

TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1

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I was thrilled when I heard I'd won first prize - a substantial amount of money! I'd had a sneaky look at all the novels that had been entered and I must admit every single one was a gripping read and well written. The ironic thing about winning the money was that I needed it less after I'd won. I'd spent a couple of years earning enough to live on, but not exactly living the high life. Then, once news was out about me winning, bookshops were overwhelmed with readers suddenly wanting anything and everything I'd ever written! Thankfully, my agent dealt with the emails that flooded in from fans and she also managed my social media presence.

Speaker 2

I live in Australia and I was on a flight back from Europe when the news broke, so I'd no idea I'd won the competition until the next day. Sure, I remember the publicity that surrounded winning, but what marked the event for me was the mental switch I made from writing novels based on historical facts to more descriptive, character-driven stories. I also recall, when I'd just sent off the entry form, thinking whatever the result, win or lose, it'd give me the chance to get feedback on my work and I'd take it on board. The judges were all highly respected writers and publishers, and even if they'd poured scorn on my work, it'd still have been useful.

Speaker 3

Well, to be honest, winning the prize has been a double-edged sword. Yeah, it was great to be headline news, but after that all died down, I spent hours staring at a blank screen, thinking - what now? Obviously, I knew I was a good writer, I wouldn't have won otherwise, but it was hard for about a year. It's weird, because when I went in for the competition I had numerous sleepless nights thinking: what'll happen if I don't win? Would I go into some sort of decline and not want to face my friends and colleagues? Fortunately, I did win, so those anxieties never had to be faced.

Speaker 4

The minute I'd completed the form to enter the competition, the only thing I could think about was; what would I say when I accepted the prize? At that stage I had no idea whether I'd even win or not. I knew there'd be a big formal dinner and the winner would have to get up and come out with words of wisdom and the thought made me feel numb with fear! Anyway, I managed to mumble thanks to all my readers and the usual stuff when the time came. In contrast, afterwards there was no time to think at all - I was being asked to write a follow-up novel by companies in countries I knew little about!

Speaker 5

I was so hacked off by all the criteria I had to meet for the competition that by the time I'd checked this, that and the other, sent endless confirmations of my ID, and read the competition style guide for the tenth time, I hoped I'd have nothing more to do with it all. Of course, having won, I can now see the funny side of all that. Winning has also made me a more assertive person, sure enough of myself to say, 'No thank you, I won't be doing that interview or attending that party. The same's happened as far as writing goes - I know what works for me!