psychic abilities.

How many books are planned in the series?

At present there are six books planned, plus *THE THIEF* for World Book Day.

THE SET UP is told from Nico's perspective, is the plan to tell each book from a different narrative viewpoint? If so, was it difficult to get into each character's 'head space'?

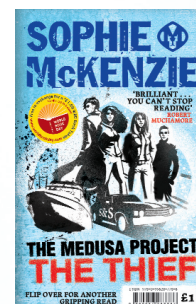
Yes, the plan is to tell each book from one of the four main character's points of view, though all four characters will appear in all the stories. They're very different people, so each perspective brings particular challenges as I try to see the world through their eyes. I usually try and find some personality trait that I can latch onto as a way of getting into their head. For instance, I'm not practical, like Ketty, or shy, like Ed, but I identify with her determination and his tendency to analyse everything.

As the story progresses in *THE SET UP*, Nico's feelings towards the adults in his life change and the reader goes on this journey with him. How did you go about plotting out the twists and turns in the story?

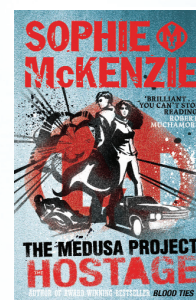
I find plotting and planning my stories really challenging. Most of the time – and definitely for *THE SET UP* – I work out the main turning points of the story before I start writing, knowing that I have to get my characters from one point to the next. Sometimes new things are thrown up by this, which may take the plot in a new direction. It's not exact... in fact, I've found that if I try and pin everything down in advance, the story often loses its spontaneity. It's certainly less fun to write!



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Which was your favourite scene to write in any of the books in the series?

My favourite scene from the Medusa series so far is actually the final scene of *THE HOSTAGE*. As it's right at the end of the story, I don't want to give away what happens, but I think it's the most exciting climax of any book I've written so far!

What books did you read as a child?

I read a lot as a child – I loved exciting adventure stories (like the Willard Price series and books by Elizabeth Goudge and Joan Aitken) and stories with lots of relationship intrigue and an element of romance (like *ANNE OF GREEN GABLES* and *LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE* series). It's no coincidence that these are the kinds of stories I try to write now!

What book would you take on a desert island and why?

It's impossible to pick just one but, if I had to choose, I'd take Jane Austen's complete works (yes, I know that's a bit of a cheat!) because every time I go back to her novels, I always find something new.

Which author (dead or alive) would you like to meet?

There's a long list, but I guess Jane Austen would be at the top!

If you had a psychic power what type would you like to have and why?

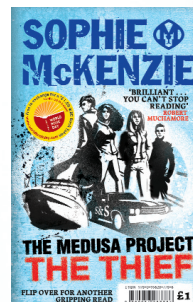
One of the reasons for writing the Medusa series was the opportunity to imagine all the psychic powers, but I think mind-reading would be the most interesting to me. It would be fascinating to get a sense of how other people perceive and process the world around them.

Who is your favourite character in your books or which of your characters would you like to be?

Asking me to choose between my main characters is like asking a parent to choose between their children! However, if I had to pick... I'd choose Rachel from *BLOOD TIES*, because she starts out unhappy and grows in confidence through the story; Ryan from the *ALL ABOUT EVE* series, because he has such a great sense of humour; and Ed and Dylan from *THE MEDUSA PROJECT* because Ed is so vulnerable and Dylan pretends not to be – which represents two sides of my own personality!



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