



ANGELA READMAN WINS 2013 COSTA SHORT STORY AWARD

- *Entries submitted and judged anonymously*
- *Two of this year's shortlisted writers (including Readman) also shortlisted last year (the inaugural year)*
- *Winner decided by public vote*

Writer and poet Angela Readman from Newcastle has won the 2013 Costa Short Story Award. She beat five other writers in a public vote where the identities of all six writers were unknown.

Angela was shortlisted for the competition in 2012, the inaugural year, and then again this year, remarkable given that the competition is judged anonymously ie without the identities of the authors being known.

The announcement was made last night (Tuesday 28th January) at the prestigious Costa Book Awards ceremony in central London which saw Angela presented with a cheque for £3,500 by Costa Managing Director Christopher Rogers for her short story, *The Keeper of the Jackalopes*.

"I'm in shock and still waiting for it to sink in," commented Angela. "It's amazing to me that people voted for my story. They didn't know who wrote it, but they read it. Given the calibre of the shortlisted stories I just didn't consider winning. I'm so grateful."

Two runners-up, writer and former lawyer Kit de Waal and former journalist and copy editor Tony Bagley, received £1,500 and £500 respectively.

Over 1400 entries were received for the Costa Short Story Award, now in its second year and open to both published and unpublished writers, for a single, previously unpublished short story of up to 4,000 words written in English by an author aged 18 years or over.

Established in 2012, the Award - run in association with the Costa Book Awards but judged independently of the main five-category system – is unique in that it was judged anonymously ie without the name of the author being known throughout the process.

A shortlist of six stories was selected by a panel of judges - Richard Beard, Director of the National Academy of Writing; Fanny Blake, novelist, journalist and Books Editor of Woman & Home magazine; writer Victoria Hislop; and Simon Trewin, agent at William Morris Endeavor – and was then made available on the Costa Book Awards website for the public to download and vote for their favourite.

Angela's story, *The Keeper of the Jackalopes*, received the highest number of public votes followed by *The Old Man and The Suit* by Kit de Waal and *The Forgiveness Thing* by Tony Bagley.

Costa is working with Spoken Ink this year in a new partnership that will see the six 2013 Costa Short Story Award shortlisted stories promoted and available to download for free for three months on the in-flight entertainment systems of First Great Western trains and British Airways. The promotions start in February and March respectively, giving extensive exposure to the six authors and their nominated stories.

Angela Readman

Angela Readman's stories have been shortlisted in the Costa Short Story Award (2012), The Asham Award and The Bristol Prize. Her work has been published online and some of her stories have recently appeared in the anthologies *Once Upon a Time There was a Traveller* (Virago), *Root* (Iron Press) and *Unthology 3* (Unthanks.) Originally from Middlesbrough, she now lives in Newcastle, has an MA in Creative Writing and also writes poetry. Her poetry has been a winner of The Essex Poetry Prize, and in 2013 she won The Mslexia Poetry Competition. She is currently working on a short story collection, *Don't Try This at Home*, due to be published by & Other Stories in Spring 2015.

Angela adds, "Last year, being shortlisted was amazing for me in itself. I'd been sitting quietly writing stories for years, but I didn't have a publisher or an agent. Once the Costa shortlist was announced, an agent approached me within days and found & Other Stories to publish my collection, *Don't Try This at Home*."

She continues, "I loved that last year's winner, Avril Joy, is from the North East. There are a lot of writers here, but people don't always get to hear about us. I don't know if that's because we're a bit shy, but I'm really pleased another writer from the region won. I just can't quite believe it was me."

The Keeper of the Jackalopes

The Keeper of the Jackalopes is the story of a girl, her father, a Jackalope and survival.

Go to www.costa.co.uk/costa-book-awards/costa-short-story-award to read and/or listen to Angela's winning story and the other five shortlisted ones.

The Costa Book Awards recognise the most enjoyable books of the last year by writers based in the UK and Ireland. Originally established by Whitbread PLC in 1971, Costa announced its takeover of the sponsorship of the UK's prestigious and popular book prize in 2006.

For more information on this year's Costa Book Awards, go to www.costabookawards.com.

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors:

About the Costa Short Story Award:

- The Costa Short Story Award was launched in 2012.
- The Costa Short Story Award is for a single, previously unpublished short story of up to 4,000 words by an author aged 18 years or over and written in English.
- The author's primary residence must have been the UK or Ireland for the past three years.
- The Award runs in association with the Costa Book Awards but is judged independently of the main five-category system
- Entrants need not have been previously published but publishers and agents may submit entries on behalf of authors.

About the Costa Book Awards:

- The Costa Book Awards, formerly the Whitbread Book Awards, were established in 1971 to encourage, promote and celebrate the best contemporary British writing.
- The total prize fund for the Costa Book Awards – including the Costa Short Story Award - stands at £60,000.
- The award winners from the five categories - Novel, First Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book - each receive £5,000.
- The overall Costa Book of the Year is selected from the five Category Award Winners with the winner receiving a further £30,000.
- The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony in central London on 28th January, 2014.
- To be eligible for the 2013 awards, books must have been first published in the UK or Ireland between 1 November 2012 and 31 October 2013.
- The 2012 Costa Book of the Year was *Bring Up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel (Fourth Estate).

About Costa

Costa is the UK's favourite coffee shop, having been awarded "Best Branded Coffee Shop Chain in the UK and Ireland" by Allegra Strategies for four years running (2010, 2011, 2012 & November 2013). Winner of "Best Branded Coffee Chain in Europe" Allegra Strategies 2011, 2012 and 2013.

With over 1,600 coffee shops in the UK and more than 1,000 overseas, Costa is the fastest-growing coffee shop business in the UK and the second largest coffee shop operator in the world. Founded in

London by Italian brothers Sergio and Bruno Costa in 1971, Costa has become the UK's favourite coffee shop chain and has recently diversified into both the at-home and gourmet self-serve markets. Costa employs over 11,000 people and is creating around 1,500 jobs this year and over 4,500 jobs in the next 3 years in the UK.

Just 1% of the world's production of coffee is good enough for us to choose from. Only the very best 100% RFA certified coffee available can go into creating the unique taste and aroma of our Mocha Italia blend.

Costa is committed to looking after coffee-growers. That's why we've established The Costa Foundation, a registered charity. The Costa Foundation's aims are to relieve poverty, advance education and the health and environment of coffee-growing communities around the world. So far, The Costa Foundation has funded the building of 42 schools and improved the social and economic welfare of coffee-growing communities.