

*I'm so sorry I can't be with you in person to accept this honor. I could not be more thrilled that the readers of Kentucky chose SWINDLE. These are truly the awards that mean the most, since they are chosen by the readers themselves.*

*I should set the record straight from the outset that the story is not autobiographical. SWINDLE was born while I was doing research for my adventure series. I kept coming across these great books and movies about robberies, which started me thinking about writing a good old-fashioned heist story for a younger audience. The problem was always the same: Robbery is a crime. How can I expect readers to sympathize with kids who are engaged in a criminal enterprise? The reason for the heist had to be so compelling that people would forgive my characters for breaking the law. That's a tall order – unless the protagonists aren't so much stealing something as stealing it back. Presto – kids who have been conned out of a million-dollar Babe Ruth baseball card by an unscrupulous collector launching an elaborate operation to take it back.*

*By the way, that connection to the good old-fashioned-caper stories we remember from our own childhoods has stuck as SWINDLE has grown into a series. ZOOBREAK, the sequel, is essentially a prison break with zoo animals. And FRAMED - brand new this fall - is a classic "wrong man" story. It has been so rewarding to watch the legions of SWINDLE fans embracing the further adventures of Griffin, Ben, Luthor, and company.*

*In the spirit of SWINDLE, it would probably be more appropriate for me to break into KRA headquarters and make away with the award under cover of darkness, but I guess that's not such a great idea. So I'll just say how honored, how flattered, and how grateful I am to accept the 2010 Kentucky Bluegrass Award.*

**Thank you,  
Gordan Korman**