

UKLA Book Award 2015 Winners

The unique UKLA Book Awards are the only awards judged entirely by teachers, who are able to share the books with their classes and genuinely discover what works with young readers.

The winning book in the 12 to16+ category is *Every Day* by David Levithan, published by Egmont.

Every day, A wakes up in a new body and has to live that person's life doing no harm to the host. However, when A falls in love, lives are changed and hosts become aware of what is happening to them. This is a highly original book which is handled with real integrity. Levithan offers readers glimpses of some of the quandaries of teenage life, but never offers superficial answers. Teacher judges described

Every Day

as 'a brilliant and important book'.

David Levithan

*It seems only fitting for me to send another person to accept this huge honour for *Every Day*. You may be seeing the body and hearing the voice of my wonderful editor Stella Paskins right now, but hopefully you will be able to feel my spirit shining through. *Every Day* is about many things, but it is primarily about the power of seeing life through a multitude of perspectives. This is something we authors do as a matter of course, propelling ourselves into lives that are not our own in order to discover truths that are larger than us. This is something readers do whenever they lose themselves in a story, reaching beyond their own experience in order to build their knowledge of their world and their empathy for other people within it. And it is something teachers do every single day of their lives, seeing the world not only from their own perspective but also from the perspectives of the varied lives that they share for the duration of a class, a school year, or much longer. I write in order to broaden my own world, and an award like this means so much to me because it broadens the world that my words will reach. Please know how deeply thankful I am, not just for this recognition, but for everything you do to help students learn other*

lives, every day

The winning book in the 7 to 11 category is *Oliver and the Seawigs* by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre, published by Oxford University Press

Judges loved

Oliver and the Seawigs

because it truly 'captures the joy of reading.' When Oliver's parents go missing, he searches for them, gradually gathering an eccentric group of new friends including a wandering isle called Cliff. Though the combination of words and pictures make

Oliver and the Seawigs

a perfect book for children who have developed little stamina as readers, it has been written and illustrated with such wit and so many highly original ideas that, as one of the judges said, 'it reaches out to everyone.'

Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre

*Thank you, UKLA, for giving *Oliver and the Seawigs* a Best Book Award! At the award ceremony in Nottingham we were thrilled to hear stories from teachers about how children who normally didn't get excited about reading were won over by Oliver... As grownups, we love illustrations, and we wanted to make a book full of pictures, which pull the readers through the pages to the end and make them want more. It doesn't seem to expect readers to move straight from picture books to pages of solid text. When we gave our speech in Nottingham, both of us took turns drawing a Sea Monkey picture, and we thanked the teachers present for taking time to think about the value of illustration.*

We also discussed #PicturesMeanBusiness, our campaign asking people to credit the illustrators of books along with the writers. And we asked the teachers to encourage their colleagues in discussing with their classes both the writers and the illustrators of books. Some children come to reading through pictures, and it's great when they can see a story being told in two different ways, through writing and through images. We love it when they get involved in doing their own drawings and making things, too: there are some activity sheets on [Sarah's blog](#) to help them get started.

Thank you again for such a lovely event

Highly Commended 7-11 Award to *Us Minus Mum* by Heather Butler, published by Little, Brown

Us Minus Mum

is, as you'd expect from the title, a book about bereavement. The story follows George's mum from her diagnosis to her death. What makes it a 'brilliant, brilliant book' is that Heather Butler creates a very happy, completely believable family who mourn mum, but honour her life through happiness as well as sorrow. There isn't a shred of sentimentality in this 'honest, powerful and insightful novel.'

Heather Butler

Thank you for the award. I am incredibly excited by it. As a teacher myself, being acknowledged by colleagues makes it all the more special.

Recently I was chatting to a head teacher after a lovely day in his school, when a ten year old girl burst through the front door. Both her parents were with her and she pointed at the Us Minus Mums in my crate and said,

'That's the book I want to buy.'

The head, the mum and the dad raised their eye brows. The head asked if he could have a word with the father in his office.

There's something going on here, I thought and began chatting to the girl and the mum. A minute later, the father emerged from the office. With tears in his eyes he shook my hand and mumbled,

'Thank you for coming to school today and for writing the book.'

After the family left, the head told me how the family's little boy died a few months before. The girl wouldn't/couldn't talk about what had happened; until today when she raced home and told her parents they were coming back to school to buy a book. She wanted them to read this book together and talk about it. The parents had no idea what the book was about until they saw the title.

So thank you again for the award. My hope is that by reading it, children (and adults) will be better able to cope with, or support others going through, the bereavement process.

The winning book for the 3 to 6 category is *The Day the Crayons Quit* written by Drew Daywalt and illustrated by Oliver Jeffers, published by HarperCollins

Fed up with the way they are misused, Duncan's crayons each write him a letter of complaint.

The Day the Crayons Quit

is a very funny book which encourages children to be adventurous and creative. Like all the very

best picture books, there is plenty here to delight adults as well as children. The theme of our responsibility for the happiness of others is explored in remarkable ways. As one of the judges said: 'I don't know how you could do more in so few words and so few pages.'

Oliver Jeffers (Illustrator)

I apologise for not being able to be here today and accept this award in person - my wife and I welcomed our son into the world only two days ago! However, regardless of my whereabouts, it appears that although the crayons quit, they still came home with the award and I couldn't be more thrilled! Thank you very much.

Drew Daywalt (writer)

The Day the Crayons Quit was the first book I've ever written and I wanted it to appeal to both children and adults, because picture books aren't just for children. They're for children and the adults who love them. They're one of the few shared mediums for all ages. And the fact that my book was chosen by teachers and the children they love and guide could not make me happier!