



## SELFIES BOOK AWARDS 2023 SHORTLISTS ANNOUNCED

### FOUR PREVIOUS WINNERS IN THE MIX

**London (March 24, 2023)** – BookBrunch has today announced the shortlists for the fifth year of the Selfies Book Awards. Launched by BookBrunch in 2018 to recognise excellence in the self-publishing market, the awards are sponsored by Ingram's award-winning self-publishing platform, IngramSpark® and are run in association with the London Book Fair and Nielsen BookData.

The Selfies are judged on both the quality of the writing and the publishing expertise displayed by the author, with judges assessing the marketing campaign as well as sales, production values and cover designs when choosing the winners. The successful author in each category - adult fiction, children's book and memoir/autobiography - receive £750 and a profile in BookBrunch, while the shortlisted authors gain free entry to Authors HQ at this year's London Book Fair at Olympia 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> April, where a series of events aimed at indie authors is being programmed.

BookBrunch managing director Jo Henry said: "Year on year the professionalism shown by self-published authors gets more impressive, and this year I'm delighted that we've got a bumper crop of titles shortlisted for these prestigious awards, including four previous winners."

In the **adult fiction category**, won last year by Ivan Wainewright's time travelling novel *The Other Times of Caroline Tangent*, contenders include historical novels, set in periods ranging from Roman to Victorian via Viking and Medieval, and cosy as well as hardboiled crime; two previous winners are also on the list.

The shortlisted titles are:

*The Phone Call* by A.J. Campbell

*Death in Paris* by Kate Darroch

*The West Rises (High King: Book 1)* by Susan Davies

*Small Eden* by Jane Davis (winner of the first Selfies Book Award in 2019)

*The Ring Breaker* by Jean Gill

*The Maids of Biddenden* by G.D. Harper

*The Secret Diary of a Bengali Newlywed* by Halima Khatun (winner of a Selfies Book Award in 2021)

*The Secrets We Keep* by A.J.Wills

In the **children's book category**, won last year by Hannah Peckham's *Conker the Chameleon*, a "lovely exploration of being a little bit different" illustrated by Stephanie Jayne, contenders this year also include two previous winners and showcase beautifully illustrated picture books as well as middle grade readers. The full shortlist is:

*Searching for a Roarer* by Kate Claxton (winner of a Selfies Book Award in 2021)  
*The Adventurers and the Sea of Discovery* by Jemma Hatt (winner of a Selfies Book Award in 2020)  
*Bee's Mission to Mars* by Jonathan Horden  
*Return to the Secret Lake* by Karen Inglis  
*Mystery in the Palace of Westminster* by Sarah Lustig  
*My Family is So Scottish* by Kristin McNeil  
*When I Grow Up* by Rich Smith  
*Tales of The Witch's Cat: The Puppy Problem* by Kristie Watson

The shortlist for the **memoir/autobiography category**, a category won last year by Hannah Powell's account of seeking out alternative therapies, *The Cactus Surgeon: Using Nature to Fix a Faulty Brain*, include six very different books. These include a stunningly illustrated look at Kew Gardens, a quest to farm more sustainably and an inspirational story about bringing up four autistic boys.

The shortlist is:

*The Register* by Moira Dennis  
*A Dairy Story* by Wilma Finlay  
*No Place to Lie* by Helen Garlick  
*The Kew Sketch Journal* by Charles Leon  
*One for the Book, Son* by Nick Terry  
*Marching to a Different Beat - A family's journey with autism* by Sarah Ziegel

Expert judging panels are now reading the shortlisted titles to select their best indie-published books of 2022. The winners will be announced on **Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> April at 5.00pm** in Author HQ at the **London Book Fair**, Olympia. For further information, or for an invitation to this event, please email [selfies@bookbrunch.co.uk](mailto:selfies@bookbrunch.co.uk).

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## THE SHORTLISTS IN FULL

The 2023 Selfies Book Awards Adult Fiction shortlist:

***The Phone Call* by A.J. Campbell.** Joey was just fifteen when his dad died, leaving him to raise his much younger siblings as his mum dealt with her failing health. So when a phone call brings Joey the chance to ease the burdens of his life, he grabs the opportunity, even though he knows things don't add up. As catastrophic events unfold, Joey becomes further embroiled and when the next job comes in, Joey wants out – but by this time, he's in way too deep to say no.

***Death in Paris* by Kate Darroch.** A nasty taxman is thrown from the Eiffel Tower, and Scots Irish schoolteacher Màiri Maguire's best friend Lianna stands accused. Everyone Màiri knows is equally likely to be the real killer... and she has less than a week to prove Lianna innocent! Can Màiri outfox the French Justice system?

***The West Rises (High King: Book 1)* by Susan Davies.** Abandoned by the Romans, facing slaughter by raiding Picts and Saxons, Britain stands on the brink of catastrophe. Only one man can save the nation: Vortigern, whose greatest ally is young warrior Kerin Brightspear. Beyond the borders, enemies are growing stronger by the day. Can Kerin seize the chance to repay his debt to Vortigern as he bids to become all that his name proclaims: lord of the Britons, the High King?

***Small Eden* by Jane Davis.** 1884. The symptoms of scarlet fever are easily mistaken for teething, as Robert Cooke and his pregnant wife Freya discover at the cost of their two infant sons. Freya immediately isolates for the safety of their unborn child. By the time they meet again, the subject is taboo. But unspoken grief is a dangerous enemy. It bides its time.

***The Ring Breaker* by Jean Gill.** In the twilight of the old gods, when the last Vikings rule the seas, two

cursed orphans meet on an Orkney beach and their fates collide. Stripped of honour, facing bleak loneliness ahead, Skarfr and Hlif forge an unbreakable bond as they come of age in the savage Viking culture of blood debts and vengeance.

***The Maids of Biddenden* by G.D. Harper.** Inspired by the real-life story of conjoined twins Mary and Eliza Chulkhurst, born in 1100 into a wealthy family from a small Kent village where they overcome fear and hostility to grow into gifted and much-loved women – one a talented and outgoing musician, the other a caring and thoughtful healer. Entangled in the struggles for power and influence of the great Kent nobles of the time, they achieve much in their lifetimes and leave behind a legacy that survives to this day.

***The Secret Diary of a Bengali Newlywed* by Halima Khatun.** New husband. New city. New in-laws and new expectations. They say you don't just marry the guy, you marry the whole family. They also say you don't really know someone until you live with them. But, surely, after the challenge of finding a man, and the nightmare of planning my big fat Bangladeshi wedding, this newlywed phase is the easy bit, right?

***The Secrets We Keep* by A.J.Wills.** With every passing minute, hopes of finding Annie Warren alive are fading fast. The police seem completely clueless while the Warrens' house is besieged by a news-hungry press pack. Among them is Yannick Kellor, an ambitious TV reporter who's spotted an opportunity to make name for himself. But that's not his only reason for wanting to solve the mystery of Annie's disappearance. He knows the family – and their dark secrets.

The 2023 Selfies Book Awards Children's Books shortlist:

***Searching for a Roarer* by Kate Claxton.** Maleri wants to be an adventurer, but her mum's long work hours and small budget mean that most of her adventures happen in her sketchbook. When she overhears talk of A ROARER dancing through the night skies, Maleri knows she must catch the magical beast and bring it home for her mum.

***The Adventurers and the Sea of Discovery* by Gemma Hatt.** Arriving in Greece on the trail of a missing friend, the Adventurers land themselves in a mystery filled with suspense. An ancient map has been discovered, but where does it lead? Who are the menacing figures pursuing them at every turn? Join Lara, Rufus and the gang as they set sail for an island-hopping escapade!

***Bee's Mission to Mars* by Jonathan Horden.** A STEM inspired story of a little girl whose dream it is to be the first person to walk on Mars. A fun and inspiring bedtime story that will encourage little adventurers to pursue their dreams.

***Return to the Secret Lake* by Karen Inglis.** Almost a year has passed since Stella and Tom discovered a time tunnel and travelled to early 1900s London, where they befriended Emma, Lucy and Jack. The magical moles that made the tunnel appear have vanished, but the children are longing to meet again. Then an illness, which puts Emma's life in danger, changes everything. The moles reappear, just when needed, and Lucy realises the only hope of a finding cure lies in the future...

***Mystery in the Palace of Westminster* by Sarah Lustig.** Theo Duncan is just an ordinary student – except he also happens to be the son of the Prime Minister. When the parliamentary mace is stolen from inside the Houses of Parliament, Theo is determined to help get it back. But he can't do it alone, and when help is offered, there's a problem. It comes from the new girl at school, Sammy Jhor, who's a supporter of the opposition party.

***My Family is So Scottish* by Kristin McNeil.** From a kilt-wearing uncle to a rugby-loving gran, come along and meet my very Scottish clan! Through witty rhymes and beautifully detailed illustrations of over 40 Scottish references, including Edinburgh castle, the Wallace monument, Robert Burns and highland cows, this book is a fun celebration of Scottish culture.

***When I Grow Up* by Rich Smith.** Miss Roberts has told her class they must choose their career for the school careers day competition. Will Harry and Amy choose in time to be in with a chance of winning the prize or will it go in the bin?

***Tales of The Witch's Cat: The Puppy Problem* by Kristie Watson.** When The Lovely Witch surprised me with a new puppy, it turned my life upside down. I had to do something about it. But what? I was

banned from using magic, so there was only one thing for it - puppy training! Unfortunately, a simple lesson causes mayhem and made us feel... not quite ourselves!

The 2022 Selfies Book Awards Memoir/Autobiography shortlist:

***The Register* by Moira Dennis.** The chance discovery of the Admission Register at Logie Primary School in Moray, listing every child who entered the school over nearly a century, inspired a search for the stories behind some of the names. The tales that were told reflect the evolution of a rural community in the Scottish Highlands, charting changes in healthcare and education, in the role of women at home and in employment, in transport, travel and farming and in personal ambitions.

***A Dairy Story* by Wilma Finlay.** For David and Wilma Finlay, the standard farming industry practice of separating newly born dairy calves from their mother was becoming a problem. The sound of cows bawling and questions from visitors to their farm, plus their own growing alarm about climate change and the environment, prompted them to question everything the farming experts insisted must be done. Together, they embarked on a radical twenty-five year transformation.

***No Place to Lie* by Helen Garlick.** On St David's Day 1981, Helen receives a phone call in St Louis from her distraught father in Yorkshire, leading her on a heart-searing path of discovery. Her brother David's shocking death at twenty in a remote mansion triggers a quest to unravel what really happened to David, and the startling secret her mother took to her grave.

***The Kew Sketch Journal* by Charles Leon.** A stunning celebration of Kew Gardens and the local area through the eyes of artist and designer Charles Leon. Through a unique perspective, Charles shares with the reader the human relationship with buildings, built by people for people, used and visited, and a constant through decades and centuries.

***One for the Book, Son* by Nick Terry.** I always had the feeling life had a plan for me. So many times, so many spooky and unbelievable coincidences would occur in my life, Dad would say, "you should write a book about them son". This story follows my life from ten right up to 2021: rags to riches via amazing coincidences. Not bad for a dyslexic boy with no qualifications!

***Marching to a Different Beat - A family's journey with autism* by Sarah Ziegel.** Sarah's twin boys were given an autism diagnosis at age two. It was sink or swim time. Unable to communicate with them, she had to learn to swim with them against the tide. Then her youngest two sons were also given an autism diagnosis at age two. This is the story of how she and her husband brought up their four autistic boys. A story of love and patience. A story of strength and hope. A story which will inspire you whether you have an autistic child or not.