

## **2022 My Brother Jack Awards**

### **Primary School Short Story Award**

Firstly, thank you to everyone who submitted stories to the primary section of this year's My Brother Jack Literary Awards – it's an enormous privilege to be able to delve into your magnificent stories. Once again, I was deeply impressed by the standard of stories and agonised over my selection.

There were 97 entries in this section and I was astonished by the breadth of subjects covered. There were stories about Halloween and time travel; stories set in outer space and stories about caramello koalas, flying socks and fairies. There were stories about dog spies, ghosts, alien zombies and stories that examine what it means to be different in a world that doesn't always make space for anything extraordinary. A lot of the stories were about heroism, and about finding a secret world in our one.

I read all of the stories through twice. The first read through was to see if I enjoyed it; the second read through was to consider the originality, message, technical expression, form and flow, choice of words and the overall impact. Many of the stories started off strongly, only to trail off or rush the ending.

Thank you again to everyone who trusted me with your stories, I loved reading them. For those of you who have placed – congratulations! For those of you who might be feeling a bit disappointed – I've been in your shoes. I hope every single one of you keeps writing.

#### ***Colourful* – First Place**

'Colourful' is a complex and well-paced story with a strong voice. It tells the story of an artist in a dystopian future where everything is grey. I love how it pulled me in and kept me completely captivated. This story is intriguing and has a thought provoking ending that stayed with me long after I finished reading.

#### ***Strange Town* – Highly Commended**

'Strange Town' is an atmospheric, uncanny story about monsters that had me on the edge of my seat.

***The Last Fight* – Highly Commended**

This unsettling story utilises powerful, poetic language to examine issues of belonging, mortality and haunting – this line really struck me: ‘a dream, a force of a flower that grows on all hills, an untapped moment’. It has a subtle, layered narrative.

***Darkseeker level 1* – Highly Commended**

This fun story is set in a videogame – we open on a scene of the villain Darkseeker minding his own business, enjoying a coconut on the beach. Until the kids start playing! This story made me laugh.

- **Eliza Henry-Jones**