

Usborne acquires “one-in-a-million” YA novel *Rosie Loves Jack* by debut author Mel Darbon

Sarah Stewart, Usborne Senior Fiction Editor, has acquired World English rights for YA novel *Rosie Loves Jack* by debut author Mel Darbon in a two book deal with Ben Illis.

Stunningly beautiful and uniquely insightful, *Rosie Loves Jack* is a story about Rosie, who has Down’s Syndrome, as she fights for the little freedoms that so many of us take for granted – independence, tolerance and love.

Sarah Stewart says of the acquisition: “You can’t help falling in love with Rosie and rooting for her every step of the way on her incredible journey. She’s so innocent yet strong, tackling every challenge with dogged determination and optimism. At a time when intolerance is sadly rife, this is a stunningly beautiful, one-in-a-million book that deserves to be read by everyone.”

Rosie is distraught when her boyfriend is sent away, so she decides to run away from home and find her Jack, the boy who makes the sun shine in her head. But a relatively straightforward journey from London to Brighton is a more daunting undertaking when you have Down’s Syndrome, like Rosie. And it is made worse when her train is cancelled, leading her to trust in the help of strangers as she determinedly struggles on. But those strangers have prejudices, problems and agendas of their own, as Rosie discovers on a journey that follows her from joy to fear and back again.

“Mel Darbon has created a character in Rosie who you will undoubtedly adore and written a book that you will undoubtedly love.” - **Brian Conaghan**, Costa-winning author of *The Bombs That Brought Us Together*

Mel Darbon is a recent graduate of Bath Spa’s MA in Writing for Young People, where she found a channel to give voice to young people who otherwise might not be heard. She says: “Writing *Rosie Loves Jack* was very important to me. Having grown up with a brother who has severe additional needs I know the challenges that these people face. I wanted to write a story that celebrates diversity, a story about not being defined by labels and because everyone deserves to see themselves represented in books.

I am delighted to be working with Usborne. I knew the minute I met everyone on the team that Rosie had found her home. Usborne are never afraid to take on books that deal with sensitive issues in an insightful and intuitive manner. I can’t wait for Rosie to make her way out into the world.”

Ben Illis on *Rosie Loves Jack*: “It’s an astonishing, timely and important narrative that left me as utterly bereft when I’d finished as it completely changed what I thought I knew about teens with special needs and even about love itself. I’m over the moon to see this book published by Usborne, a list I’ve always seen as unflinching, unusual and unafraid to tackle dark subject matter in a sensitive way.”

Export Director, **Grant Hartley** says: “Enthusiasm for this book is infectious. We can’t wait to start talking to our international customers and fiction fans about it.”

Usborne Publishing is committed to publishing inclusive and diverse books for all ages and is a signatory on the Everybody In charter, spearheaded by Inclusive Minds. Usborne Fiction Director, **Rebecca Hill** says: “We are proud to add *Rosie Loves Jack* to an inclusive fiction list. Led by authentic storytelling, our award-winning list includes titles that explore selective mutism, Aspergers, mental health issues, disability, transgender and more.”

Rosie Loves Jack by Mel Darbon is due to be published in September 2018.

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