



## Orphans of the Tide wins Branford Boase Award

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*Struan Murray and editor Ben Horslen of Puffin have won the prize for the 'phenomenal page turner'*

Struan Murray has won the 2021 Branford Boase Award for his fantasy adventure *Orphans of the Tide*, set in the last city of a drowned world. He shares the award with his editor, Ben Horslen of Puffin, and the prize was announced last night (15 July) as part of a public event with the LoveReading LitFest. The award was founded in 2000 in memory of author Henrietta Branford and her editor Wendy Boase of Walker Books, and is the only award that honours both the author and editor. Previous winners include Meg Rosoff, Mal Peet, Siobhan Dowd and Frances Hardinge, and winning editors include Barry Cunningham, David Fickling and Fiona Kennedy.

Liz Hyder, who won the award in 2020 for *Bearmouth*, was on this year's judging panel. She said: "This book utterly stole my heart. Exquisitely written, it's a phenomenal page-turner with characters that leap off the page and straight into your imagination. *Orphans of the Tide* explores lots of big themes - environmental issues, friendship and xenophobia to name but a few - all wrapped up in an utterly compelling tale told by a master storyteller. Struan is an exceptional talent and I can't wait to read everything else he ever writes."

Murray said: "I am so honoured and thrilled to have won the Branford Boase Award. This award is extremely special as it celebrates not only the author but the editor too, and understands and recognises that writing is a collaborative process that wouldn't be possible without the commitment, imagination and skill of the editor. Working with Ben has stretched me as a writer and his insight contributed so much to the world of *Orphans of the Tide* that I couldn't imagine it without him."

Horslen said: "Every year I look forward to the announcement of the Branford Boase Award shortlist with particular excitement. The author-editor relationship lies at the very heart of our industry, and to have an award that celebrates and showcases that relationship is a very special thing indeed. To be nominated is a career highlight that every editor hopes for. To win is simply a dream come true."

This year's judges were Zoey Dixon, YLG Librarian of the Year 2020; Scott Evans, teacher, consultant and founder of TheReaderTeacher.com; Natasha Radford of Chicken and Frog bookshop, Brentwood; and Liz Hyder, author of *Bearmouth*, winner of the 2020 Branford Boase Award. The panel was chaired by Julia Eccleshare, children's director of the Hay Festival.

Eccleshare said: "The Branford Boase Award has always celebrated the special role new writers play in expanding the scope of what children read. New voices telling new stories add to the already rich seam of children's books: in the hands of skillful storytellers they are vital in giving a fictional commentary on current emotional, social and political issues. This year's shortlist includes books that show just how exciting, diverse and fresh storytelling for all ages of children can be. The level of talent among the new writers is extraordinary as is their determination to ensure all children can find themselves in a story. Congratulations to Struan and Ben and to all the authors and editors on the shortlist."

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