

CHIKOMBORERO

The Boy the Forest Chose

BOOK CLUB & CLASSROOM GUIDE

This guide supports reading groups, book clubs, classrooms, and school visits for *Chikomborero: The Boy the Forest Chose* by Jaydn Bruce.

Suitable for readers aged 8–14 · Grades 3–9

Part of The Chikomborero Chronicles series

By Jaydn Bruce · Published 2026 · jaydnbruce.com

ABOUT THE BOOK

Chikomborero — Chiks — is twelve years old and has always felt slightly wrong in the world. His mother tells everyone he is a blessing. His name means blessing. But Chiks does not feel like one. He is quiet, draws animals in his notebook, and does not quite fit — not at school, not on the football pitch, not even at family gatherings.

Then, following a kingfisher too far into the forest one afternoon, he becomes lost. He finds a glowing cave. And inside it, a silver wolf named Lumari who speaks eighteen languages — and has been waiting for him.

Lumari tells Chiks he is the one the forest has been waiting for. But there are loggers threatening to destroy it, a villain named Gonzo pulling strings, and Chiks’ own father unwittingly caught in the middle. Chiks must find a way to save what he loves — and finally believe that his name is not a mistake.

“This was such an unputdownable book. I loved that Chiks finally sees that his name meaning Blessing was not a mistake.”

Amazon Reader — 5 stars

KEY CHARACTERS

Chikomborero (Chiks)	Twelve years old. Quiet, artistic, deeply empathetic. Feels like a misfit. His name means ‘Blessing’ in Shona — a name he is still learning to carry.
Lumari	The silver wolf. Guardian of the forest. Speaks eighteen languages. Ancient, patient, certain. She has been waiting for Chiks.
Rudo	Chiks’ younger sister. Perceptive beyond her years. She becomes the family’s record-keeper by the end of the book.
Tinashe	Chiks’ best friend. Straight-talking, loyal, honest in the way real friends are.
Kiki	A monkey companion in the forest. Comic relief and loyal when it matters.
Tafadzwa	Chiks’ father. A good man in a difficult situation — in debt and unwittingly enabling the loggers.
Gonzo	The villain. Arrested by the end of Book 1, but his network is larger than one man.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Chiks feels like a misfit throughout the first half of the book. His journey is about finding where he actually belongs — and discovering that belonging might mean being exactly who you are.

THE POWER OF A NAME

Chiks carries the weight of his name — ‘Blessing’ — and spends much of the book doubting that he deserves it. The resolution of this tension is at the emotional centre of the story.

NATURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The forest is not a backdrop. It is a character. The threat to it mirrors real-world environmental battles happening across Africa today.

FAMILY, TRUST, AND FORGIVENESS

Tafadzwa’s situation asks readers to consider how good people can end up doing harmful things — and whether redemption is possible.

AFRICAN ORAL TRADITION

The book draws on oral storytelling traditions — the wolf who speaks, the forest that remembers, the child who is chosen. These are rooted in African mythological frameworks.

COURAGE AND PURPOSE

Chiks is not a hero who knew he was destined for greatness. He is a quiet boy who acted anyway. What does that teach us about courage?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions move from comprehension to deeper reflection. Suitable for book clubs, classrooms, and reading groups.

Understanding the story

- 1 Why does Chiks feel like a misfit at the beginning of the book? What specifically makes him feel that way?
- 2 What does Chiks' name mean, and why does the meaning feel like a burden rather than a gift?
- 3 Describe Lumari in your own words. What makes her different from how wolves are usually portrayed in stories?
- 4 How does Tafadzwa end up involved with the loggers? Was he a villain, a victim, or something else?
- 5 What role does Rudo play in the story? How does she change from beginning to end?

Going deeper

- 1 Chiks finds it much easier to be in the forest than anywhere else. Is there a place where you feel most like yourself?
- 2 Lumari tells Chiks he is “the blessing we have been waiting for.” Can something be true about you before you believe it yourself?
- 3 The forest in this book is described almost as if it is alive and aware. Do you think nature can have feelings or intelligence?
- 4 Tinashe notices when Chiks is hiding something but does not push too hard. What makes a good friend?
- 5 Gonzo is arrested at the end, but his network remains. What does this tell us about how environmental destruction actually works?
- 6 By the end of the book, Chiks has changed. What is the most important thing he learns about himself?

ACTIVITIES

DRAW YOUR FOREST

Chiks draws animals in his notebook as a way of understanding the world. Take 15 minutes to draw your own forest — the animals, the trees, the light. What animals would live in your forest?

YOUR NAME'S STORY

Find out what your name means and where it comes from. Write a paragraph about the story of your name. Does knowing the meaning change how you feel about it?

A LETTER TO CHIKS

Write a letter to Chikomborero at the beginning of the book, before he meets Lumari. What would you want him to know?

CREATE A GUARDIAN

Lumari is the guardian of her forest. Design your own guardian for a natural place you love. What animal would it be? What would it say to someone who came to harm that place?

FOREST JOURNALISM

Emmanuel the journalist leaves at the end of Book 1 to cover another forest case. Write a short newspaper article about the events — the logging threat, Gonzo's arrest, and what Chiks did.

DEBATE: SHOULD CHIKS HAVE TRUSTED LUMARI?

Split your group in two. One side argues Chiks was right to follow Lumari. The other argues it was foolish. Use evidence from the text.

THE CHIKOMBORERO CHRONICLES

	Title	Year	Status
Book 1	Chikomborero: The Boy the Forest Chose	2026	Available now
Book 2	The Girl the Stream Found	2026	Pre-order now
Book 3	Chikomborero and the Keeper of Names	TBC	Forthcoming

SCHOOL VISITS & AUTHOR TALKS

Jaydn Bruce is available for school visits, classroom sessions, book club appearances, and reading events in Accra and beyond. To book a visit:

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