



Awards ? The Other Award and The Observer Teenage Fiction Prize

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Report on the latest prizes.

The Other Award 1987

The panel for the 1987 Other Award has chosen four winners and two runners-up to honour for this, its thirteenth, presentation.

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The idea of several 'equal winners' is a characteristic of the Other Award, as is the fact that the panel considers books for children and young people from a wide range of publishing - educational, community, Black and gay as well as mainstream. Set up to be different from established awards the Other Award has ended up influencing them while itself remaining constant in its focus on the presentation of gender, race, class and disability alongside literary and aesthetic merit. There are no prizes for the winners. 'The only real prize for an author or illustrator is their book reaching readers it would not otherwise have found,' says Rosemary Stones, co-founder of the award with Andrew Mann. This may well be happening. Publishers report that the Other Award - now paradoxically very much part of the children's books establishment - actually increases sales; and the Other Award posters are much in demand for libraries, schools and bookshops.

The Winners and the award panel's comments

Grandma's Favourite, 0 423 51720 1 **Wok's Cooking**, 0 423 51740 6 **Which Twin Wins?**, 0 423 51750 3, **Chapatis not Chips**, 0 423 51730 9 Peter Heaslip, Methuen 'Next Door Books' series, £1.75 each

Everyday incidents for primary school age children are vividly and amusingly told in these four 'Next Door Books': a mixed marriage family prepares for a christening (**Grandma's Favourite**); bi-lingual (Urdu/English) twins vie with each other to teach their baby sister words from each language (**Which Twin Wins?**); a white family learns to cook with a wok (**Wok's Cooking**); and an Asian mum comes into school to show how to make chapatis (**Chapatis not Chips**). Part of a series for developing readers and illustrated with lively, full-colour photographs. These deceptively simple stories are a vital addition to a literature for younger readers which reflects the multi-racial society.

The Palestinians

David McDowall, Franklin Watts 'Issues' series, 0 86313 484 X, £5.25

'The plight of the Palestinians is one of the most serious and controversial issues facing the world,' says David McDowall in this exceptionally clear and well-written account of the history and present-day situation of the Palestinian

people. This is the first book to be published in Britain for young readers on this complex subject which can rouse strongly partisan feelings. With its well-judged text illustrated with charts and photographs, **The Palestinians** sensitively presents the issues and explains the differing interests that have created this twentieth-century tragedy.

Push Me, Pull Me

Sandra Chick, Women's Press 'Livewire', 0 7043 4901 9, £2.95

14-year-old Cathy's world falls apart when her mum's boyfriend, Bob, moves in and begins to sexually assault and rape her, confident that Cathy will never tell her mum what's going on. When Bob finally leaves, the painful and courageous process of making a new life begins for Cathy. Uncompromisingly honest about causes and effects, **Push Me, Pull Me** shows in many ways, large and small, where sexual abuse fits into larger social injustices and distortions. No easy read, this novel for teenagers is both moving and compelling.

Rosa Guy

The Other Award has only once before singled out an individual writer for an outstanding overall contribution to children's literature. In 1977 Frederick Grice was honoured for his novels (which include **The Bonny Pit Laddie**) which embody the history and spirit of the Durham mining community he grew up in. Now in 1987 the Other Award is honouring Rosa Guy, one of America's leading Black writers who has, over the years, made a unique and outstanding contribution to a literature for teenagers in which the Black experience is central.

Rosa Guy's first trilogy (**The Friends, Edith Jackson, Ruby**) focuses primarily on the lives of girls and women and is a sensitive and perceptive portrayal of the cultural divide between Black Americans and people from the Caribbean. All three of these powerful novels stand on their own; **The Friends**, in particular, is an established favourite with teenagers in Britain. Rosa Guy's second trilogy (**The Disappearance, New Guys Around the Block, And I Heard a Bird Sing**) also addresses themes of racial prejudice, violence and society's indifference to the needs of Black youth. Rosa Guy's style here is fast moving, and dramatic tension is sustained with the introduction of crime and thrilling denouements.

Rosa Guy's versatility and originality as a writer are clearly shown in her recent and very different poetic novel set in a Caribbean island, *My Love, My Love* (Virago Upstarts) in which she looks, via the story of Desiree Dieu-Donne, a peasant girl, and her love for rich and handsome Daniel Beauxhomme, at the destiny of poor peasants eking out their existence in a society in which prejudice of colour, race and class, creates a descending spiral of deprivation, despair and destruction.

With **Paris, Pee Wee and Big Dog**, the tale of three friends' adventures in the streets of New York, Rosa Guy has now also turned her attention to writing for a younger audience (8 to 12-year-olds).

Rosa Guy's novels are published by Gollancz and Puffin.

The Runners-up

Piggybook

Anthony Browne, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 268 7, £5.95

Mr Piggott and sons Patrick and Simon lead such important lives they barely notice Mrs Piggott as she cooks, cleans and goes out to work - until the day she's no longer there. A witty picture book full of surreal detail and a moral tale about sex roles. For six-year-olds and upwards.

Words by Heart

Ouida Sebestyen, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12083 7, £6.95

Lena's is the first Black family in the district and when Lena wins the scripture reciting competition, unspoken hostility becomes open. This powerful novel for teenagers is a moving evocation of share cropping life in the southern states of America in the early years of the century.

There may be a copy of the Other Award poster with this issue of **Books for Keeps**. If not, or if you would like an extra copy, write to Rosemary Stones, 4 Aldebert Terrace, London SW8 IBH, enclosing an A4 stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The Observer Teenage Fiction Prize

The winner for 1987 is

Memory by Margaret Mahy (Dent, 0 460 06269 7, £7.95)

19-year-old Jonny, troubled, drunk and desperately needing to make some sense out of some powerful and confused memories (especially those connected with his older sister's death five years ago) encounters old Sophie West, equally confused but without memory, suffering from senile dementia. An unlikely relationship is depicted with humour and understanding as Jonny, drawn into Sophie's present, begins to make sense of his own past.

Also shortlisted were:

Wise Child, Monica Furlong, Gollancz, 0 575 04046 7, £7.95

Madame Doubtfire, Anne Fine, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 12001 2, £6.95

Isaac Campion, Janni Howker, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 270 9, £5.95

The Mysterious Mr Ross, Vivien Alcock, Methuen, 0 416 01312 0, £7.50

Push Me, Pull Me, Sandra Chick, Women's Press 'Livewire', 0 7043 4901 9, £2.95

The six adult members of the jury were joined this year by 16-year-old Philip Chamberlain.

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