



2025 SELFIES SHORTLISTS ANNOUNCED

Six titles – including authors shortlisted in previous years – on each shortlists

London (11th February 2025) – BookBrunch has today announced the shortlists for the seventh year of the Selfies Book Awards, with six titles on each of the three categories.

In the **adult fiction category**, won last year by Julia Boggio's *Shooters*, contenders include historical mysteries, vampires, new motherhood and 'Austen-esque' short stories, with four authors (Grossey, Khatun, Mann and McVeigh) having been shortlisted for this award in the past:

Sizar by Susan Grossey

The Secret Diary of a Bengali Mum by Halima Khatun

The Echoing Shore by Jason Mann

Pride and Perjury by Alice McVeigh

Unravelling by Preethi Nair

House of Crimson Hearts by Ruby Roe

On the list for this year's **children's book category**, won last year by mother/daughter duo Jill Michelle Smith and Jennifer Watson's *Extraordinary Extinct Prehistoric Minibeasts: A First Guide to Fossils*, are stories featuring time travellers, a Prime Minister's son and a magical cat, with three authors (Inglis, Lustig and Watson) having appeared on previous shortlists:

The Wonder Girls Rebel by J.M. Carr

Fyn Carter and the Agents of Eromlos by Ian Hunter

Beyond the Secret Lake by Karin Inglis

Time Tub Travellers and the Silk Thief by Claire Linney

Body in the Thames by Sarah Lustig

The Witch's Cat Goes Wild by Kirstie Watson, illustrated by Nina Khalova

There are six books in contention for the **general non-fiction category**, won last year by JF Penn's *Pilgrimage: Lessons Learned from Solo Walking Three Ancient Ways*. From heart-breaking life stories to a neurodivergent comic book via help with the eccentricities of English spelling, keeping your dog happy and becoming a runner, this year's list consists of:

Can I speak to Josephine please? by Sheila Brill

Just Run: Discovering my love for running and how the impossible becomes possible by Merili Freear

They're All Barking, A Dog's Guide to Human Behaviour by Ruth McDonagh

Knocked Sideways by Sarah McGeough

The Weird & Wonderful Survivories of Squid Horse by The Mollusc Dimension

The Little Book of Confusables 2 by Sarah Townsend

The judges – Anne Williams of the Kate Hordern Literary Agency, Helen Lewis of LitPR and Chris White of Nielsen Bookdata in the adult fiction category, publisher Will Atkinson, Lucy McCarragher of the Rethink Press and Ben Hughes of IngramSpark on adult non-fiction and LBF director Adam Ridgway, book blogger Linda Hill and publisher Jane Harris on children’s books – will be assessing the quality of the writing, marketing campaigns and sales as well as the production values and cover designs when choosing their winners. All shortlisted authors gain free entry to Authors HQ at this year’s London Book Fair, with the winners to be revealed on the afternoon of Tuesday, 11th March in Author HQ. The winner in each category will receive a cheque for £750 and a profile in BookBrunch, while all shortlisted authors will benefit from a range of PR services and branding resources from LitPR.

BookBrunch managing director Jo Henry said: "As always, we’re delighted with the variety and brilliance of the shortlisted titles. There is an amazing range of subjects on offer this year - with a striking concentration on time-travel in the children’s category - and I can’t wait to see who the judges choose as their winners for 2025."

Launched by BookBrunch in 2018 to recognise excellence in the self-publishing market, the awards are sponsored by Ingram’s award-winning self-publishing platform, IngramSpark® and are run in association with the London Book Fair, Nielsen BookData and LitPR. For further information, or for an invitation to the award event, please email selfies@bookbrunch.co.uk.

THE SHORTLISTS IN FULL

Adult fiction

***Sizar* by Susan Grossey.** In the spring of 1826 ex-soldier Gregory Hardiman is settling into civilian life as an ostler and university constable in Cambridge. When an undergraduate is found hanged in his rooms at St Clement’s College, the Master asks Gregory to find out what could have driven the seemingly happy young man to take such a drastic step. In the second of the Cambridge Hardiman Mysteries, Gregory finds himself on shifting sands – torn between family ties in Spain and the possibility of new affections in Cambridge.

***The Secret Diary of a Bengali Mum* by Halima Khatun.** An ambitious British-Bengali woman and her happy-go-lucky husband, a baby that doesn’t sleep and lots of unsolicited advice and old wives’ tales - welcome to the world of a new mum. Halima Khatun tackles race, identity, and maternal mental health as the protagonist marries modernity with the motherland.

***The Echoing Shore* by Jason Mann.** A lifeboat is lost off Cornwall's wild Atlantic coast and all eight crewmen die, but the cause is never fully explained. Ten years later, Kate Tregillis, the editor of a small newspaper on the brink of closure, becomes obsessed with solving the longstanding mystery. Her investigations provoke a backlash of threats and violence in the insular fishing community of St Branok.

***Pride and Perjury* by Alice McVeigh.** Twelve deliciously witty short stories in McVeigh's celebrated ‘Austen-esque’ series. Discover what really happened when Wickham eloped with Lydia and what the Longbourn servants secretly think of the Bennet sisters and take a deep dive into Caroline Bingley’s ambitions, Lady Catherine's diary – and Mr Knightley’s heart.

***Unravelling* by Preethi Nair.** To the outside world, Bhanu seems to have a perfect life, a beautiful home and a wonderful husband and family. No one knows that each superficial layer has been carefully constructed to hide the dark secrets of her past. Then, on the eve of her fortieth wedding anniversary and vow renewal ceremony, a chance encounter shatters Bhanu’s pretence, when a face from her past

reappears.

***House of Crimson Hearts* by Ruby Roe.** In a city ruled by vampires, Octavia, an original vampire, and Red, a hunter seeking revenge, are forced to collaborate during deadly trials for the city's heir. Octavia wants a crown. Red wants blood. But there's only one first place. To win, they're going to have to trust each other. But teamwork is not easy when their past is filled with betrayal.

Children's books

***The Wonder Girls Rebel* by J.M. Carr.** In 1938 all is well, despite headlines in The Nettlefield Courier about Nazis overpowering Europe, and after foiling two Blackshirt plots the Wonder Girls are finding their places in the world - except for gang leader, Baby, who feels out of place. And the arrival of 16-year-old American journalist, Veronica Park, puts Baby's nose further out of joint. But unless they can get along, bombs will fall on Nettlefield before World War 2 has even started.

***Body in the Thames* by Sarah Lustig.** Theo Duncan is just an ordinary student, except he also happens to be the son of the Prime Minister. While Theo and his friend Sammy grapple with work experience inside Parliament, Westminster is shaken by the discovery of a body in the Thames. Journalist Erin Connelly is convinced the death is connected to rumours of MPs planning to break away from Will Duncan's party. With security heightened, Sammy and Theo must be especially clever to evade detection as they work with Erin, question MPs and search the Palace of Westminster for clues.

***Fyn Carter and the Agents of Eromlos* by Ian Hunter.** Twelve-year-old Fyn Carter has always wondered why his dad disappeared eight years ago, so when a world window appears in his living room and a mysterious man warns him to beware of the agents, he cannot help but feel this is the clue he's been waiting for. Setting off on a perilous journey with his best friend Amy, his Grandad Bernie, and a fox named Henry Flame, Fyn must race the agents of Eromlos to find the answers he needs. The multiverse is at risk, but Fyn doesn't realise that he himself is the missing key...

***The Witch's Cat Goes Wild* by Kirstie Watson.** When the Witch's Cat is asked to water the garden, he's thrilled to lend a paw. But when he discovers some magic seeds and a bottle of 'Spectacular Garden Grow', he can't help getting carried away. DRIP DROP ZAAP! What could possibly go wrong?

***Beyond the Secret Lake* by Karin Inglis.** When Tom and Stella find a 100-year-old letter from their Edwardian friend Jack, his plea for help leads them down a time tunnel to 1913. There the adventurers reunite with friends at the grand Penworth Estate - unaware of the danger that awaits. Young heir Sebastian has fallen mysteriously ill, and tensions are running high in the household. With secrets lurking in every shadowy corner, it's up to the friends to unravel a dangerous mystery that threatens Sebastian's life.

***Time Tub Travellers and the Silk Thief* by Claire Linney.** When Zula's aunt's antique bathtub turns out to be a Time Machine, she and her best friend Milo find themselves trapped 400 years in the past. Excited at the chance to show her history teacher that there are Black people in Britain's past, she pulls Milo deeper and deeper into the dangerous world of Tudor London. History is about to get real in ways Zula never imagined.

General non-fiction

***Can I speak to Josephine please?* by Sheila Brill.** Sheila gave birth to Josephine in 1993 and for 23 years, they co-existed in a loving mother-daughter relationship with a difference: Josephine suffered catastrophic brain injury at birth and never spoke to Sheila, rarely smiled and was barely able to see the faces of the people who loved her. But this is not a misery memoir; it's the story of a person who touched the lives of so many people - a bright and beautiful young lady who could work the room despite her enormous limitations.

***Just Run: Discovering my love for running and how the impossible becomes possible* by Merili Freear.**

This book isn't about achieving sub-3-hour marathons or maintaining a running streak for a decade. Instead, it's for the ordinary runner who laces up their shoes, steps out of the door, and finds solace in each stride, despite facing setbacks along the way. Whether you're aiming for marathons, ultras or 5ks, join Merili as she shares the highs, the lows, and the incredible joy that comes from deciding to just run.

***They're All Barking, A Dog's Guide to Human Behaviour* by Ruth McDonagh.** Professor Daniel Springer-Spaniel digs deep into how human behaviour impacts on the nation's dogs, showing how hectic human lifestyles, stress and emotions can affect their pets. He pulls no punches in revealing life from a dog's perspective, including genuine case studies from a canine massage therapist to highlight particular issues and help make humans aware of how they can ensure every dog lives their best life.

***Knocked Sideways* by Sarah McGeough.** Life brings challenges, but it is how you deal with them that makes the difference. Each of these remarkable stories offers an insight into the power of the human spirit - where resilience and determination can help create a brighter future. A book of hope, *Knocked Sideways* shows that no matter what happens, you can find happiness and purpose again.

***The Weird & Wonderful Survivories of Squid Horse* by The Mollusc Dimension.** A comic book about defying multiple, hidden challenges and daring to tell one's story as a fish out of the water creative in a norm-core world refusing to believe you exist through 37 self-contained yet interwoven colourful short stories, based on the unique (yet relatable) lived experiences of a British-born Chinese, trans, neurodivergent artist.

***The Little Book of Confusables 2* by Sarah Townsend.** This essential guide will help you swerve spelling slip-ups and tackle tricky words with confidence. Whether you're puzzling over tricky words or caught in a 'BARE with me' moment, this is more than just a reference book: with an entertaining mix of fun examples, memorable tips and gorgeous typography, it's a joy to read!