

Illustrator wins national award

The 2002 Ena Noel Award for Children's Literature



Illustrations from *Cherryblossom and the Golden Bear*, by Pamela Freeman, illustrated by Beth Norling, and published by Omnibus Books, a division of Scholastic Australia Pty Ltd.

The winner of the 2002 award is the young illustrator Beth Norling for her illustrations in the book *Cherryblossom and the Golden Bear* with text by Pamela Freeman and published by Omnibus Books, a division of Scholastic Australia Pty Ltd.

This award is given by the Australian National Section of IBBY — the International Board on Books for Young People. IBBY is a not-for-profit organisation allied to UNESCO. It consists of a network of people from all over the world, who are committed to bringing books and young people together. Some sixty nations are members. In Australia the member is ALIA.

The IBBY secretariat is in Basel, Switzerland. There are many facets of its mission. It aims to encourage the young, from babyhood to adulthood, to enjoy storytelling and reading and to read the best on offer — books with high literary and artistic standards. It aims also to encourage the publication and distribution of such books as well as giving young people the opportunity to have access to information. In addition, it aims to foster international understanding through books for the young and to stimulate research and scholarly works in the genre.

One of international IBBY's many activities is the biennial Hans Christian Anderson award for children's literature. This is an award made to a writer and to an illustrator of children's books for their complete output, which like the works of the great Danish master of storytelling, have made a lasting contribution to literature for the young. A distinguished international jury of children's literature experts judges the awards. Known as the 'Little Nobel Prize for children's literature' they are the highest international recognition in this genre. Patron of the awards is Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

The Australian National Section worked for many years to establish an award for children's literature. It was to be

an encouragement award to be made to a young Australian developing writer or illustrator for one book only. The book must have been published within the past two years before the granting of the award.

The award was named after Ena Noel, the foundation president of the Australian National Section for twenty-five years from 1966 to her retirement in 1991. The first award was presented in 1994 to the outstanding young aboriginal writer and illustrator Arone Raymond Meeks for his book *Enora and the Black Crane*.

In judging the 2002 award, the judges were impressed by the exquisite work of Beth Norling. Her illustrations for the book *Cherryblossom and the Golden Bear* are imaginative and innovative, which give an added emotional dimension and are a perfect supplement to the re-telling of the old folk tale 'The woodcutter's daughter'.

This book is a fantasy for the very young. Cherryblossom sews gowns for rich ladies. One evening whilst sitting by the fireside sewing, she is overcome by tiredness but must continue her work in order to finish the gown by morning. Suddenly, from the burning flames of the cherrywood, a huge golden bear appears. He has had a spell cast upon him, which can only be broken if Cherryblossom can somehow carry out tasks that seem impossible. As the bear sets her each task he says to her, 'If you will you can. Trust your heart.' Somehow, Cherryblossom is able to overcome each task. This breaks the spell and in a blinding flash the bear turns into a handsome prince who then begs Cherryblossom to become his princess.

All previous winners of the award — Sonya Hartness and Catherine Jinks, who wrote for young adults, the illustrator Steven Woolman and the writer/illustrators Arone Raymond Meeks and Toby Riddle have developed into fine artists and enjoyed many successes. It is hoped that Beth Norling will produce much more exquisite work. ■