

Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)
2024-2025 Set Pieces for Asia Division

FINAL

Prose Reading
Born in 2015-2016

Paddington

by Michael Bond

Mr and Mrs Brown first met Paddington on a railway platform. In fact, that was how he came to have such an unusual name for a bear, because Paddington was the name of the station.

The Browns were waiting to meet their daughter, Judy, when Mr Brown noticed something small and furry near the LEFT LUGGAGE office.

“It looks like a bear,” he said.

“A bear?” repeated Mrs Brown. “On Paddington Station? Don’t be silly, Henry. There can’t be!”

But Mr Brown was right. It was sitting on an old leather suitcase marked WANTED ON VOYAGE, and as they drew near it stood up and politely raised its hat.

“Good afternoon,” it said. “May I help you?”

“It’s very kind of you,” said Mr Brown, “but as a matter of fact, we were wondering if we could help you?”

“You’re a very small bear,” said Mrs Brown. “Where are you from?”

The bear looked around carefully before replying. “Darkest Peru. I’m not really supposed to be here at all. I’m a stowaway.”

“You don’t mean to say you’ve come all the way from South America on your own?” exclaimed Mrs Brown. “Whatever did you do for food?”

Unlocking the suitcase, the bear took out an almost empty glass jar. “I ate Marmalade,” it said. “Bears like marmalade.”