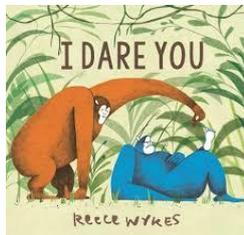


After the 2018 FCBG Children's Book Awards Ceremony in June Kate West caught up with our Overall Winner and Category Winning authors to find out a little more about them.

Here's what they had to say.

Reece Wykes Category Winner, Younger Children's Category with his picture book, *I Dare You*.



1. Congratulations! How does it feel to be the winner of the Younger Children's Category?
It feels amazing, completely unexpected. Its such a meaningful award considering it's all voted for by the kids. They're why I wrote the book.
2. What do you prefer working on, the words or the pictures?
Definitely the illustrating, I love drawing.
3. Is there a set process you work by when beginning a new project?
With *I Dare You*, the drawings came first and the story followed on. The characters came first and informed the story.
4. What would you say to any budding young illustrators out there?
Get your work out there. Enter as many competitions as you can. That's how I got seen. Get your work out there on social media.
5. At the end of the story, is it really as bad as it looks for that poor monkey?
Can't say! That's up to the reader to decide.

Katherine Rundell Category Winner and **Overall Winner** with her Younger Readers adventure, *The Explorer*



1. Firstly, huge congratulations from everyone at the CBA for winning our Award! You are a multi-award winning author so what does this particular one mean to you?

This one is special - because it's voted for by children. I'm of course always thrilled if adults like my books, but it's not what I really care about - what I really want is to write books that children find gripping and exciting and new. So the fact that children choose the winner is a real delight.

2. Your stories have taken you all the over world. Did you travel to discover stories or do the stories find you along the way?

I try to travel wherever I can - I find it ignites your imagination in a way nothing else in the world can. So for *The Explorer*, I travelled to the Amazon, and ate piranha, and swam with dolphins - and so, when I put those things into the book, they were based on real life. I hope very much that it shows.

3. You had several wonderful books published before *The Explorer* but it is this book that has really shot you into the stratosphere. What do you think it is about this particular story that has captured everyone's hearts so much?

I think the thing that children see in it is a promise that, if they were put in the same position, they might be similar - scared, at first, but then resourceful and hopeful and bold. I think most of us are bolder and braver than we believe of ourselves or each other. Also, the Amazon is just such a wonderful place to write about - it's such a glorious world out there, that the descriptions came easily to me.

4. Many of our young voters are also keen writers themselves. Do you have top tips for getting the most out of their stories?

I would say, never quit! Often you don't quite know what you've written until it's finished - so get to the end in order to begin. The hardest part of any story is in the finishing of it. And I would say, let yourself write badly - bad writing can become good writing, but no writing remains no writing.

5. Are you allowed to give as any hints of what might be coming next from you?

Yes! Next up is a book based on origin stories for characters of the Jungle Book, called *Into The Jungle*. And I'm just finishing my next full novel, set in New York. I don't want to give too much away, but - there's a crime involved...

Penny Joelson Winner Older Readers Category with her YA book, *I Have No Secrets*



1. Congratulations on being this year's Older Readers' category winner. As an FCBG member yourself, what does this particular award mean to you?

It is incredibly special to win a national award for a start, voted for right throughout the country and by young people themselves. And as a member of the Federation, I've only just joined but I see the amount of work that goes in from volunteers, amazing school librarians who are part of my local group and all the national groups that make this all happen it's just incredible commitment and love of books that really shines through. It's just incredible for my book to come out at the top of my category.

2. It was exciting to see *I Have No Secrets* on the World Book Day list this year. How did that come about?

They just chose it, I don't even know how they did it but I got a call from my publisher saying that they'd chosen it. When I saw what the other teen titles were I thought it was amazing to be one of them.

3. Did you have to do much research for this book?

I did. I'd had some experience with people with cerebral palsy and different disabilities in the past but I did quite a lot of research both on line and talking to people mostly, getting in touch with people who had connections or who had cerebral palsy themselves or who used alternative means of communication. The most important thing for me was to get feedback from those people when I'd done a draft to make sure the next draft was even better. I was amazed at the



response I got and how positive people were which really encouraged me. Because it was such a big responsibility when its not my own experience that I'm writing about.

4. Do you have any advice to give our young members who are trying their hand at writing stories of their own?

Read really widely I think reading is what made me a good writer. I once got locked in the public library because I was so absorbed in a book. And write as well of course. Keep an ideas book because you might have your best ideas tomorrow even though you might be an adult when you actually write it.

5. What are you working on next?

I can say my next book has just gone to print and is coming out on August 9th. It's called *Girl in the Window* and its about a girl who's ill at home and she's looking out of the window and she sees a woman being grabbed and taken into a car. Then she sees a girl in the window opposite who she thinks has also seen this. She calls the police but they say no one has been reported missing and when they go to this house across the road they say there's no girl there.

We would like to thank all our winning authors for taking the time to be interviewed and many congratulations to them all!

All our testing children are busy already reading and rating books for next year's award. If you want to be part of voting for our Top Ten 2019 follow us on Twitter @CBACoordinator