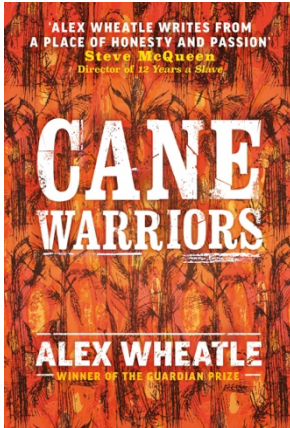


Cane Warriors

By Alex Wheatle



Moa is fourteen. The only life he has ever known is toiling on the Frontier sugar cane plantation for endless hot days, fearing the vicious whips of the overseers. Then one night he learns of an uprising, led by the charismatic Tacky. Moa is to be a cane warrior, and fight for the freedom of all the enslaved people in the nearby plantations. But before they can escape, Moa and his friend Keverton must face their first great task: to kill their overseer, Misser Donaldson. Time is ticking, and the day of the uprising approaches . . .

Alex Wheatle is a British Novelist whose works include *Brixton Rock*, *Crongton Heights* and *Liclle Bit*, his YA novel which was longlisted for the Carnegie Medal in 2016. In 2008, Wheatle was awarded the MBE for services to literature. His life story features in the fourth film in *Small Axe*, an anthology of five films directed by Steve McQueen about the West Indian community in the UK during the 1970s and 1980s. *Alex Wheatle* depicts Wheatle's life up to and just after the Brixton uprising.

Discussion Questions

1. The book centres on a period of British and Jamaican history that is rarely covered in British schools or in children's books. Why is it important for this story to be told?
2. Why does the author choose 14-year-old Moa as the narrator rather than one of the leaders of the uprising?
3. Many aspects of the story are vicious and visceral and the descriptions of violence often graphic-why did the author feel it necessary to include this detail?

4. Discuss Moa and Kellerton's relationship. What created their bond and how did their friendship develop?

5. What are Moa's hopes for the future and what do you think the reality will be for Moa and Hamaya?

6. "De blood will remember" is a key phrase in the book and its closing line. What do you think it means?

7. In the afterword, Alex Wheatle describes his own personal connections with Tacky's cane warriors. What stories about the past are untold or hidden in the conventional telling of history; whose voices are unheard?

Thank you to Book Clubs in Schools, the charity of which Alex Wheatle is a patron, for choosing this title and creating the resource.