Hans Christian Andersen Writer Award Nomination 2020
Dear Jury Members,

It is with great delight that I submit the work of esteemed South African children’s book writer, Jaco Jacobs, for consideration for the Hans Christian Andersen Award 2020. Jacobs has published more than 150 books for children and young people, including picture books, collections of children’s verse, and non-fiction. More than a million copies of his books have been sold.

Please find all the required information and documentation for the nomination in the dossier attached to this letter and the documents accompanying it. We at IBBY South Africa are grateful for your consideration of the work of this prolific author. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me on ibbysa@ibbysa.org.za.

Yours,

Dusanka Stojakovic

IBBY SA Chairperson
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Nominee: Jaco Jacobs

Biographical Information

Jaco Jacobs grew up in a small Karoo town in South Africa, where he fell in love with books at a very young age. His writing career started at school, with his participation in numerous competitions for aspiring writers, and the publication of his first short stories in magazines.

At 18 he wrote his first youth novel, Pretpark (Funfair), which was later published by Human & Rousseau.

After school he studied at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, and obtained a B.A. degree in Communication Science, as well as a B.A. (Hons.) degree in Afrikaans and Dutch Literature. After working as journalist and editor of the youth supplement at the daily newspaper Volksblad, he joined LAPA Publishers as children’s book publisher, where he worked for 13 years before becoming a full-time author.

Jacobs has published more than 150 books for children and young people, including picture books, collections of children’s verse, and non-fiction. More than a million copies of his books have been sold. In addition to this, he has translated more than 250 children’s books into Afrikaans, among them four Tintin titles as well as books by Michael Rosen, Chris Riddell and Charles Fuge. He believes humour is one of the essential ingredients in an enjoyable children’s book, and his books, such as My ouma is ’n rock-star (My Granny is a Rock Star) and Worms met tamatiesos (Worms in Tomato Sauce and Other Silly Poems), and translations are characterized by a strong element of fun.
He has been featured in numerous magazine and newspaper articles, and in radio and television interviews.

He was awarded the Alba Bouwer Prize, the MML Literature Award, the Elsabé Steenberg Prize, the Tienie Holloway Medal and the C.P. Hoogenhout Medal, and has won twenty-six ATKV Children’s Book Awards (the only book award in Afrikaans where children get to vote for their favourite books). In 2008, his youth novel Suurlemoen! was named an international IBBY Honour Book. Two of his novels for teenagers, Suurlemoen! and Oor ’n motorfiets, ’n zombiefliek en lang getalle wat deur elf gedeel kan word, have been adapted into full-length feature films.

In 2018, translations of ’n Goeie dag vir boomklim (A Good Day for Climbing Trees) and Oor ’n motorfiets, ’n zombiefliek en lang getalle wat deur elf gedeel kan word (A Good Night for Shooting Zombies) were published internationally by acclaimed British publisher Oneworld, and Italian rights for A Good Day for Climbing Trees were also recently sold.

Jaco is also a freelance journalist, columnist and long-distance runner. He lives in Bloemfontein with his wife, Elize, and two daughters, Mia and Emma.

Statement on the candidates contribution to literature for young people

Jaco Jacobs has dedicated his life to creating books for young people that are not only engaging, entertaining and of the highest quality but are also books that young people want to read. According to the South African Book Development Council, 58% of South African households do not have a single leisure book in their homes. Having sold over a million copies of his books, Jacobs is the most prolific children’s book writer in Afrikaans and continues to work steadfastly towards improving literacy rates in South Africa not only in his capacity as an author but as a publisher, translator and freelance journalist.

By translating popular works into his native Afrikaans, Jacobs works not only in creating new children’s books but also allows greater numbers of South African children access to a world of books otherwise unavailable to them in their language. Jacobs
has translated more than 250 books for young people into Afrikaans.

An acknowledgement of Jacobs’ work as prestigious as the Hans Christian Andersen Award would offer untold opportunities for all aspects of Jacobs’ work in the literary sphere. BookTrust in the UK said of the recent translation of Oor ’n motorfiets, ’n zombiefliek en lang getalle wat deur elf gedeel kan word, “With over 140 books to his name, we can only hope that more continue to be translated into English from what is likely to be a treasure trove of stories.”

List of awards and other distinctions

ATKV CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS
* Liefde laat jou Rice Krispies anders proe (2004)
* Pretpark (2005)
* Nag van die monsters (2006)
* My ouma is ’n rock-ster (2006)
* Ouens is nie pizzas nie (2008)
* Die spookperd (2008)
* Totsiens, Sugarplum (2008)
* Danie Dreyer se dinosouruseier (2008)
* Lieve land, ’n olifant! (2009)
* Middernagfees (2010)
* Perfek (2010)
* Harlekyn (2011)
* My hart is vol graffiti (2012)
* Haasmoes (2012)
* Waarvoor is seerowers bang? (2013)
* Kinderspeletjies (2013)
* Al die meisies bon van Divan Louw (2013)
* Professor Fungus en die skrikwekkende Snotzilla (2014)
* Rivierperde (2014)
* Wian Verwey het ’n crush op my (2015)
* Moenie die knoppie druk nie (2016)
* My ouma is ’n filmster (2016)
* Viskos (2017)
* Grom! (2017)

**ALBA BOUWER PRIZE**

* Wurms met tamatiesos en ander lawwe rympies (Wurms in Tamato Sauce and Other Silly Poems) – 2007

**CP HOOGENHOUT AWARD FOR CHILDREN’S LITERATURE**


**SATI PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION (CHILDREN’S BOOKS)**

* Willemien en die geel cat (Ottoline and the Yellow Cat)

**ELSABE STEENBERG PRIZE FOR CHILDREN’S BOOK TRANSLATION**

* Willemien en die geel cat (Ottoline and the Yellow Cat) – 2007

**IBBY HONOUR BOOK LIST**

* Suurlemoen! – 2007
* Willemien en die Geel Kat (Translation of Chris Riddell’s Ottoline and the Yellow Cat) – 2010

**ATKV/ANTWERP CHILDREN’S STORY COMPETITION**

Winner with Nag van die monsters (Night of the Monsters) – 2004

**TAFELBERG/KLEINB CHILDREN’S STORY COMPETITION**

Winner with Harlekyn in 2009.

**kykNET/RAPPORT AWARDS: FILM PRIZE**

* ’n Goeie dag vir boomklim (A Good Day for Climbing Trees) – 2016

**EXCLUSIVE BOOKS/IBBY AWARD**

* Moenie hierdie boek eet nie! ’n Rympie vir elke dag van die jaar (Don’t Eat this Book! A Poem for Every Day of the Year) – 2017
TIENIE HOLLOWAY MEDAL

*Grow!* *(Grow!)* – 2018

IN OTHER WORDS TRANSLATION PROJECT

*A Good Day for Climbing Trees* was one of the three final titles chosen for the project, and English and Italian language rights were subsequently sold.

MASKEW MILLER LONGMAN LITERATURE PRIZE

Winner in 2007 with the young-adult novel *Verneukpan*.

CARNEGIE MEDAL (UK)

Nominated for *A Good Day for Climbing Trees*.

Complete bibliography of the children’s books by the candidate, English translation of the titles, the year and place of publication and the name of the publisher


* *Hoe wyd kan ’n seekoei se bek ooprek?* *(How Wide can a Hippo Open its Mouth?)*. 2002. Pretoria: LAPA Publishers.


* Basjan en Bella (Buster and Bella). Via Afrika, 2012)


* My eerste soen en ander dinge wat jou uit die bloute kan tref (My First Kiss and Other Things that can Strike you out of the Blue). 2013. Pretoria: LAPA Publishers.*


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Spaghetti tussen jou tone (Spaghetti between your Toes)</em>.</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Pretoria: LAPA Publishers.</td>
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<td><em>Dinge wat ek nie van skape geweet het nie (Things I didn't Know about Sheep)</em></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Pretoria: LAPA Publishers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Professor Fungus en die onsigbare skurk (Professor Fungus and the Invisible Villain)</em></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Pretoria: LAPA Publishers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Professor Fungus en die gekloonde konyn (Professor Fungus and the Cloned Rabbit)</em></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Pretoria: LAPA Publishers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Die dag toe Ernst ’n ertjie geëet het (The Day Peter Ate a Pea)</em>.</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Pretoria: LAPA Publishers.</td>
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* Indicates books published under the pseudonym Tania Brink.

** Indicates books published under the pseudonym Lize Roux.

List of translated editions and their languages

Two of Jaco Jacobs’s books have been translated into English: A good day for climbing trees (’n Goeie dag vir boomklim) and A good night for shooting zombies (Oor ’n motorfiets, ’n zombiefliek en lang getalle wat deur elf gedeel kan word) – both published by the British publisher OneWorld. The Italian rights for ’n Goeie dag vir boomklim have been sold to the Italian publisher, Rizzoli.

Ten of the most important titles by the candidate and the names of the publishers of all the editions

Dinge wat ek nie van skape geweet het nie (2018)

’n Goeie dag vir boomklim (2015)

Haasmoles (2011)


Moenie hierdie boek eet nie! ’n Rympie vir elke dag van die jaar (2016)

Oor ’n motorfiets, ’n zombiefliek en lang getalle wat deur elf gedeel kan word (2013)


Suurlemoen! (2007)

Waarvoor is seersowers bang? (2013)

Wurms met tamatiesous (2005)

* All the above-mentioned titles were published by LAPA Publishers in South Africa.
List of five titles submitted to the jury


Electronic copies of these titles and any available translations accompany this dossier.

Published reviews of the books submitted to the jury

*A Good Day for Climbing Trees*

*Publishers Weekly*

“This humorous South African import offers a warm look at middle grade activism. Marnus, the 13-year-old narrator, is the forgotten, unremarkable brother sandwiched between two stars—the Adonis-like 15-year-old Donovan and the entrepreneurially gifted nine-year-old Adrian (who rents Donovan out to neighborhood girls for kissing lessons). “Marnus-in-the-middle,” Marnus laments. “Sometimes it felt like I was invisible.” However, when a “weird” girl named Leila comes to Marnus’s door with a petition to save a tree, he breaks character and follows her to the park to see it, then joins her up in the branches to protest and save the tree from municipal managers and bulldozers. A comic cast champions their cause, including a pink-haired town eccentric named Mrs. Merriman who brings food and drink; a gruff caretaker who allows Marnus and Leila to use the club’s restrooms; and Leila’s quiet mother. While it stretches belief that Marnus’s litigator mother allows him to stay in the tree, Jacobs authentically sketches the main characters’ deeper motivations—especially Leila’s reaction to her parents’ divorce. Ultimately, Jacobs delivers a kind and uplifting novel about two characters taking a stand. Ages 9–12. (May)”

Amanda Craig, *New Statesman America*, 28 March 2018

“… From South Africa, Jaco Jacobs’s *A Good Day for Climbing Trees* (Rock the Boat, £6.99) is instantly engaging, funny and robust. Our narrator Marnus’s sassy younger brother is renting their handsome eldest sibling out for kissing lessons, billed as a “self-esteem workshop”. Marnus is sick of being ignored, but when Leila asks him to help prevent a special tree from being cut down, it’s the start of a joint rebellion. Ideal for eight-plus boys.”


**A Good Night for Shooting Zombies**

*Kirkus Reviews*, 22 December 2018

“A punch in the face sets Clucky and Vusi on the start of an unlikely friendship.

Clucky is a bit of a loner. His mother and sister still suffer from the impact of his father’s sudden death, with his mother refusing to leave the house and his sister now alienated from the family. Vusi is largely housebound due to Hodgkins disease and is cared for by a nurse while his parents also hover. Yet Vusi convinces Clucky to join him as he works to create a zombie film. On set around their neighborhood, these two youngsters are joined by Chris, a schoolmate of Clucky’s. When Chris suggests they use a garage that houses her imprisoned brother’s possessions, the trio place themselves in the crosshairs of a local gang, which happens to have Clucky’s sister’s boyfriend as its leader. In one painful encounter with the gang, Vusi’s dreams are dashed. Clucky, desperate to fix things, rallies the community to pull off the impossible. Jacobs, a South African writing in Afrikaans, uses naming convention to hint at ethnicity, while Tierney’s illustrations depict Clucky and Chris as white and Vusi as black. Death is present in both reference to Clucky’s father’s accident and Vusi’s illness, but Jacobs delicately weaves it throughout the tale in a way that both celebrates life and places importance on human connection as it affects the lives of those who remain.

An emotive and enjoyable read. (Fiction. 10-14)”

“Martin, also called Clucky, spends most of his time with his chickens after his dad dies, as well as thinking a lot about maths. His mother has withdrawn in her grief and his sister spends all her time with her boyfriend.

He meets his neighbour Vusi when Vusi’s dog kills Martin’s favourite chicken. Introductions don’t go well when Vusi reveals he knows about Martin’s mother being a former actress, which leaves Vusi with a bloody nose.

Sent over to apologise the next day, Martin learns that Vusi has cancer, and the two bond over Vusi’s love for horror films. Vusi’s ambition is to create a zombie movie, and as Martin helps realise Vusi’s vision, he begins to step out of his comfort zone and discover his potential.

This is the second of Jaco Jacobs’s books to be translated from Afrikaans and it is a wonderfully quirky, humorous and heart-warming read. Jacobs is a superb storyteller, blending a captivating voice with a compelling plot. You can immediately tell he is a master at writing for children and young adults.

With over 140 books to his name, we can only hope that more continue to be translated into English from what is likely to be a treasure trove of stories.”

https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book/a/a-good-night-for-shooting-zombies/