

Winners of the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2023 unveiled (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/100386>)

The six winners of this year's KPMG [Children's Books Ireland](http://www.childrensbooksireland.ie) (<http://www.childrensbooksireland.ie>) Awards were announced today (24.05.23) by host Rick O'Shea at a ceremony held in Merrion Square, as part of International Literature Festival Dublin.

Selected by an independent panel of expert judges, including a Young Judge, and a network of Junior Jurors nationwide, the winning titles include an illustrated retelling of Cinderella as Gaeilge; an anthology of unsung stories about Ireland's mythical goddesses; a mischievous mystery for younger readers; a colourful adventure tale of bravery and friendship; and a supernatural page-turner for ages nine and up, drawing on the darker side of Irish folklore.

Girls Who Slay Monsters, written by debut author Ellen Ryan and illustrated by Shona Shirley Macdonald (shortlisted in 2022 for *Cluasa Capaill ar an Rí*), won both the KPMG Book of the Year Award and the KPMG Junior Juries' Award, which is voted for by thousands of young readers across Ireland.

Following the winners of the six awards categories, Maria Flannery, KPMG Ireland Partner, announced 13-year-old Shi Lei (Mila) Chen from Presentation Secondary School, Waterford, as winner of the KPMG Reading Hero Award, which recognises remarkable passion and achievements in reading by a young person. Shi Lei was selected as the winner of this award, due to her love of reading in both English and Chinese, having moved to Ireland just two years ago. Her sister, Shi Rong, accepted the award on her behalf.

Speaking at today's ceremony, **Elaina Ryan, CEO of Children's Books Ireland**, said: "Our congratulations to every one of the authors, illustrators and publishers celebrating their wins today. Through our KPMG Junior Juries programme, we have seen the wonder and delight that these six books have inspired in young readers across Ireland, and it is a joy to recognise and reward the artists that created them at this level.

"Ireland has always been a nation of storytellers, and every one of these winners exemplifies the sheer excellence visible in contemporary Irish children's books. As we celebrate another year of the KPMG Children's Book Awards, we hope that today's celebrations encourage them to keep creating stories that speak as powerfully to their readers as these."

Award-Winning Titles

- The KPMG Book of the Year Award – '**Girls Who Slay Monsters**' by debut author Ellen Ryan, illustrated by Shona Shirley Macdonald (HarperCollins Ireland).
- The Honour Award for Fiction – '**The Boy Who Lost His Spark**' by Maggie O'Farrell, illustrated by Daniela Jaglenka Tarrazzini (Walker Books).
- The Honour Award for Illustration – '**The Wilderness**' written and illustrated by Steve McCarthy (Walker Books).
- The Eilís Dillon Award for best debut – '**The Book of Secrets**' by Alex Dunne (The O'Brien Press).
- The Judge's Special Award – '**An Slipéar Gloine**', written by debut children's author Fearghas Mac Lochlainn and illustrated by Paddy Donnelly (Futa Fata).
- The KPMG Junior Juries' Award – '**Girls Who Slay Monsters**' by debut author Ellen Ryan, illustrated by Shona Shirley Macdonald (HarperCollins Ireland).

A total prize-fund of €16,000 has been awarded to this year's winners.

Seamus Hand, Managing Partner of KPMG in Ireland, said: "Well done to all our winners, and a special congratulations to our Reading Hero Shi Lei Chen who was nominated by her teacher, Caroline Fox. Shi Lei came to Ireland from China aged 11 and is a voracious reader in both English and Chinese. We were delighted to hear about the incredible kindness and empathy for the characters brought to life through reading in class. This along with her dedication to improving her reading and writing in English has been truly admirable."

The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards and Junior Juries programme are supported by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland National Lottery Funding.

Damian Smyth, Joint Head Literature of Drama for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, commented: "These awards are recognised as the most prestigious for children's books in Ireland, and we

are thrilled once again to see two artists from Northern Ireland taking home prizes today. The stories we encounter in childhood are the ones that shape us for life, and the young readers of Ireland are fortunate to have such excellent homegrown titles at their fingertips. Our congratulations to everyone celebrating in Dublin today!"

Region

Nationwide

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