

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Literary Properties acquires *intellectual property in four international children's authors: Martin Waddell, Adèle Geras, Gianna Marino and Sheila Burnford.*

- International Literary Properties announces new acquisitions of four beloved multi award-winning children's authors from the USA, Canada, the UK and Northern Ireland.
- ILP to pursue new opportunities and expand existing partnerships in publishing, digital, and multi-media production as part of their on-going commitment to children's content.

International Literary Properties (ILP), the global company that invests in, acquires, manages, and enhances literary estates, is excited to announce the acquisition of intellectual property in children's and young adult authors: **Martin Waddell, Adèle Geras, Gianna Marino, and Sheila Burnford.**

Martin Waddell is the Northern Irish children's author, best known for his books featuring anthropomorphic animals including the *Little Bear* series, *Owl Babies* and *Farmer Duck*. He also writes under the pen name Catherine Sefton for older children and young adults, including a series of books set against The Troubles—the violent sectarian conflict that took place in Northern Ireland from 1968 to 1998. He has written more than 200 books over his distinguished career, including eight children's series; over 50 picture books; over 20 chapter books for children; over 20 books for older children under the Sefton pseudonym; the Otley series of novels for adults, adapted into a 1968 comedy spy movie starring Tom Courtenay and Romy Schneider; and numerous collections of short stories. His picture books alone have sold more than **18 million copies worldwide**. In 1989, Waddell and Barbara Firth won the Kurt Maschler Award, AKA the Emil, for *The Park in the Dark*—the award annually recognized one British “work of imagination for children, in which text and illustration are integrated so that each enhances and balances the other.” In 2004, Waddell was awarded the biennial **Hans Christian Andersen Medal** for his “lasting contribution” as a children's writer. The award is the highest professional accolade available to a writer or illustrator of children's books.

“I am invigorated by working with ILP. It feels like a new beginning and I am excited about where this will take us together. It is great, at 80, to be so full of hope, energy and enterprise,” shared Martin Waddell.

Adèle Geras is a British author, who has written more than 100 books for children, young adults, and adults. Many of her books for young adults and children feature her love of classical stories and ancient history, namely her best-known book *Troy*, which was shortlisted for the **Whitbread Prize** and highly commended for the **Carnegie Medal**. Her YA romance stories are based on classic fairy tales, and her children's books include a series about cats (*Cats of Cuckoo Square*), and two series about ballet dancers—*The Little Swan* and *The Magic of the Ballet*. Her novels for adults

include *Facing the Light*, *Hester's Story*, *Cover Your Eyes*, and *Love, or Nearest Offer*. In 2021, she published her first murder mystery under the pen name **Hope Adams**. *Dangerous Women* is inspired by the incredible true story of female convicts transported to Australia.

Adèle Geras said, "I'm proud and honoured to find myself on a list which includes some of my favorite writers and I'm delighted that ILP will have my own works in their care from now on. I'm happy to have lifted a burden from the shoulders of my children and grandchildren and I know everyone at ILP will be both imaginative and diligent in looking after my books. I'm very excited to see what the future holds."

"The ILP team is thrilled to be working with such accomplished and prolific authors. Martin Waddell is a true legend of children's literature, known and beloved by readers of all ages. Adèle Geras combines clever, timeless stories for children and young adults with engrossing adult fiction that places love and family at its core. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be working together," said Mary Durkan, Head of Acquisitions, UK and EMEA.

Gianna Marino is an American author and illustrator who has written over a dozen award-winning books, including *Meet Me at the Moon*, *Too Tall Houses*, *Following Papa's Song*, *Night Animals*, *Night Animals Need Sleep Too*, and *If I Had a Horse*. Her stories are largely based on nature and animals, and follow the interpersonal relationships between animals as well as humans, and their surroundings. For *We Will Live in this Forest Again*, Gianna drew upon the tragic environmental impact of the 2017 Northern Californian forest fires to deliver a powerful message of ecological hope. She is also the **New York Times best-selling illustrator** of *Don't Let Them Disappear*, written by **Chelsea Clinton**. *Meet Me at the Moon* was chosen for distribution by **Dolly Parton's The Imagination Library** in 2012.

"Over the past 20-plus years of creating books for children, I have met with thousands of students, teachers and librarians. To see their smiles, laughter and interaction with my book characters makes the years of work worth every brushstroke. I am now looking forward to working with ILP to bring my stories and characters to an even wider audience through global media channels," said Gianna Marino.

"I have long been a fan of Gianna Marino's poetic, tenderhearted, and evocative work. Gianna's carefully crafted texts and skillful illustrations celebrate the natural world around us in a way that appeals not just to children, but to the young at heart as well. I couldn't be more excited to add this talented, *New York Times*-bestselling author-illustrator's titles to ILP's catalog," said Molly Cusick, ILP's VP of North American Acquisitions and Publishing.

Sheila Burnford (1918 - 1984) was a British Canadian author, best remembered for the classic children's book, *The Incredible Journey* about three animal pets traveling in the wilderness, that inspired the feature film *Homeward Bound*. The book won both the Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children Award and the ALA Auriadne Award in 1963. That same year, the book became a bestseller after the hit Disney film, of the same name, was released. The film was remade in 1993 as *Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey*. Burnford followed up with three titles of nonfiction, including *One Woman's Arctic*, an account of her activities (dog sledding among them) on the Canadian Arctic Island of Baffin, and two more books for young readers. In 1978 she published *Bel Ria*, her final book, which drew on her experience as a volunteer ambulance driver during World War II. It tells the story of a dog and the extraordinary attachments he makes to the people he encounters during his perilous journey from occupied France to besieged Britain.

"As someone who read *The Incredible Journey* as a child and watched its beloved movie adaptation countless times, it's a very special honor to add the works of Sheila Burnford to our

catalog. We're thrilled to help carry on her legacy, not only with her best-known title, but by introducing readers to her other unforgettable gems as well," said Molly Cusick.

ILP has fast-established itself as a proactive literary rights owner, employing a seasoned team of media veterans from the fields of publishing, theater, TV, film, music and brand management. Collaborating with authors, heirs, agents and publishers, ILP invests in the strategic curation and marketing of intellectual property across multiple formats and platforms to bring literary works to new international audiences. Since the company's first acquisitions in 2020, multiple international TV, film and theater development deals have closed.

ILP is delighted to continue to represent recognized children's and young adult authors across generations.

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Notes to editors

About International Literary Properties

International Literary Properties is a global company that invests in, acquires, manages and enhances literary estates.

ILP's team, based in the US, UK, and Europe has decades of experience in literary, TV, film, and theater management. It works with authors, their heirs and estate managers to help realize the value of literary properties, protect their legacy and build their visibility and appeal with contemporary audiences. The company prides itself on finding bespoke solutions and providing financial certainty for each estate.

ILP owns and nurtures a substantial number of literary catalogues in all genres, fiction and non-fiction, many of which are household names. Working in close collaboration with existing literary agents and author representation, the team uses its industry expertise and contacts to create new opportunities for authors' writing to be enjoyed across all media platforms.

The company is based in New York and London and run by its founders, Scott Hoffman, president and CEO, Ted Green as Executive Chair, Hilary Strong, CEO for UK and EMEA, and Bob Benton, director.

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