

**\*\*Strictly embargoed until 20.00 GMT, Wednesday 9th February 2011\*\***

## **SITA BRAHMACHARI SCOOPS WATERSTONE'S CHILDREN'S BOOK PRIZE**

Debut author Sita Brahmachari has won one of the most valuable and prestigious children's book awards in the country for her striking coming-of-age novel about life, death, friendship and love.

*Artichoke Hearts* was announced as the winner of the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize 2011 by Children's Laureate Anthony Browne at an evening ceremony at Waterstone's Piccadilly, Europe's biggest bookshop, on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Anthony Browne described *Artichoke Hearts* as "a beautifully written book about family, friendship, grief and hope, which made me laugh and cry – sometimes at the same time."

Inspired by the author's 'beautiful and bohemian' mother-in-law, whose long battle with cancer was heartbreaking for her family, Brahmachari started writing the book as a way of dealing with her grief. *Artichoke Hearts* was praised by the judging panel for the way it tackles the issue of death head on, treating it as part of the cycle of life and of growing up, and for the "effortless way in which it shows how inspiring grandparents and the older generation can be for children."

Waterstone's Children's Buying Manager, Sarah Clarke, said:

"This is the most honest, emotionally affecting children's book I've read for some time, and a more than worthy winner of the Prize. Its characters lodge straight in the reader's heart and I defy anyone to read it without crying."

Beating off stiff competition from a nine-strong shortlist, *Artichoke Hearts* was published earlier this year, and has already received much praise within the industry. Caroline Horn, Children's News Editor of *The Bookseller*, said: "*Artichoke Hearts* is a delicate, perceptive coming-of-age novel. The author seems to have an instinctive grasp of the issues faced by young people of this age and I look forward to reading more by her."

Celebrating its seventh year, the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize was created to champion new and emerging talent in children's writing. As well as a £5000 cash prize – one of the most valuable for children's writing in the UK – the winner sees a significant boost in sales, and the promise of ongoing commitment to their writing career from over 300 Waterstone's branches nationwide.

The daughter of a doctor from Kolkata and a nurse from the Lake District, Sita Brahmachari grew up in Shropshire, and has worked in theatre and education for over a decade. She now lives and works in North London with her husband and three children.

**For further press information, author and jacket images, and interview requests please contact**

**Anwen Hooson at Riot Communications on**

**020 3174 0118 / 07899 798885 / [anwen.hooson@riotcommunications.com](mailto:anwen.hooson@riotcommunications.com)**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. 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.
  2. The nine shortlisted authors who competed for the coveted award are as follows:
    - *Artichoke Hearts* by Sita Brahmachari (Macmillan)
    - *The Memory Cage* by Ruth Eastham (Scholastic)
    - *Tall Story* by Candy Gourlay (David Fickling Books)
    - *The Pain Merchants: The Healing Wars* by Janice Hardy (Harper Collins)
    - *Wereworld: Rise of the Wolf* by Curtis Jobling (Puffin)
    - *Fantastic Frankie and the Brain-Drain Machine* by Anna Kemp (Simon and Schuster)
    - *A Beautiful Lie* by Irfan Master (Bloomsbury)
    - *Mortlock* by Jon Mayhew (Bloomsbury)
    - *When you Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead (Andersen Press)
  3. 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.
  4. 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.
  5. For further information, please visit: [www.waterstones.com/wcbp](http://www.waterstones.com/wcbp)
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