

Youth Literature Awards

Compiled by GRIZÉLL AZAR-LUXTON

Jedro's Bane

by Peter Slingsby

Commendation by Darrel Bristow-Bovey Columnist

Il too often writers of books - whether they are books for children or adults - forget why it is that people read. Very few adults and absolutely no children - children being in these cases more sensible than adults - read a book because they are in the mood to read some literature. Most adults, and all children, read because they want to be told a story.

It is true, I suppose, that under some conditions stories can teach lessons and make people think about this or that, but the worst kinds of stories are stories that set out to teach lessons and make people think about this or that. The best kind of stories, however, are stories that make you gasp and sigh and hold your breath and rush to turn over the page, and that leave you, when you have finished, with a sense that you have seen more of the world and of the world's possibilities. The best kind of stories leave you thinking about the things you have just seen in the pages of that book, but most importantly, they leave you thinking that it is your idea to think about what you have just seen. It is my privilege to commend to you a story that is precisely the best kind of story.

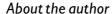
On one level - the most important level - it is a thrilling adventure story. It is a story of outlaws and fugitives and poisonous snakes and lurking black leopards. It is a story of omens and soothsayers and bravery and betrayal. It is the story of one boy's courage, and it is a story of love and truth and loyalty. It is a story, as such stories must be, of triumph and hope. There are two central characters in this bookthere is a story within a story - and both characters are good and brave and likeable. They are the kinds of guys that we would all like to be, or, failing that, be friends with.

On another level, this book broadens our understanding of our present and our past. And it does so in the only way that works: by telling the stories of individual people. The book uses magic and mystery and the power of story-telling to connect one young boy, living in Clanwilliam today, with his distant ancestor, living in the Clanwilliam of a hundred and more years ago. In doing so, it opens up a world to the imagination. There is depth to this story, and there are lessons here, but they are the kind of gentle imbedded lessons that young readers will take a great deal of pleasure in finding for themselves.

The writing is clear and confident and well paced. It marshals tremendous research and a fine authenticity, and it does so to serve the story. The story is the thing here: the history and the folklore and the ideas and the authorial intention are all put in service to the story. It is written with a light heart and a feel for adventure. Very often I read books that are written with such earnest joylessness it becomes

clear that the writer is not himself a reader, that he takes no pleasure, no delight from the story itself. You cannot be a readable writer, I always say, if you are not a reader. This book, I am pleased to say, was written by someone who is both a reader and a writer.

It is my very great pleasure to commend to you the Sanlam Gold Prize winner in the English category, **Jedro's Bane** by Peter Slingsby.



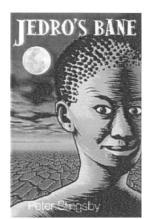
Peter Slingsby is no stranger to the Sanlam competition: in 1985 his novel **The cave** was a runner-up, and in 1996 he was one of the five main prize-winners with **The joining**. Other youth novels from his pen are **Tomas**, **leopard boy** and **Flood Sunday**.

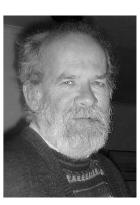
He combines a number of passionate interests in his working life, being an environmental educator and a writer. He is also a cartographer, and as cartographer for the National Hiking Way he has produced maps of all the major hiking trails in South Africa, as well as providing maps and drawings in a variety of different books and publications. He has in addition published several guides to the environment of the Western Cape.

Peter's interest in rock art, which is strongly and strikingly reflected in **The joining** (which was translated into Dutch under the title **De**

rotsschildering and is also being published in Thailand in 2003), began some thirty years ago, and he is the author and illustrator of a series of guide books entitled Rock art of the Western Cape. His particular love of the Cederberg mountains is reflected in both The joining and Jedro's bane.

Since 1996 he has been involved in authoring, illustrating





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and publishing travel and rock art guidebooks of the Southern Cape and Cederberg areas. Working with his wife, Maggie, a teacher, he assisted Kagiso Publishers in the initiation and publishing of the first-ever multilingual African reading scheme for Foundation Phase to be developed in indigenous languages.

Peters is currently the cartographer for the officially endorsed maps of the Cape Peninsula National Park, from Table Mountain to Cape Point. He and Maggie live in Lakeside, Cape Town, and they have three grown-up children.

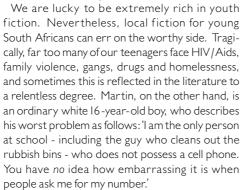
Welcome to the Martin Tudhope Show

by Sarah Britten

Commendation by Dr Helen Moffett

hen I first read this manuscript, I fell hook, line and sinker for its hero and his wacky family. But I assumed they all felt so familiar because they resembled my own family, which can politely be

described as eccentric. So I was delighted to find my fellow judges equally enchanted by Welcome to the Martin Tudhope Show.



However, the slice of Martin's life presented in his novel is neither glib nor trivial. The author has an unerring sense of the issues that confront all young people, rich, poor, black or white. Every teenager - and everyone who's ever been a teenager - will identify with Martin's chief battles: handling the uncomfortable mix of love, loyalty and sheer embarrassment he feels towards his family; gaining the acceptance of his peer group; working out what his responsibilities are to others. And we

all remember the agony of being hopelessly in love with someone unattainable.

The author keeps the pages turning through an apparently simple plot - a year in Martin's life. She adds a clever twist to the question 'Will the guy get the girl?' and comes up with a satisfying solution to Martin's dream of becoming the next Jerry Seinfeld. Her characters are engaging to the extent

that when I finished, I hoped for a sequel, so I wouldn't have to let go of them.

Most refreshing of all, the book is genuinely funny. Humour is one of the hardest things to write, and this author does it with panache. I laughed out loud not only when I read it the first time as a judge, but also when working through it a second, third and fourth time as an editor. I'd love to read you some samples of the fresh and in-your-face exchanges, especially between Martin and his four sisters, but I'd rather you read the book yourselves.

So I would like to announce the winner of the Silver Sanlam Prize, for the second time, with only her second novel -Sarah Britten - thanks for all the pleasure you're going to give thousands of young readers.

About the author

Sarah Britten was born in Johannesburg on 31 August 1974, and grew up in Sandton.

She obtained a BA (Dramatic Art) and Master's degree from Wits University. As a student she was actively involved in student politics and edited the alternative student magazine, Agitate, which won an award from the Mail & Guardian in 1996. For a while she also wrote Wits Student's notorious Nurden column.

Her first published story was about buying a matric dance dress when she was 17, and since then she has freelanced for various publications, including Denis Beckett's now defunct Sidelines, The Sunday Independent, Sunday Life Lifestyle and Style.

As far as the Sanlam competition is concerned, it is second time around for Sarah: in 2000 she won the Silver Prize for The worst year of my life, so far, which will soon be published in Germany by the publishing giant Bertelsmann.

After working in advertising for two years, she resigned to devote herself to finishing her PhD thesis on the mythology of the new South Africa in advertising.

She says about Welcome to the Martin Tudhope Show, 'Writing an "upbeat" story for teenagers is always a challenge, since adolescence is meant to be a time of angst. I also felt that to write a positive story in a South African setting without at least acknowledging the tremendous challenges the country faces would be a bit of a cop-out. So I hope that in this novel I have succeeded in capturing the anarchy of family life within a setting that includes references to the many ambiguities of life in South Africa today. While there is a strong element of realism, however, the book is designed to be entertaining, and the more people laugh when reading it, the happier I'll be.'

Sarah lives in Johannesburg with her husband, André.

Die ongelooflike avonture van Hanna Hoekom

deur Marita van der Vyver

Aanbeveling deur Linda Rode Skrywer

is selde dat mens 'n boek in die hand neem wat jou van die eerste bladsy af lok met 'n tintelende belofte van nog véél meer. Die ongelooflike avonture van Hanna Hoekom is so'n boek.

Heel gou word die leser meegevoer in die dolle bestaan van Hanna saam met haar kunstenaar-ma Mana, haar halfboetie, haar twee stiefbroers en Beyers, hul akteurpa - 'n





Her characters are engaging to the extent that when I finished, I hoped for a sequel, so I wouldn't have to let go of them redelike ekstreme voorbeeld van die Nuwe Gesin, of liewer die Nuwe Uitgebreide Familie van ons tyd. Hanna se biologiese pa is 'n gay modeontwerper in Johannesburg, haar halfboetie se pa is 'n skitterblink proefbuis - Mana se kreatiewe oplossing vir 'n tweede kind, sonder die aanwesigheid van 'n man. En toe trou Mana tog weer, met Beyers...wat by gebrek aan juwele vir haar 'n knewel van 'n aartappel en 'n bossie pietersielie met 'n rooi strik aandra as verlowingsgeskenk.

Ten midde van al hierdie buitenissighede, en oorskadu deur haar flambojante ma se andersheid, besin Hanna kalm oor die hoekoms in haar lewe. Sy het eers in die kleuterskool agtergekom dat...'die ander kleuters se ma's nie soos myne lyk of klink of selfs ruik nie. Dat hulle hoëhakskoene en nylonkouse dra, dat hulle nooit dink hulle weet beter as die kleuterskooljuffrou nie, en dat hulle na duur parfuum ruik. My ma ruik die meeste van die tyd na die paraffien waarmee sy haar verfkwaste skoonmaak'. Stilweg gekwel oor haar afwesige en eweneens anderse pa, erken Hanna: die grootste skok in die kleuterskool was...'dat my maats almal pa's gehad het. Mans wat dasse dra en hulleself Pappa noem. Ek het net vir Gavin gehad. Hy was nie veel meer as 'n stem oor 'n telefoon nie. En dit was nie 'n stem wat by 'n das gepas het nie'.

Binne hierdie gesin se bont verskeidenheid skat Hanna haarself as bra vaal, en sy koester één groot begeerte: om te skryf. Inderdaad kry die leser in die loop van die verhaal die taalbegaafde meisiekind se skryfpogings te sien: 'n sielkundige riller; 'n speurverhaal; 'n gedig; 'n liefdesverhaal; 'n kortverhaal - met as hoofkarakter die kleurryke wese wat Hanna wens sy was: 'n meisie met die eksotiese naam Fabienne. Hanna-die-skrywer betrek die leser spontaan in 'n diskoers oor die omstandighede in haar eie lewe wat aanleiding gee tot hierdie ontvlugtingskarakter Fabienne, en so kry die verhaal boonop 'n postmodernistiese kinkel.

Wanneer dié uitsinnige gesin Mana en Beyers se lank uitgestelde wittebrood in 'n hut op 'n berg gaan vier, word die kontraste en moontlike konflikte op die spits gedryf deur Gavin se onverwagte besluit om Hanna se vyftiende verjaardag saam te kom vier; en deur die net so verrassende, indien nie ontstellende, nuus dat Margot, Beyers se eksvrou, 'n aktrise, in al haar teatrale glorie op pad is uit Amerika. Voeg hierby 'n skielike winterstorm, onbegaanbare bergpaaie én 'n krisis van die mees delikate soort...en ineens val die maskers af en vervaag uiterlikhede. Die mees onwaarskynlike lid van die geselskap - die prima donna uit Los Angeles - bewys haar as redder in nood, en die baie werklike drama word 'n ondervinding wat almal saamsnoer.

Die ongelooflike avonture van Hanna Hoekom getuig van 'n skrywer wat midde-in die werklikheid van die moderne lewe staan en wat die uitsonderlike gawe besit om ook potensieel negatiewe temas met patos en balans uit te beeld; belangriker nog, met skrywersverantwoordelikheid.

Heel, heel selde, verskyn daar 'n jeugboek wat jou van binne af warm maak met soveel menslikheid en humor, en wat clichés - soos die stiefma- en stiefpa-sindroom - oortuigend kan ontmasker. **Die ongelooflike avonture van Hanna Hoekom** is so 'n boek.

Hanna sluit haar verhaal af met: 'Ek gaan daardie roman skryf... Maar ek gaan nie oor 'n fabelagtige skepsel soos

Fabienne skryfnie. Ek gaan 'n storie skryfoor 'n gemiddelde vaal meisiekind met 'n onwaarskynlike ma en 'n selfs meer onwaarskynlike pa.' En die leser sug. Twéé maal. Die eerste keer oor die wonderbaarlike storie wat pas tot 'n einde gekom het. Die tweede keer is die sug eintlik 'n versugting: Hopelik is Hanna Hoekom nog lank nie uitgesels en uitgeskryf nie!

Hiermee die gelukwense van al drie keurders wat entoesiasties en eenparig voorgestel het dat vanjaar se Goue Sanlam Prys vir Jeuglektuur in die Afrikaans-kategorie toegeken word aan Marita van der Vyver.

Oor die skrywer

Marita van der Vyver is in Bellville gebore, waar sy haar laerskooljare deurgebring het. Sy was in Pretoria en Nelspruit op hoërskool en in haar matriekjaar, die Afrikaanse Eeufeesjaar 1975, het sy in 'n landwye kompetisie 'n studiebeurs vir vier jaar losgedig. Sy is na Stellenbosch, waar sy onder professor DJ Opperman gestudeer en in 1978 'n BA met Afrikaans en Frans verwerf het. In 1979 het sy honneurs in joernalistiek *cum laude* verwerf, en 'n paar jaar later, as deeltydse student, 'n meestersgraad in joernalistiek met 'n tesis oor die vrou in die Afrikaanse pers.

Ná universiteit het sy 'n jaar oorsee gewerk en met haar terugkeer as verslaggewer by **Die Burger**, daarna as kopieskrywer by Leserskring en nog later as artikelskrywer by **Sarie**. In 1987 het sy vryskut begin werk om meer tyd vir skryf te hê.

Haar debuutwerk, die jeugverhaal **Van jou jas** (1982), is bekroon met 'n beginnersprys in 'n wedstryd van Tafelberg en **Sarie**. Haar volgende twee jeugboeke, **Tien vir 'n vriend** (1987) en **Eenkantkind** (1991), was albei Sanlam-finaliste, en laasgenoemde is ook bekroon met die ATKV Prys vir Jeuglektuur.

Haar eerste roman vir volwassenes, Griet

skryf 'n sprokie, het in 1992 verskyn en was 'n sensasie en 'n blitsverkoper. Die roman is bekroon met die ATKV Prys, die M-Net Boekprys en die Eugène Marais Prys. Dit is wêreldwyd vertaal, onder meer, in Engels, Nederlands, Duits, Frans, Italiaans, Spaans en Sweeds. Dit is ook die eerste Afrikaanse boek wat in Chinees vertaal is. Haar volgende roman, Die dinge van 'n kind (1994), is ook in Engels, Duits en Nederlands vertaal. Al twee romans is verwerk tot toneelstukke wat by die Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees opgevoer is.

In 1997 is haar eerste boek vir jong kinders, **Olinosters op die dak**, met die Tienie Holloway Medalje vir Kinderlektuur bekroon. In dié jaar het sy ook 'n Internasionale Beurs van die Stigting vir Skeppende Kunste gewen, wat haar in staat gestel het om aan die International Writing Programme van

die Universiteit van Iowa in die VSA deel te neem

Wegkomkans en Griet kom weer is onderskeidelik in 1999 en 2001 Heel, heel selde, verskyn daar 'n jeugboek wat jou van binne af warm maak met soveel menslikheid en humor, en wat clichés - soos die stiefma- en stiefpa-sindroom - oortuigend kan ontmasker





gepubliseer, en laasgenoemde word tans in Engels vertaal.

Sedert Januarie 1999 woon sy permanent in Provence, Frankryk, saam met haar Franse eggenoot, Alain, hulle dogter, Mia, gebore in 1999, haar seun, Daniel, gebore in 1992, en Alain se twee seuns Thomas en Hugo.

Kungasa Ngifile

by Dumisani Sibiya

Commendation by Danisile Ntuli Lecturer

n Kungasa Ngifile MaMemela's long-hidden dark secret is bound to come out in the open when her son Sonzo announces that he wants to get married to Nokuthula. The

> title of the story, which translates as 'Over my dead body,' is apt, for in the story these words are uttered by both mother and son.

> MaMemela mentions that she would rather die than to see the two children becoming husband and wife - as far as she knows they are brother and sister. On the other hand Senzo says he would rather die than to be parted from the woman he

> More than twenty years ago MaMemela had been unfaithful to her husband, Mhlungu, and got herself impregnated by her secret lover called Zondi, Nokuthula's father. In order to keep her secret, she tries very hard to stop the children from getting married. She even hires a thug to kill Nokuthula. However, all her evil plans fail and the wedding date is set. On the wedding day, MaMemela makes the last attempt to stop the wedding by eventually telling the truth. To everyone's shock the bride's mother responds to this by revealing that Senzo and Nokuthula are not brother and sister, because when she got married to Zondi she had already conceived Nokuthula from her former lover.

> The story is captivating from the beginning to the end. The old theme of forbidden love has been skilfully handled to suit present-day problems. Kungsa Ngifile has relevance to us as South-Africans for it raises some pertinent questions

with regard to moral issues.

The author uses subtle irony and satire in that the two lovers, Senzo and Nokuthula, are portrayed to represent the noble behaviour that is still prevalent in some of the present-day youth, as opposed to Senzo's mother and Nokuthula's father, the secret lovers, who represent parents whose behaviour leaves much to be desired. Ironically, MaMemela now expects her son to walk the straight and narrow road while she herself had dismally failed to do so.

The strongest aspect of the novel is the way the yarn has

been spun. The author has with great skill and through flashbacks succeeded in portraying MaMemela as the younger self and also as the mature character who is given a chance to look at her dirty past. This story will definitely appeal to young readers on multiple levels. The youth will learn that good conduct finally pays off because Senzo and Nokuthula, who are portrayed as wellbehaved youngsters, complete their tertiary education and end up getting married. They do not bow to peer pressure. Although they are madly in love, they vow not to indulge in premarital sex. On the other hand, Zitha, one of Senzo's friends, has already impregnated three of his girlfriends.

The next strong point of the story is the author's command of the Zulu language. The language is of a very high standard. His use of new figures of speech is commendable. Lastly, the use of suspense and humour in this novel provides entertaining reading.

It gives me great pleasure to recommend that the Silver Sanlam Prize for Youth Literature in the Nguni language category be awarded to Dumisani Sibiya for his debut novel in Zulu, Kungasa Ngifile.

Halala Mfo Kasotobe!



Edward Dumisani Muziwokuphila Sibiya was born on 29 April 1976 in the Emhlangeni area near Nguthu, in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. He matriculated with exemption at Celumusa High School, Nquthu, in 1994.

He obtained a BA degree with majors IsiZulu, African Literature and Drama and Film Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in 1999, and an honours (joint) in African Languages and African Literature from the same university in 2000. In 2001 he obtained an MA in Publishing Studies, and he is currently studying for his doctorate, with radio and literature as his field of research. He obtained both his honours and his MA degree with distinc-

He was awarded several certificates of merit in his undergraduate years and received the following distinguished awards from the university: Post-graduate Merit Award (1999), the Kagiso Publishers - Isaac Moephuli Memorial Award (1998), the ISMA - Maurice Flior Award (1998), and the Vilakazi Memorial Award (1999) for an outstanding research contribution to the field of African Languages and Literature. He also received several bursaries and prestigious scholarships.

In 2000 he was selected to participate in a writing development project of the Centre for the Book in Cape Town. Called Books for Africa, this project consisted of two series of creative writing workshops presented by Dr Dorian Haarhoff in Cape Town and Johannesburg. This was where the novel which ultimately became Kungasa Ngifile, origi-

Dumisani contributed a short story and a poem to Lives in transit, a compilation by Martin Rollo and Renos Spanoudes, published by the Wits Writing Centre in 2002. Imikhizo and Amancoko, two compilations of short stories and essays from his pen, has been accepted for publication by Bard Publishers. He is also the script writer of the theatre productions Welcome to Johannesburg. Currently he is compiling an anthology of short stories entitled Izinjobo.

He is an associate lecturer in the African Literature discipline in the School of Literature and Language Studies at Wits and lives in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. His hobbies and interests are athletics, playing the piano and singing, writing, reading and debating.





This story will definitely appeal to young readers on multiple levels. The youth will learn that good conduct finally pays off

Leba Seipone

by Kabelo Kgatea

Commendation by Jurie le Roux *Lecturer*

eba Seipone (Look in the mirror) is a teenage novel with self-acceptance as its theme. It is a story about Motswagauteng, born of a white man and a black woman. His mother took him back to Motsitlane, the village where his grandparents lived. He grew up in an environment in which he was continuously mocked by the village people because of his skin colour. To them he was considered to be a Bushman. His grandmother, however, comforted him by encouraging him to look in the mirror and to believe in the person who was reflected in it.

When his grandparents died, he was left in the care of his uncle Mosala. While tending the goats one got lost. He was severely punished. After this treatment Motswagauteng ran away from his newly acquired home, but was captured by a gang known for trade in children. However, before any sale could take place he was helped to escape by the woman who guarded him during his captivity.

After his release he managed to get to Vryburg, where he met some street children like himself - not black, not white. However, they too refused to accept Motswagauteng. From here he experienced many things. He went to Gauteng, where he finally was taken care of by an old white woman. Her friend, who turned out to be the lady for whom his grandmother used to work, took him back to Vryburg to live with her. She sent him to school and he became involved in the racial frictions there.

Thanks to his co-operation with the police the gang involved in child trade was uncovered. The lady who saved him from the gang turned state witness. During her testimony it was revealed that she was in fact his mother and the identity of his father also became known.

These discoveries played a major role in allowing Motswagauteng to come to recognise his own identity and it contributed to the improvement of his self-esteem.

After these revelations he met his childhood friend, and he returned to Motsitlane where he discovered his grand-mother's mirror in the ruins of what was once her home. He picked it up, looked at his reflection and recalled his grandmother's words of wisdom: Only be the person that you see in the mirror.

Leba Seipone is a realistic and convincing story which deals with the problems existing in our society today. People are often not accepted for who they are, but for their status and material worth. However, in the end it is only through selfacceptance and self-esteem that one can live with honour.

This is not only a teenage novel but it deepens the understanding of the hurt one may experience when not accepted by others in society because of factors not under your control.

It gives me great pleasure to recommend that the Silver Sanlam Prize for Youth Literature (Sotho Languages) be awarded to Kabelo Kgatea for his Setswana novel **Leba Seipone**.

About the author

It is Sanlam revisited for Kabelo Kgatea: in 2000 he won the Silver Prize in the Sotho language category for his novel **Njeng manong fa ke sule!** (Devour me, vultures, when I'm dead!). In 2001 this novel was also awarded the M-Net Book Prize (Sotho category).

'Mabinagotsholwa' Kabelo Duncan Kgatea was born on 31 January 1961, the fifth child in the family. He is 'the black Ndebele who smells meat, Mokwena, Sechele ooMotswasele'. His parents enrolled him at Motsitlane Bantu School in 1969, where he completed his senior primary education in 1976.

In 1979 he was employed on the Rustenburg Platinum Mines, where he completed his standard eight through Damelin College in 1984. In 1988 he matriculated through Lyceum College.

He studied Comprehensive Writing with the Writing School of South Africa between 1990 and 1995, and Drama and Public Speaking with Mmabana Cultural Centre (Rustenburg) between 1993 and 1994. In 1998, he enrolled to study acting and production in radio and television with Sound Advertising Agency, where he passed with distinction.

He has written 14 radio dramas, which have been broadcast by Radio Setswana (SABC) and Radio Mmabatho (BBC) respectively. His short story *Tlhakantshuke* was included in an anthology by the same title, published by Nikita Publishers, and some of his poems have been included in three compilations published by Kagiso. His autobiography, entitled *Go tswa pekeng go ya Peneng* is awaiting publication.

His drama entitled *Mathata a bogosi* took the first prize in the Eulitz Productions Literary Competition in 1997. His first stage play has been included in a volume of plays entitled **Ke ne ke sa itse**, published by Shuter & Shooter, while his anthology of poems, **Ngwana wa dikgomo**, was published by LZ Sikwane Publishers.

When he won a Sanlam prize in 2000 he was still a single drum winder operator at Anglo Pla-

tinum mines in Rustenburg. Winning this prize contributed to his being promoted to communications and HIV/Aids officer.

Kabelo was invited by the International Research Society for Children's Literature to attend their first conference in Africa, held in Limpopo, in 2001. In April this year he was invited by the Department of Foreign Affairs to attend the eighth Dakar International Book Fair in Senegal.

He completed his diploma in Business Communications with the Standford Correspondence College in 2001 and is currently studying for his diploma in Journalism and Media Studies at INTEC Correspondence College.

He is married to Sechongwang and they have two children. They live in Rustenburg.

2003



Leba Seipone



This is not only a teenage novel but it deepens the understanding of the hurt one may experience when not accepted by others in society because of factors not under your control