

# NERO

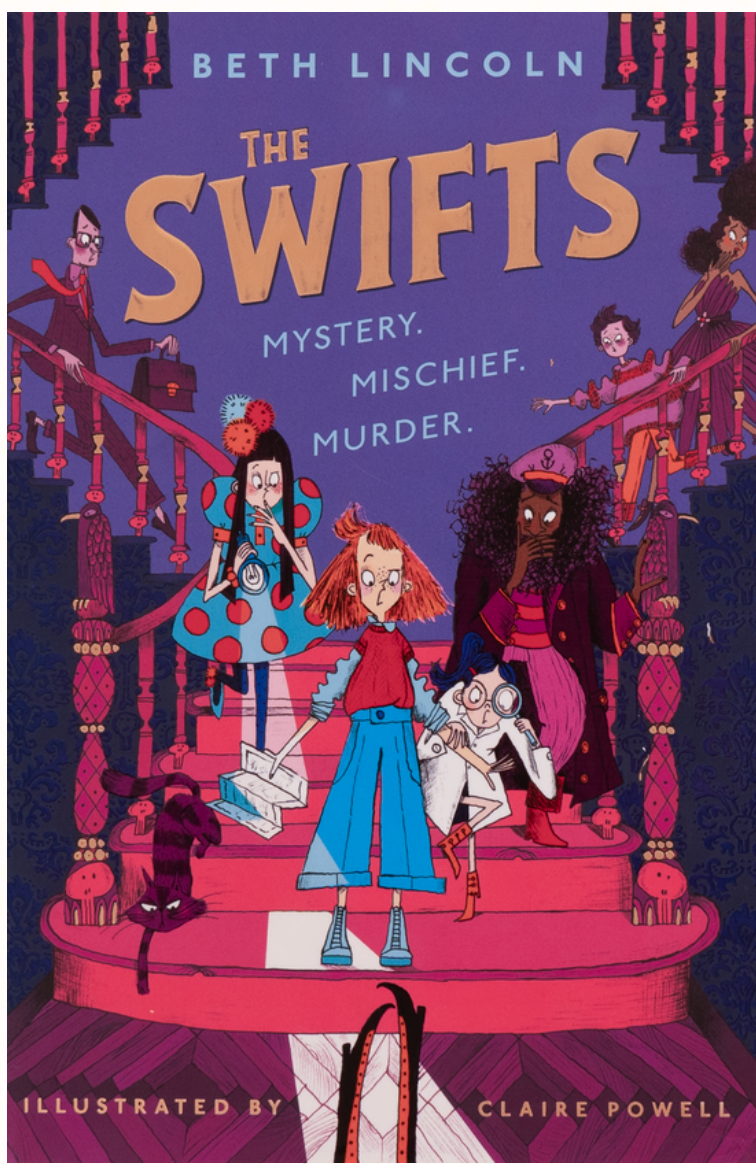
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## BOOK AWARDS

### Reading Guides

Category Winner -  
Children's Fiction

*The Swifts* by Beth Lincoln.  
Illustrated by Claire Powell



**Beth Lincoln** was raised in a former Victorian railway station in the North of England. Her childhood fears included porcelain dolls, the Durham panther, and wardrobes that looked at her funny. She grew neither tall nor wise, and never learned to play an instrument - but she did write stories, a bad habit that has persisted to this day. When she isn't writing, Beth is woodcarving, or making a mess of her flat, or talking the nearest ear off about unexplained occurrences. Her favourite things include ghosts, crisps, and weird old words like bumbershoot and zounderkite. She lives in Newcastle upon Tyne with her partner.

*'Fast-paced, fiercely charismatic and brimming with challenge and heart, The Swifts is everything a book for young people should be.'* - Children's Fiction judges, 2023 Nero Book Awards

*'Good' said Aunt Schadenfraude.  
'Most people seem to be here.  
And if they are late then tough. I  
could die any minute. It's time to  
begin.'*

On the day they are born, each member of the eccentric Swift clan is brought before the sacred Family Dictionary. They are given a name and expected to grow up to match it, like awful Cousin Atrocious and turbulent Uncle Maelstrom. Unfortunately for them, the strong-willed Shenanigan Swift has other ideas. When one of the family tries to murder Great Aunt Schadenfreude at the annual reunion, when the family gathers to search for its long-lost hoard of treasure, Shenanigan turns detective, taking on the case with the help of her sisters and cousin.

A murder mystery full of comedy and high jinks, *The Swifts* is a celebration of words and individuality. The story is suspenseful, the dialogue is witty. Lincoln has woven wordplay, games and plenty of mischief throughout.

Highly entertaining and beautifully illustrated by Claire Powell, *The Swifts* also holds an important message for readers of all ages: that we must always be true to ourselves despite whatever anyone else thinks we are or should be.

#### Discussion points:

- Do you think that your name reflects who you are as a person?
- If you were brought before the sacred Family Dictionary, what word would be chosen to match your personality?
- Who is your favourite member of the Swift family and who is the biggest scoundrel?

