



Carnegie Medal Acceptance Speech

Paul R. Gagne



Paul R. Gagne is Director of Production, at Weston Woods Studios, which won the 2011 Andrew Carnegie Medal for *The Curious Garden*, based on the book by Peter Brown.

Good morning. Thank you Angelique, members of the 2011 Carnegie Medal selection committee, and ALSC for this wonderful honor. Melissa and I would like to share with you a little bit about what went into making *The Curious Garden*, and we decided to each focus on different aspects of the production and members of our creative team. Melissa's acknowledgments and thanks go double for me, as I'm sure mine do for her.

One of the very first creative decisions we make whenever we start a new project is casting the right voice for the story. We always try to consult with the authors and illustrators for their input and insights. In the case of *The Curious Garden*, author/illustrator Peter Brown told us that although the idea for the book came from a specific place—High Line Park in New York City—he felt that the story is more universal. He felt it should be a woman's voice with the storytelling ability and the right accent to give the film a very classic, "Masterpiece Theater" feel. That ruled out Snooki.

We immediately thought of Katherine Kellgren. You just can't get any more "Masterpiece Theater" than the reader of the audiobook version of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies!* Recently named 2011's "Voice of Choice" by *Booklist* magazine, Katy has been one of our "voices of choice" for several years now, which happened as a direct result of the 2008 Odyssey Honor for her audiobook reading of *Bloody Jack*. Katy is a consummate professional and a phenomenal talent, and we love working together.

After we booked the date to record *The Curious Garden*, we found out she had chosen her birthday because coming out to our studio was such a treat. Katy's Odyssey Honors have become a yearly tradition, and if you can make it to this afternoon's Odyssey event, I highly recommend that you give yourself a treat and come to the Odyssey event this afternoon to hear her read from *Alchemy and Meggy*

Swan. In the meantime, thank you Katy for giving *The Curious Garden* its heart.

I would also like to thank our animation producer David Trexler and the creative team of animators and artists at Scholastic's Soup2Nuts studio in Boston for their superb work on this film.

I have a favorite cartoon that I believe originally came from the *New Yorker*. In it, a man and a woman are lying next to each other, and in the caption the woman is saying, "That was pretty good, but I have a few notes."

It's obvious to me that the couple in the cartoon have just finished reviewing a rough cut of a Weston Woods production! As producers, Melissa and I have used that line many, many times, and nobody knows this better than our animators. I'm sure we must drive them crazy. But David and his team are excellent collaborators. They started with a very strong plan for the film in the form of a video storyboard and worked very hard throughout the animation process to incorporate all of those notes while bringing Peter Brown's illustrations to life in a way that remained true to the look and feel of the book.

There's a joke I've often heard in the context of working with creative talent like animators and composers. I don't know the original source, but it goes something like this: "(1) We'll do a fantastic job; (2) We won't go over budget; (3) We'll complete the job on schedule. You get to pick two of the three." David and the Soup2Nuts team gave us all three—or at least two and a half.

Before turning things over to Melissa, I'd just like to thank our vice president, Linda Lee, as always for her unwavering support, all of our colleagues within the Scholastic and Scholastic Entertainment families, and my wife, Lynn, and our daughters, Melanie and Brianna, for always being there for me.

Thank you! 🐣