

**\*\*Strictly embargoed until 00.01 GMT, Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011\*\***

## **“CAN HE WIN IT?” BOB THE BUILDER DESIGNER SHORTLISTED FOR MAJOR CHILDREN’S BOOK PRIZE**

Curtis Jobling, the designer behind worldwide hit children’s television show *Bob the Builder* and former model maker for Aardman’s *Wallace & Gromit*, has been shortlisted for this year’s Waterstone’s Children’s Book Prize, one of the most valuable and prestigious children’s book awards in the country.

Jobling is nominated for his debut novel, *Wereworld: Rise of the Wolf*, the first in a new series about a 16-year-old trying to master the werewolf within. He was praised by the leading bookseller for the way he combines fantasy, horror and action-adventure, resulting in “an exciting genre-busting novel destined to be a huge hit with fans of bestseller Darren Shan”.

Themes of conflict and division also play a significant part in this year’s shortlist, with several titles drawing on these issues: *A Beautiful Lie* by Irfan Master is a powerful debut set in the time of Partition in India; the protagonist in Ruth Eastham’s *The Memory Cage* is haunted by a promise he made but couldn’t keep growing up during the Bosnian War; whilst *Tall Story* by Candy Gourlay tells the tale of two siblings reunited after almost a decade of being separated from one another.

Sarah Clarke, Children’s Buying Manager at Waterstone’s, said:

“There is much to be excited about in this fantastic selection of books; undoubtedly one of the strongest shortlists we've seen. From titles grounded in reality with complex plots and strong emotional narratives, to pure escapism with fantastical tales of werewolves and magician's assistants, there is something for everyone on this list.”

Celebrating its seventh year, the Waterstone’s Children’s Book Prize was created to champion new and emerging talent in children’s writing. The nine shortlisted authors competing for the coveted award are as follows:

1. *Artichoke Hearts* by Sita Brahmachari (Macmillan)
2. *The Memory Cage* by Ruth Eastham (Scholastic)
3. *Tall Story* by Candy Gourlay (David Fickling Books)
4. *The Pain Merchants: The Healing Wars* by Janice Hardy (Harper Collins)
5. *Wereworld: Rise of the Wolf* by Curtis Jobling (Puffin)
6. *Fantastic Frankie and the Brain-Drain Machine* by Anna Kemp (Simon and Schuster)
7. *A Beautiful Lie* by Irfan Master (Bloomsbury)
8. *Mortlock* by Jon Mayhew (Bloomsbury)
9. *When you Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead (Andersen Press)

Final judging is currently underway, and the winner will be announced by Children’s Laureate Anthony Browne at an evening reception at Waterstone’s Piccadilly (London), Europe’s largest bookstore, on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February. As well as a £5000 cash prize – one of the most valuable for children’s writing in the UK – the winning author will see a significant boost in sales, and the promise of ongoing commitment to their writing career from over 300 Waterstone’s branches nationwide.

**For further press information, author and jacket images, and interview requests please contact  
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## NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Waterstone's Children's Book Prize is open to authors writing for 7-13 year-olds who have written two fiction titles or less, and is unique in that it is voted for by booksellers across the country.
- Previous winners of the prize include: *The Diamond of Drury Lane* by Julia Golding; *Ways to Live Forever* by Sally Nicholls; *Thirteen Treasures* by Michelle Harrison; and last year's winner *The Great Hamster Massacre* by Katie Davies.
- Waterstone's is the UK's leading specialist bookseller with branches in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as branches in Eire, in Amsterdam and Brussels, on the Isle of Man and Jersey. Its transactional website [Waterstones.com](http://Waterstones.com) was launched in 2006, and there are currently over 3 million holders of the Waterstone's Card. Waterstone's was named High Street Retailer of the Year at the Bookseller Retail Awards 2009.
- For further information, please visit: [www.waterstones.com/wcbp](http://www.waterstones.com/wcbp)
- *Shortlist details and bookseller comments:*

### **Artichoke Hearts by Sita Brahmachari (Macmillan)**

Twelve-year-old Mira comes from a chaotic, artistic and outspoken family where it's not always easy to be heard. As her beloved Nana Josie's health declines, Mira begins to discover the secrets of those around her, and also starts to keep some of her own. An insightful, honest novel exploring the delicate balance, and often injustice, of life and death - but at its heart is a celebration of friendship, culture and life.

"I loved everything about this book, the characters, the story, the way the author writes with warmth and humour... I could go on forever!" - Isabel Tomlinson, Waterstone's Hull University.

### **About the Author**

Sita was born in Derby in 1966, to an Indian doctor from Kolkata and an English nurse from the Lake District. She has a BA in English Literature and an MA in Arts Education. Her many projects have been produced in theatres, universities, schools and community groups throughout Britain and America. *Artichoke Hearts* is her first novel for children. Sita lives and works in North London with her husband and three children.

### **The Memory Cage by Ruth Eastham (Scholastic)**

Alex's beloved grandfather is sick. His memory is failing, and Alex's parents want to put him in a home. Alex has promised Granddad that he won't let that happen. But Alex has broken promises before. When he was growing up in the Bosnian War, he swore that he would protect his brother. It was a promise he couldn't keep and he can't fail again. An inter-generational tale of war, memory, love and loyalty in the vein of Michael Morpurgo and Michelle Magorian.

"A beautifully written, touching and emotive story; never before have I felt so emotionally tethered to a book." - Sam Bryant, Waterstone's Oxford St. Plaza.

### **About the Author**

Ruth Eastham was born in Lancashire and trained as a teacher in Cambridge. She has since worked in more than a dozen different schools in the UK, New Zealand, Australia and Italy. She likes photography, growing things to eat, second-hand shops and world maps. Currently she lives in an international college with 26 teenagers from 23 different countries. Ruth was shortlisted for the BBC Talent Children's Fiction Prize in 2002.

### **Tall Story by Candy Gourlay (David Fickling Books)**

Andi desperately hopes her long lost half-brother Bernardo will be as mad on basketball as she is. But when he steps off the plane from the Philippines, she can't believe her eyes. She hasn't seen him for ten years, but even so, how did he get to be eight foot tall? In a novel packed with humour and quirkiness, Candy Gourlay explores a touching sibling relationship and the clash of two very different cultures.

"Great central characters with really unique voices and a fantastic story to tell. This has drama, intrigue and family matters, and I loved it." – Katy Roberts, Waterstone's Fareham.

### **About the author**

Candy Gourlay was born in Manila during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos; after working as a journalist for some years, she moved to the UK in her twenties. Candy is now a full-time writer of short stories, blogs, websites, journalism and radio programmes.

### **The Pain Merchants: The Healing Wars by Janice Hardy (Harper Collins)**

In a dystopian world crippled by war, orphans Nya and Tali try to make a living. They are Takers, and can pull pain from people's bodies and move it into their own. This ability wins Tali an apprenticeship at the powerful Healers' League. But Nya's unique pain-shifting skills are flawed, dark and deadly dangerous. Now something sinister is happening at the Healers' League and apprentices are missing. Suddenly Nya's talent is in great demand from the pain merchants and trackers hunting her across the city...

"Adventure, mystery and fantasy. I loved this book and am already looking forward to the next part of this exciting new series." – Jeanette Cake, Watertstone's Southampton Above Bar.

### **About the author**

Janice Hardy lives in Georgia. She wrote and illustrated an early work *Dog City* when she was eight, and has been writing ever since. *The Pain Merchants: The Healing Wars* is the first book in her medieval fantasy trilogy.

### **Wereworld: Rise of the Wolf by Curtis Jobling (Puffin)**

When the air is clear, 16-year-old Drew Ferran can pick up the scent of a predator. When the moon breaks through the clouds, a terrifying fever grips him. And when a vicious beast invades his home, his gums begin to tear, his fingers become claws, and Drew transforms...

"This book was howlingly good fun, the characters were wicked and the action had me completely hooked till the last page!" – Mark Scott, Waterstone's Bristol Galleries.

### **About the author**

Early work on Aardman's *Wallace & Gromit* and Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks* led Curtis Jobling to pick up his crayons in 1997 to design the BAFTA winning *Bob the Builder*. The animated series of *Frankenstein's Cat*, based upon Curtis's picture book of the same name, picked up the Pulcinella award for Best Children's Show at the 2008 International Cartoons On The Bay festival in Salerno, Italy. His noisy new preschool show, *Raa Raa*, can be seen on CBeebies, while his original paintings and prints sell in galleries the world over. Curtis Jobling lives with his family in Cheshire, England.

### **Fantastic Frankie and the Brain Drain Machine by Anna Kemp (Simon and Schuster)**

When Frankie Blewitt brings home yet another F-for-failure school report it's the last straw for his overachieving parents and they decide to send him to the Crammar Grammar boarding school. At first he is just relieved to be away from home, but he soon realises that there's something really weird going and that headmaster Dr Gore has plans to turn all the students into robot-like super-brains using his "brain-drain" machine!

"*Fantastic Frankie* is great fun! I love all of the insane characters and the illustrations were gorgeous too." – Bobby Brill, Waterstone's Maidstone.

About the author

Anna Kemp works on contemporary French literature at Oxford University. Her first picture book *Dogs Don't Do Ballet* was published in 2010. *Fantastic Frankie and the Brain-Drain Machine* is her first young fiction title.

**A Beautiful Lie by Irfan Master (Bloomsbury)**

Set in India in 1947 at the time of Partition, this powerful debut novel tells the story of Bilal, a boy determined to protect his dying father from the news of Partition, and explores the importance of tolerance, love and family.

"I very much enjoyed this – great characters, interesting setting and informative too; brilliant." – Rebecca Gransbury, Waterstone's Sheffield Orchard Square.

About the Author

Irfan Master is a project manager at the National Literacy Trust. His family is from Gujarat, where the novel is set. This is his first novel. Irfan lives in London.

**Mortlock by Jon Mayhew (Bloomsbury)**

Josie is a knife thrower in a magician's stage act. Alfie is an undertaker's assistant. They are both orphans and they have never met, but they are about to be given a clue to the secret of their shared past, which has come to seek them out. Whilst they flee for their lives, they must unravel the burning mysteries surrounding the legacy that threatens to consume them.

"I was gripped by this book from start to finish, wonderfully sinister with a proper baddie – fantastic!" – Beth Goodyear, Waterstone's Edinburgh Cameron Toll.

About the author

Jon Mayhew is a man with a dark imagination, who has always loved writing and storytelling. An English teacher for 20 years, he now works as a specialist teacher for children with autism. He has four children himself and, when neither teaching nor writing, plays in ceilidh bands and runs marathons. *Mortlock* is his first novel. Jon lives between Chester and Liverpool.

**When you Reach Me by Rebecca Stead (Andersen Press)**

Miranda's life is starting to unravel. Her best friend, Sal, gets punched by a kid on the street for what seems like no reason, and he shuts Miranda out of his life. The key that Miranda's mum keeps hidden for emergencies is stolen. And then a mysterious note arrives. The notes keep coming, and Miranda slowly realises that whoever is leaving them knows things no one should know. Each message brings her closer to believing that only she can prevent a tragic death. Until the final note makes her think she's too late.

"I loved this book, especially the central character's honesty and emotion. Totally fantastic and an original voice." – LJ Patterson, Waterstone's Finchley

About the Author

Rebecca Stead grew up in New York City and worked as a lawyer, before turning her hand to writing books for adults. *When You Reach Me* is her first book for children, and is the winner of several awards, including the John Newbery Medal.

