



THE UK SELFIES BOOK AWARDS 2021 WINNERS ANNOUNCED

London (April 20, 2021, embargoed until 5.30pm) - BookBrunch has today announced the winners of the Selfies Book Awards for the best adult fiction, the best children's book and the best memoir/autobiography self-published in the UK in 2020.

At an online ceremony attended by indie authors, judges, sponsors and supporters, the winner of the **adult fiction category** was **The Secret Diary of an Arranged Marriage by Halima Khatun**. It was 'fresh and funny', said the judges, 'the narrative drew me in...I felt like I knew the characters' and with a marketing strategy 'that went outside the normal channels', the novel uncovers the 21st century world of a British-Bengali girl looking for Mr Right.

The runner up in this category was an author who had 'hands down the most effective marketing' and was 'doing brilliantly in building this series': **The Snowdonia Killings by Simon McCleave**.

In a wonderfully diverse **children's book category**, the winner was a celebration of how we must embrace the skin we're in, **My Mum's A Tiger by Kate Claxton, illustrated by Angela Mayers**. 'The illustrations are joyous, the text has a gentle rhythm which makes it perfect to share' said the judges, 'love the skin you're in – is there a more important message for a young child?'

The winner of the inaugural memoir/autobiography award was described as 'a brave and important book', that 'gripped me from start to finish', and 'has punched above its weight in terms of mainstream media attention as well as a range of online platforms': **Breakfast at Bronzefield by Sophie Campbell**, a former public schoolgirl who risked extra time on her sentence by documenting her experiences of life inside.

The runner up was a book that had a 'very attractive package' with a 'clean, understated and elegant' cover that was perfect for its intended audience, and 'a well put-together website': **A Few Wise Words compiled by Peter Mukerjee**, showcasing stories of success and inspirational advice from 22 individuals from many different worlds.

BookBrunch managing director Jo Henry said: 'We were delighted by the diverse range of topics covered and the publishing expertise shown by all the 20 authors on this year's shortlists. The adult fiction category goes from strength to strength, and this year's winner, Halima Khatun, has written a funny and engaging 21st century take on the British-Bengali marriage market in **The Secret Diary of an Arranged Marriage**. The children's shortlist, which included a book teaching children simple Polish words and an interactive book marking special days on the Islamic calendar, gives us a wonderful celebration of accepting people in **My Mum's a Tiger** by the winner Kate Claxton and her illustrator Angela Mayers, while in the inaugural year of the memoir/autobiography category we were delighted to be able to honour such an important book as Sophie Campbell's **Breakfast at Bronzefield**. These three very worthy winners demonstrate that self-publishing has definitely come of age.'

Ben Hughes, Business Development Manager at IngramSpark UK, said: 'IngramSpark are excited to sponsor the Selfies Book Awards again this year and, In a year of unprecedented challenge for our industry, it's heartening to see the author community come together, albeit virtually, to celebrate writing and writers. As someone who spends each day thinking about self-published authors and how to help them, it's hugely encouraging to see the level of talent across genres and the professionalism and dedication to not only writing, but marketing, designing and publicising great books. The entrants to this year's prize all deserve a lot of credit and I know the eventual winners are more than worthy. In the category I helped to judge, I loved reading the 4 books over the past month or so and learning about worlds I hadn't known anything about before. I'd urge anyone to pick up a copy of the winner's book and any of the shortlist for a great read. '

Launched by BookBrunch in 2018, the Selfies are sponsored by Ingram's award-winning self-publishing platform, IngramSpark® and supported by the London Book Fair and Nielsen Book. The Selfies Awards are judged on the quality of the writing; the production values of the book; an enticing cover and blurb that successfully addresses the target audience; and an effective and creative marketing and publicity strategy that has the potential for great sales. Each winner receives £750 in cash and a profile in BookBrunch, while all shortlisted authors will receive free entry to the 2021 London Book Fair Authors' HQ at the end of June, where a series of events aimed at indie authors will be programmed, and entry into a prize draw for one author to receiving two free hours of mentoring from the Really Useful Company, won by Jemma Hatt.

The judges for the 2021 awards were **Joanna Swainson** of Hardman & Swainson, **Malcolm Edwards** and **Eleanor Pigg** of Nielsen Book for the fiction category, **Helen McAleer** of Helen McAleer Ltd, **Natasha Radford** of the Chicken & Frog Bookshop and **Jennie Marlow** of the London Book Fair for the children's book category, and **Richard Charkin** of Mensch Publishing, **Gordon Wise** of Curtis Brown and **Ben Hughes** of IngramSpark for the memoir/autobiography category.

THE SHORTLISTS IN FULL

The 2021 Selfies Book Awards Adult Fiction shortlist:

The Secret Diary of an Arranged Marriage by Halima Khatun. A British-Bengali girl is looking for Mr Right and getting to know a motley crew of men all while fending off a mum on a mission to match make. Welcome to the world of the 21st century arranged marriage.

The Snowdonia Killings by Simon McCleave. Starting a new life in Snowdonia was always DI Ruth Hunter's dream. About to hit fifty, the veteran police officer trades in the crime-ridden streets of London for a more peaceful life in rural North Wales. But she has barely settled into her new position in North Wales Police when the body of a brutally murdered woman is discovered.

Odd Numbers by Jill Marsh. Five friends reunite every other New Year to commemorate a friend who died tragically young. On the 20th anniversary, in a remote snowy chalet, old doubts surface, wounds reopen and morality comes into question. Is friendship a safety net or a tie that hobbles them all to the past?

Murder Your Darlings by Debbie Young. When Sophie Sayers joins a writers' retreat on a secluded Greek island, she's hoping to find inspiration and perhaps a little adventure. But scarcely has the writing course begun when bestselling romantic novelist Marina Milanese disappears on a solo excursion to an old windmill – and Sophie is the prime suspect.

At the Stroke of Nine O'Clock by Jane Davis. London 1949. The war-torn city is struggling to re-boot itself and wider society, amid ongoing privations. The dawning realisation that Britain needs to

change and to challenge ingrained inequalities is explored through the lived experiences of three very different women whose lives are about to collide.

His Wife's Sister by Adrian Wills. Mara Sitwell was only eleven when she went missing. Nineteen years later, she's been found wandering through remote woodland, alone and confused. She says she's been kept in an underground cell for all these years - but refuses to reveal anything about the man who snatched her. What does she have to hide? And who is she protecting?

Fitting in By Amanda Radley. Heather Bailey has been in charge of a prestigious London shopping centre for several years. Financial turmoil brings a new investor to secure the future, but when he demands that his daughter is found a job at Silver Arches, things become even harder.

How to Buy a Planet by D.A. Holdsworth. It's the Year 2024. Drowning in debt following the pandemic and facing ruin, the world's leaders have taken the only logical decision. They've sold the planet. With only 24 hours to avert the apocalypse, Toby's flatmates drag him on an intergalactic adventure to find a chance of salvation.

The 2021 Selfies Book Awards Children's Books shortlist:

My Mum's A Tiger by Kate Claxton, illustrated by Angela Mayers. Find out what makes Eliza's mum so WILD in this beautiful story of embracing the skin we're in and celebrating all our spots and stripes, the same way we celebrate animal print.

The Fabulous Lost and Found and the Little Polish Mouse by Mark Pallis, illustrated by Peter Baynton. A little mouse has lost something precious, but there's a problem: she only speaks Polish. Before long, the irrepressible Mr & Mrs Frog have turned their Lost and Found Office upside down to solve the mystery and readers have learnt 50 Polish words without realising it.

It's Raining in Moscow and I Forgot my Umbrella by Caroline Boxall. Twelve-year-old Billy has a few problems and his parents are missing. Meanwhile, in Russia, Manya would rather not have parents at all. In a remarkable tale of destruction, deceit and sheer determination, two seemingly unconnected stories are told in parallel, slowly revealing an astonishing link.

Phases of the Moon by Hajera Memon. Learn about the phases of the moon with this sparkly interactive tie-back book with a surprise glow-in-the-dark ending. Each phase marks the passing of time and helps determine special days, such as the beginning of Ramadan, the festivals of Eid, and the Hajj pilgrimage.

The Adventurers and the City of Secrets by Gemma Hatt. Two master criminals are on the run with ancient treasure, using London's web of hidden trails and passages to conceal their loot. The Adventurers must track them down using their wits, Uncle Logan...and a stolen red bus.

Under Grandma's Table by Emma O'Connor, illustrated by Rachael Gray. A beautifully illustrated children's story book about the adventures of imagination in that safe and special place - under Grandma's table.

Champion of the Iroko by Zee Ghara. Ojadili, great warrior of the Madu clan of Atu Kingdom, is tasked with a heavy burden from birth. He must save both his Kingdom and half-sister, Adi from impending doom. Will duty be the cost of love? Or will love cost him the Kingdom, Adi or both?

The Graceful Ghost by Eleanor Dixon. Grace, a ghost who has been tied to Amberwood Ballet School for 200 years, wants to leave. Lauren, a student who is so beset with problems she is struggling to dance, wants to stay. Can they help each other before it's too late?

The 2021 Selfies Book Awards Memoir/Autobiography shortlist:

Breakfast at Bronzefield by Sophie Campbell. Forced into signing an NDA when she arrived there on remand, former public schoolgirl Sophie risked extra time on her sentence by documenting her experiences of life inside. A powerful glimpse into a world few see, including riots, unethical medical prescribing and prison barons.

A Few Wise Words compiled by Peter Mukerjee. A compilation of stories of success and inspirational advice from 22 high profile and highly successful individuals from the worlds of

business, the arts, sport and religious leadership, including Sir Ben Ainslie, Tanni Grey-Thompson, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks and Martha Lane-Fox.

Llama Drama by Anna McNuff. Armed with a limited grasp of Spanish, and determined to meet as many llamas as possible, Anna and her friend Faye set off on a 6-month journey along the spine of the largest mountain range in the world – the Andes.

Barking Mad: Confessions of a Dog Sitter by Jane Mosse. When Christine and Rob take early retirement after having said goodbye to the last of their dogs, their home seems somewhat empty. It's then that they discover the joys of pet-sitting. Staying in other people's homes and taking care of their animals seems the perfect antidote to life without a dog.