

## **2024 My Brother Jack Awards Junior and Senior Primary Short Story Awards**

Firstly, thank you to everyone who submitted stories to the two primary sections of this year's My Brother Jack Literary Awards. I adored reading this year's entries. I was deeply impressed by the imaginativeness, originality, sophistication and surprising twists in this year's entries.

There were 165 entries in the grade 4 – 6 section and 53 entries in the foundation – grade 3 section. The breadth of subjects was astonishing. There were stories about Eurovision, time travel and dragons in space. Imaginary friends and bank heists. There were stories told from the perspective of foxes, flowers, magpies, the moon and pancakes. Nail biting matches of football and volleyball. There were stories set on Mount Everest, in deep dark caves, and many, I noticed, set under the sea. I read stories about fairies, mermaids, everyday kids facing tough situations and adventuring through magical realms.

There were so many promising stories this year. I was really inspired by the liveliness of the voices, the worldbuilding, and how imaginative this year's entries were. I was struck by how many entries felt like sections from much longer works, which is exciting to see.

When judging, I consider the originality, message, technical expression, form and flow, and overall impact of each story. Once I have a shortlist, I once again dragged my school-librarian mother out of retirement to help me decide the placegetters.

It was a privilege to read these stories. Thank you for trusting me with them, and please keep writing!

### **Junior Primary**

#### ***The Lost Cat – First Place***

A very entertaining and fast-paced story about two friends solving the mystery of a missing cat. There are twists, turns and a satisfying ending. I was particularly intrigued by the plot, the pacing and the excellent use of dialogue.

### ***The Mysterious Light* – Highly Commended**

This evocative and engaging story follows a young boy called Jacob, who leaves home to track down a mysterious light. The sustained use of language, story arc and characterisation was compelling.

### ***Kitty Criminal* – Highly Commended**

This lively, imaginative and rollicking story follows a pizza cat criminal. The use of dialogue, the originality, and the pacing of the story was intriguing.

### ***Teenager to Mermaid* – Highly Commended**

The teenaged main character turning into a mermaid is just the start of this entertaining and surprising tale. Its originality and how sustained the story impressed me. It was also accompanied by thirty excellent illustrations.

## **Senior Primary**

### ***A Kite of a Whale* – First Place**

‘A Kite of a Whale’ is an entrancing and poetic tale about a boy and his mother flying a whale kite at the park. I was extremely impressed with the lyricism of the work - “The whale dipped and soared, a mythical creature unbound, Its flukes brushed stardust, its body a vessel spellbound”. I was also captivated by how well the author captured the magic of small, everyday moments.

### ***I Wonder Who* – Highly Commended**

A thought provoking and emotional story about a woman in her seventies who has been diagnosed with cancer. This story was well crafted and well sustained, with a very effective use of repetition throughout, culminating in a powerful ending.

***Brighton Sky* – Highly Commended**

This playful and extremely original story has a lot of respect for the reader, leaving clues throughout to help us piece together that the protagonists are crows on an unexpected mission. The ending had me laughing out loud.

***Moonlight in Melbourne* – Highly Commended**

This is an immersive, dreamlike story that rewards a close reading. Told from the perspective of the moon, it unfolds over a single night in Melbourne, dipping in and out of various beautifully drawn scenes.