

I'm presuming you wouldn't quite understand the words, "I do und }
means it won't be in chronological order.

Printz was announced, a US blogger wrote Melina Who Jellicoe What?
ed the question. Back home, my first novel received a strong response
d the life of a young Australian Italian girl juggling two cultures. At
ther writers of semi semi autobiographical novels, I still feel quite
ite the fact that it's been almost seventeen years since its publication.
new kid on the block in January this year, and to read the words "off
e feel quite liberated.

his award on Australia Day. It was eight am in the morning when my
e up anonymous and I rarely pick up the phone if I don't know who it
e was that far away, couple of moments of silence and I thought it was
call centres in India and since watching Slumdog Millionaire I've made
t more considerate, so I stayed on the line and didn't hang up.

committee on Saturday night. It was wonderful to put faces to those
January the 26th. Voices of such excitement and enthusiasm, like they
ds who couldn't wait to tell me a secret. I remember asking "What do
of them called out on the speaker phone to have lots of champagne.

o say no to s



I get asked over and over again, what the Printz actually means in the long run. People ask about money and sales and whether I get to travel, whether I'll meet JK Rowling and Stephenie Meyer. What am I going to wear when I meet the Printz, despite the fact that I spell the word every time I say it. Some have told me to wear a thick coat because Chicago's a really cold place.

But what it means to me, in all honestly, is that more people will read my work and ultimately, I think it's what most writer's want—for their stories to be read and to be shared and to be discussed. Even when it's not all good. I've enjoyed the diverse opinions on the blogs. I love the fact that young readers have bullied their parent to persevere with *Jellicoe*, rather than the other way round. I've even loved receiving letters saying "Dear Ms Marchetta. I just love your novel *On the Jellicoe Road*. My friend hates it and my teacher doesn't understand it."

I've read the words "Your story hurt my heart."

I've read the words, "Teenagers won't be able to access this novel."

Those are the words I worry about the most. I'd like to think that it's challenging but very accessible. I receive more letters and feedback from teenagers about *Jellicoe*, than any other. Their favourite part isn't Taylor and Jonah's love story, as I thought it would be. They mostly write to me about the community created by the five friends of the past. The community created by Taylor in the end when she stops being reactive and becomes proactive and begins collecting her own people.

I know some people have a thirty page rule. I wish they didn't. I'd like to think there are so many wonderful surprises on page 31 of someone's story. I'd like to think that the first line of a novel doesn't make sense if you haven't read the last. That they may discover that I've written a story about something more than territory wars between Boarders and Townies and Cadets.

For me,

Jellicoe Road is a story of love between people, regardless of gender and age. It's about p eof v



fighting the battles within the territory of their hearts. It's about staying individual and still belonging to a community. It's about pointing out the beauty of wonder in the midst of ugliness

So I'd like to thank Mary and the Printz committee for giving my purpose a platform. For introducing more readers to a story that in some parts, I regret writing because the circumstances break my heart.

I'd like to thank the community of writers I belong to. Those who emailed me back home and from afar, when the decision was announced. A writer spends a lot of time on their own. Even when we're with friends and family, a part of us is elsewhere constructing. Half the time we think we're geniuses. The other half of the time, with the same passion, we think we're failures. That no one will be interested in reading what we've written. Fellow writers kind of get it. They make you feel less lonely.

And for Margo Lanagan and Emily Lockhart and Tobin Anderson and Terry Pratchett for constantly writing at a standard that raises the bar, not just with these novels, but with everything they've written. It was like receiving a second award when I heard my name read out with theirs.

My agents, Jill Grinberg and Sophie Hamley, and my Australian publisher of Jellicoe, Laura Harris, for creating an environment of kindness in our dealings, who have never once

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