

The Island Prize 2022-2023



Founded by Karen Jennings, in partnership with Holland House Books, we are delighted to announce The Island Prize will be running for its second year.

Please find attached an information pack covering details of this year's prize.

Contents

About	2
Summary, prizes, guidelines, rules, details on submissions	
Further Guidance.....	4
How to write an effective and accurate synopsis & how to make the most of your entry	
Press Release.....	5
Judges.....	6

'As African writers, we are often faced with a double dose of challenges. Firstly, getting published within African countries can be incredibly difficult because local publishers are often constrained by finances. Secondly, for many writers getting published overseas is almost impossible because the rest of the world has certain ideas of what an African story should be. Having experienced these challenges first-hand – being told that a novel is 'too African' or 'not African enough' – I know how important it is that stories from Africa be given a wide variety of platforms so that they can be shared at home and abroad without the need to fit certain moulds. I am proud to be part of The Island Prize for a Debut Novel from Africa – a competition where the judges are African and where the winners have an opportunity of being published both in the UK and in South Africa. This is one step towards bridging the gap between here and there, us and them. In fact, it is through prizes like these that authors across the continent can gain the confidence to tell stories as they wish. The hope is that, with time, such stories will become appreciated across the globe, without first being labelled as an exception or a surprise.'

- **Karen Jennings**

About

The Island Prize is a literary prize that has been curated with the primary aim of helping African writers break into the UK publishing scene. This prize is open to **debut novelists** from all African countries, or the diaspora. All short-listed writers will be read by publishers and agents in the UK, US, and South Africa.

The first year of The Island Prize, set up by Karen Jennings, exceeded all expectations. We received over 120 entries from all over the continent, a fine and diverse longlist, and then an excellent shortlist. The winner already has a UK agent as a direct result of the prize, and three books have been offered publishing contracts. The competition has aroused much interest in the UK, and we expect even more this year.

The prize is open to entries from across **any and all genres**.

All **longlisted** authors will be offered the opportunity to receive detailed feedback on their submissions, with their entire manuscript being read by industry professionals. The longlist will include a minimum of 8 novels.

All **shortlisted** authors will receive in-depth editorial attention to their entire manuscript, working closely with publishers, agents, and our judges to ready their work for submittance to agencies and publishers once the winner has been announced. The shortlist will include a minimum of three novels.

Prizes:

Winner - £500

Two Runners Up (Shortlist) - £200

Both the winner and runners up will receive detailed editorial feedback and will be mentored by industry professionals and read by UK and US agents.

Maghreb Region Prize

This year, we are thrilled to be able to offer a **£200 prize** to the best writer from the Maghreb region.

This has been initiated by last year's runner up, Hamza Koudri, who has donated his winnings to this cause.

“Just like I have been lucky to receive the support of The Island Prize team, it would give me immense pleasure to pay it forward and help at least one young author on their journey to publication.”

- **Hamza Koudri**

How to enter:

Writers must send the opening **3 chapters/10,000 words** of a **finished** novel, along with a short **synopsis** to submissions@theislandprize.com.

Longlisted entries will then be invited to submit a full manuscript.

Attached to this pack is guidance on how to submit an effective and accurate synopsis, as well as further guidance on entering.

Submissions open: Friday 9th September 2022

Submissions close: Friday 6th January 2023 [Midnight (Central African Time)]

Rules

- * Entrants must be citizens of African countries or officially recognised permanent residents. Evidence will be required if longlisted.
- * Authors cannot have previously published a novel – non-fiction/short stories/poetry are fine.
- * Author cannot have an agent.
- * Entries over 120,000 words will be automatically disqualified.
- * Novels that were entered previously may not be submitted again.

If you require further guidance on your entry:

Please send any queries either to:

Robert at contact@hhousebooks.com

Poppy at submissions@theislandprize.com

Social Media:

The Island Prize

Instagram: @theislandprize

You can also follow all updates on social media handles for **Holland House Books**.

Twitter: @Hhousebooks

Instagram: @hollandhouse3525

Further Guidance

Notes on Submissions

1. It is important to send the very best copy you can – there is no benefit in rushing to enter for the prize, so please take time to polish and work on the manuscript.
2. Please send the first three chapters or 10,000 words. Do not send images or further material.
3. The synopsis is important for the readers in the initial stages of the prize, so take real care with this. Your novel is not judged on the quality of the synopsis, but it helps readers to assess the sample.

A synopsis should be:

- a. One page long – please don't send five page synopses, they should not be necessary.
- b. A clear outline of the significant events and developments – the skeleton of the work. Keep descriptive writing to the absolute minimum.
- c. Clearly and simply written. Entries are not judged on the literary quality of the synopsis, and there is no value in trying to convince of the excitement or depth of the book. Judges need to have a sense of the book overall, and be able to see if it is essentially coherent.
- d. Please don't tell us how important the book is, nor give a list of themes. At most state the central one or two themes.

Press Release

The Island Prize opens submissions to debut African novelists

Submissions open: Friday 9th September

Contact: britcherpoppy@gmail.com

No entry fee.

1st Place - £500

2 runners up - £200

Maghreb Region Prize - £200

We are thrilled to be opening submissions for The Island Prize, for its second year. Open to debut novelists, this literary prize has been curated to help African authors from across the continent, and the diaspora, break into the UK publishing scene and reach a wider audience for their work. The winner will receive £500, two runners up will receive £200, and all three will receive detailed editorial attention and mentorship from the editors at Holland House Books and The Island Prize judges. This year we are also excited to be offering a £200 prize for top entry from the Maghreb region. In testament to the value of the prize, our winner from last year now has a UK agent as a direct result of the prize, and 3 of the shortlisted authors have been offered publishing contracts. The remainder of the shortlist are still working with The Island Prize editors to hone their submissions. The Island Prize was founded by Karen Jennings, 'An Island', in partnership with Holland House Books (UK). Submissions will close 6 January 2023 at midnight (Central African Time).

- **Send submissions to submissions@theislandprize.com**
- **Submissions should be the opening 3 chapters/10,000 words of a finished novel, along with a short synopsis (no more than a page)**
- **Find more information on our Instagram ([@theislandprize.com](https://www.instagram.com/theislandprize.com)) or on Holland House Books' website.**

Rules:

* Entrants must be: citizens of African countries or officially recognised permanent residents. Evidence will be required if longlisted.

* Authors cannot have previously published a novel – non-fiction/short stories/poetry are fine.

* Author cannot have an agent.

* Entries over 120,000 words will be automatically disqualified.

* Novels that were entered previously may not be submitted again.

Judges

Karen Jennings



Karen Jennings is a South African author. Her debut novel, *Finding Soutbek*, was shortlisted for the inaugural Etisalat Prize for African Fiction. In 2014 her short story collection, *Away from the Dead*, was longlisted for the Frank O'Connor International short story competition. Her memoir, *Travels with my Father*, was published in 2016, and in 2018 she released her debut poetry collection, *Space Inhabited by Echoes*. Her historical mining novel, *Upturned Earth*, was published in 2019, followed in 2020 by *An Island*, which was published by Holland House Books and longlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize. Her new novel, *Crooked Seeds*, will be published worldwide in early 2024.

Rachel Edwards



Rachel Edwards is an author with Fourth Estate, HarperCollins. Her second novel, *Lucky* – a tale about race, migration, betrayal, online gambling and the risks we all take to survive – was published on 24 th June 2021. It follows on from the success of her acclaimed debut, *Darling*, published in 2018. An alumna of King's College London, she worked in publishing, won a national Arts Council award for her fiction and became a freelance writer for over 12 years until she chose to focus full-time on writing novels.

Rachel has appeared at literary festivals and events around the UK. Her articles have featured across the national media including in *The Guardian* and *The Sunday*

Times. During the summer of 2020, she featured as lead columnist for *The Sunday Times Magazine*. She is a regular guest on BBC Radio, featuring on *Woman's Hour* in 2019 and 2020. She lives in Somerset.

"I have always been passionate about new and under-represented voices entering the UK literary scene, including, at one time, my own. As a British writer of Jamaican and Nigerian heritage, I am particularly excited about discovering the work of emerging African writers who can contribute unique narratives and share valuable insights. It is a privilege to be a judge for The Island Prize and I cannot wait to lose myself in some fresh, original, accomplished African fiction."

Hamza Koudri



Hamza Koudri has an MA in English literature and civilization and has been working in education and international development since 2008. Hamza is also a Director of Programs with World Learning, overseeing a portfolio of education and workforce development projects across Algeria. Over the years, Hamza has created and led courses and projects for youth and educators across the MENA region and Korea. During a year-long fellowship in the U.S. he also helped put in place a mentorship program for a social equity course at Penn State University and a teacher training certificate program for Indiana University. Hamza's novel, SAND ROSES, won third place in the Island Prize's inaugural edition (2021-2022).

“Being shortlisted for the Island Prize was a defining moment for my career as an author, as my novel has received unprecedented exposure and I can finally see a path towards publication thanks to the immense support from the Island Prize organizers and judges. I am more than happy to serve as a judge on this year’s edition and help aspiring authors from the African continent kickstart their writing careers.”