

A writing magazine

# PaperBound

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Issue 12 Summer 2023

For the young, and the young at heart

AUTHOR  
INTERVIEWS  
with

LEX CROUCHER  
FINBAR HAWKINS  
SUSAN LYNN MEYER  
DOAN PHUONG NGUYEN  
CARRIE SELLON  
&  
DAVID WOLSTENCROFT



+ TOP TIPS ON GIVING FEEDBACK  
FROM HANNAH FRIEND

A SNEAK PEEK INSIDE LAURA  
DOCKRILL'S NEW CREATIVE WRITING  
GUIDE: YOU ARE A STORY

▶ CLAIRE LEWIS SHARES SOME FUN  
FACTS IN A WRITING PROMPT  
BOOK REVIEWS  
& MORE...

**NEW**  
WRITING &  
ILLUSTRATIONS  
From

CAROLE BROMLEY      SAMANTHA KAY DAVIES  
KIM DE HAAN      DORIAN HAMPTON      VAL HARRIS      IMOGEN HARTLAND  
ARDEN JONES      JAYNE LEADBETTER      LINDA MIDDLETON

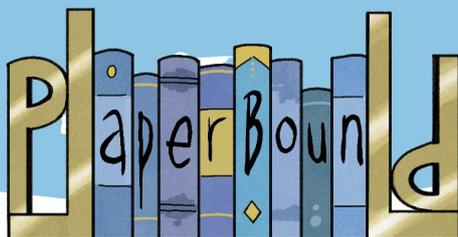
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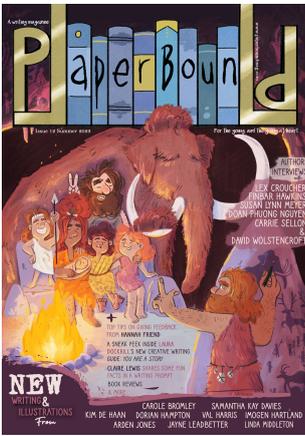
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**(CREATE ART FOR US:** WE ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ARTWORK TO DECORATE EACH ISSUE. (CHECK OUT OUR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES TO SEE WHAT WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR.

**BE INTERVIEWED BY US:** IF YOU'RE AN AUTHOR OF MG OR YA FICTION, AND HAVE A BOOK COMING OUT, WE WANT TO KNOW! GET IN TOUCH!

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Find out more about our fantastic cover illustrator, Samantha Kay Davies, on page 52

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PaperBound Magazine is a quarterly online magazine for the young, and the young at heart. It is dedicated to showcasing authors and illustrators of children's and young adult fiction. It strives to deliver inspiring content, new and exciting writing, book recommendations and top tips for aspiring young writers. PaperBound has been created by Emily, Lucy and Rayan who met while studying an MA in Writing for Young People at Bath Spa University.

If you are interested in contributing to the magazine please see full submission details on our website.

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# Letter from the editors Summer 2023

Dear Readers,

How can this be our 12th issue? We really hope you enjoy our past/future edition this summer. As always it's full of writing and illustrations, author interviews, inspiring articles, book reviews, and more.

We couldn't do this without the help of all of our contributors, and the publishers and publicists who help put us in touch with the fantastic authors and books you see featured every issue. Huge thanks to you all!

As most of you know, PaperBound is run completely voluntarily, and we have been enjoying creating these issues for you all over the past three years. And, although we are not going anywhere, we will be making a few changes going forward. We'll be talking more about that in the coming weeks so please do keep an eye out on social media and our website.

If you'd like to be a part of a future issue, please get in touch. We're always on the look out for new writing and illustrations as well as interviews, articles and book reviews. The theme of our next issue is CURIOSITY. Check out our website for more details.

We hope you enjoy the SUMMER issue!

Happy reading!

Emily, Lucy and Rayan

If you would like to contribute to a future issue, tell us what you thought of this one, or contact us about anything else, we'd love to hear from you.

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Summer 2023

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This contents page has been illustrated by the fantastic

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INTERVIEW

WE CAUGHT UP  
WITH **FINBAR HAWKINS**  
TO CHAT ABOUT HIS  
BEAUTIFULLY WRITTEN  
NOVEL, *STONE*.



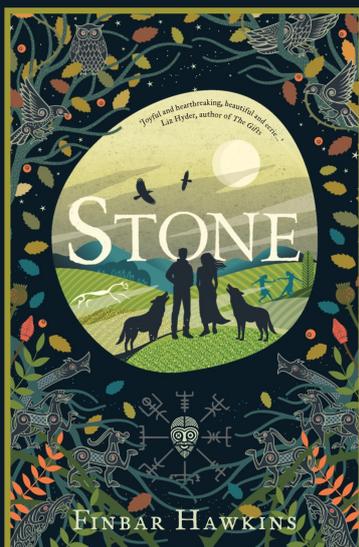
FINBAR  
HAWKINS

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR NOVEL, *STONE*, AND THE INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

*Stone* is about how Sam deals with the aftermath of his father's death, a soldier killed while on patrol in Kabul. On the day of his funeral, Sam goes up on the hills where he used to walk with his father. He discovers a strange stone, that appears to give him abilities and visions. The book is about how Sam navigates his grief and anger, stepping between the real and supernatural world, and how his friends and family help him on his way.

There are a few inspirations. I'm always drawn to the way our landscape affects our psyche, how we have this charged relationship with the natural world. I've also

always been hugely interested in magick and the supernatural, the ineffable power of divination, and the creation of spells. And I also wanted to explore mental health and therapy, as this is such an important subject for young people.



Jacket artwork by Edward Bettison

YOUR NOVEL COVERS THE IMPACT GRIEF CAN HAVE ON FAMILY AND FRIENDSHIPS, WHILE ALSO SEAMLESSLY INCLUDING MYTH AND MAGIC. HOW DID YOU CREATE THIS BALANCE?

Family and friendships are incredibly important to me, so I always want to make sure that these things are real and grounded in my writing. It's important as a reader that you recognise emotions, situations and traits in characters. We all read to find ourselves I think, so that has to be reflected in your writing. As human beings we're on a continual journey of

discovery, of trying to work out life. And I guess that's also why myth and magic come into my writing. We don't really understand how the universe works.

We're this tiny dot in the incomprehensible

expanse of the universe. So it's natural to me to want to explore this space: what is it to be human, and how do we deal with the unknown.

YOU WRITE IN SUCH A BEAUTIFUL AND UNIQUE WAY; WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU GIVE YOUNG WRITERS TRYING TO FIND THEIR OWN WRITING STYLE?

Thank you, that's lovely of you to say. I would say experiment like crazy, and know that there is no right or wrong way. I often re-write scenes from other viewpoints, playing around with first, second and third person, or looking at a scene through a

different characters' eyes. I think rewriting like this tells you a lot, as you might find suddenly hitting a rich seam of inspiration, and that's your subconscious connecting with the character, their emotions and desires. I would also recommend studying writers' styles that you admire, looking at how they structure their pages, and trying things out for yourself. As with anything, practise and don't be afraid, there is no failure! Also, seek out a writers group if you can so you can get used to sharing and critiquing work. A workshop will force you to up your game since you are submitting to a small audience of readers, and you will learn quickly what's working.

“ I FIND THAT WRITING AND DRAWING HELP EACH OTHER A LOT, AS I'M WORKING THROUGH IDEAS AND SITUATIONS... ”

### WERE YOU INSPIRED BY ANY WRITERS, EITHER GROWING UP OR MORE RECENTLY?

Yes, massively. I'm a huge Ursula Le Guin fan; her *Earthsea* books are just incredible, and her adult science-fiction is extraordinary, how she uses genre fiction to write about the depths of human nature. Susan Cooper and Alan Garner were also big influences, their books both fascinating and unnerving me. More latterly, I think it was first reading Patrick Ness' *Chaos Walking Trilogy* that inspired me to finally having a shot at writing fiction for young people.



### THE MAIN CHARACTER, SAM, FELT VERY REAL IN MANY WAYS, PARTICULARLY HIS EMOTIONS. DO YOU HAVE ANY WRITING TIPS FOR DEVELOPING REALISTIC CHARACTERS?

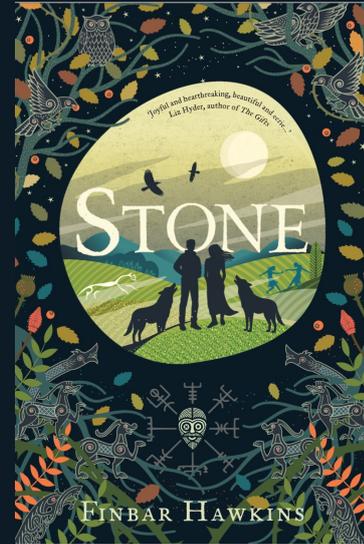
You have to go into yourself, and look at difficult situations either you or those close to you have experienced. Try and get the basics of this down, quickly, not worrying about shaping it, but let the emotions find their way onto the page. Think about what your characters want, what their deepest desire is. And think about what they fear, what their doubts, their misbeliefs are. We all harbour anxiety and suffer stress, so think about what your characters' weaknesses are. And think about where they are at the end of your story, what

has happened to them to make them change. This groundwork will then give you ideas for scenes where you can interrogate that change in your characters.

### YOU HAVE ALSO INCLUDED SOME WONDERFUL ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE NOVEL. COULD YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT THE CREATIVE PROCESS? DID YOU CREATE THEM AS YOU WERE WRITING, BEFORE, AFTER?

I'm glad you liked them! It's a bit of all of those really. I always have very clear images in my mind as I write about certain illustrations that are key, so while I'm drafting, I will also start illustrating these. I find that writing and drawing help each

other a lot, as I'm working through ideas and situations in both. So I'll have quite a few of these illustrations by the end of the first draft, and then I love working with my editor on others that we can add. That's more of a design part of the process, but no less important, as we're at the vital stage of collaboration, working together creatively to make something compelling, immersive and as wonderful as possible. 📖



*Stone* is out in hardback and paperback (May 23), and is published by Zephyr.

### FINBAR'S WRITING PROMPT

Write a scene involving a character or number of characters caught up in something they cannot rationally explain. How would they react and deal with this? Are they scared, intrigued, exhilarated or a mixture of all of these things? How do they get out of the situation or change it? Has the experience changed them, or their understanding in some way?

We'd love to read what you come up with.  
Send it here: [paperboundmagazine@outlook.com](mailto:paperboundmagazine@outlook.com)

### FINBAR HAWKINS

Finbar Hawkins is a graduate of the Bath Spa MA in Writing for Young People. He grew up in Blackheath, London and now lives in Wiltshire with his family, in a landscape steeped in myth and legend. He is a creative director and writer of games and fun interactive things. Finbar's debut novel, *Witch*, shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award and nominated for the 2022 Carnegie medal, is also published by Zephyr.

[www.finbarhawkins.com](http://www.finbarhawkins.com)

Twitter/Instagram: [@finbar\\_hawkins](https://twitter.com/finbar_hawkins)



# HELIOS

by Linda Middleton



## Linda Middleton

Linda lives in a leafy corner of England and is passionate about inspiring others with her poetry. She is delighted that some of her poems have found beautiful homes, including *The Caterpillar* and *The Dirigible Balloon*. In her spare time when she is not writing, she can be found wood wandering, wildlife watching, beach strolling and ice cream tasting.



Follow Linda on Twitter: [@LindaMid7](https://twitter.com/LindaMid7)

Illustration by  
Imogen Hartland.  
Find out more about  
Imogen on page 52

I call you Greek sun god, Helios,  
a burning solar system boss.  
I call you lizard central heating,  
an intense hydrogen and helium meeting,  
a fierce flare thrower, a great golden glower.

You *conjure* magic as  
dawn wall washer, noon land splasher,  
circadian rhythm master, tall shadow caster,  
sunflower bloomer, aurora wind zoomer,  
prism rainbow creator and milky moon illuminator.

You **TEASE** as  
beauty sleep breaker, mirage maker,  
ice cream melter, sizzling summer swelter,  
people pinker and between cloud winker.

You *soothe* as  
sinking spirit lifter, blue mood shifter,  
a snoozy cat rug, a lonely heart's soft hug,  
weariness pruner and happiness balloonier.

Your powers **BLAZE** as  
photosynthesis key, food web guarantee,  
season turner, equator burner,  
solar panel feeder, green energy leader,  
dark sundial hands (my holiday plans).

You are our **PAST**, our **PRESENT**,  
our world's **FUTURE** fueller,  
worshipped as our heliocentric ruler.

Your **DESTINY**:  
white dwarf sky-diamond designer.

But for now, let's all celebrate  
this 4.5 billion-year-old  
dazzling superstar shiner!



# CARRIE SELLON

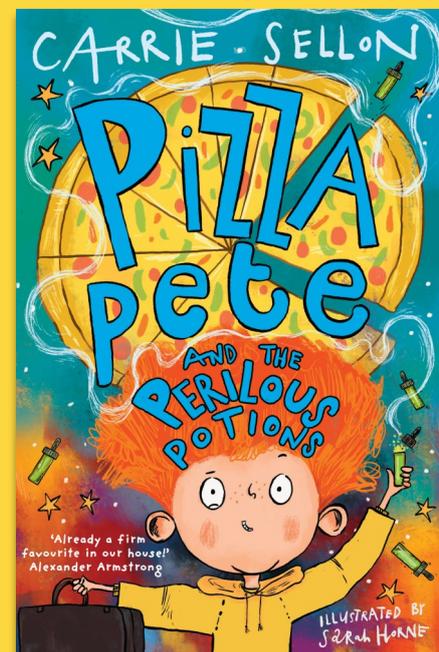
We caught up with debut author **Carrie Sellon** to chat about her new series, *Pizza Pete!*

**Can you tell us a little bit about *Pizza Pete and the Perilous Potions*, and the inspiration behind it.**

*Pizza Pete and the Perilous Potions* is about a 12-year-old boy called Pete who loves living above the pizza shop with his dad, and is terrified of the outside world. But when a new restaurant steals all their customers, Pete and his friend Anna have to come up with an ingenious plan to sell more pizzas, otherwise he'll be forced to move. When they stumble upon a mysterious briefcase of magical potions hidden in the attic, Pete thinks he might have found a way of making enough money to save his home. Everyone wants to eat magical pizzas that can make them fly or turn into different animals. But little do they know what chaos and mayhem will ensue...

As for my inspiration, during lockdown we built a pizza oven in the garden and started eating a LOT of pizzas. The kids

soon got bored of the usual toppings so we experimented with all sorts: fried banana and chilli, prawn and cashew nuts, roasted carrots and cinnamon. It got me thinking – what if chilli could make you breathe fire? What if prawns could turn you into a mermaid? I started scribbling down notes for a picture book, then I wrote a bit more, and a bit more, and suddenly I'd written ten thousand words. *Pizza Pete* was born.



Illustrated by Sarah Horne

**There are so many brilliant characters and scenes in *Pizza Pete*. Which was your favourite to write (without giving away any spoilers)?**

Anna was so fun and sparky to write. I'm a bit shy (like Pete), so I found it quite liberating writing a feisty, stick-two-fingers-up-at-anyone character. And I loved writing Useless, Anna's dog. Look out for Useless' puppies later in the trilogy!

My favourite scene to write was Pete and Anna testing the potions. I had so much fun working out how the potions were going to affect them. Initially I had thirty potions but my editor quite rightly said I should limit them (there are now fifteen), so Pete and Anna wouldn't have endless ways of getting out of their (many) scrapes.

**Pete discovers extraordinary potions in this book. If you could have a magical potion in real life, what would you want it to be able to do?**

I'd love to have a potion that allowed me to time travel. How cool would it be to travel back to see the dinosaurs, or travel forward to see flying cars and robots that can make you pancakes for breakfast!

**This is your debut novel. Could you tell us a little bit about your journey to publication? What have been the highlights so far?**

I used to make wildlife films for the BBC, and one of my favourite parts of the job was writing scripts for the presenters, including Sir David Attenborough. But then three babies came along, and you can't dash off filming polar bears if you're changing

nappies, so I took some time off. I sat in cafés, pushing a buggy with my foot, and wrote little stories, including one about dancing dogs, but I didn't have any plans to

pursue my writing any further... until lockdown. I did a three-month writing course with Curtis Brown Creative, working on an early version of *Pizza Pete*. In 2021, I entered it into an Open Submission competition with Guppy Books, and was thrilled to be runner-up. Bella Pearson emailed to say she'd love to work with me editorially, with a view to publishing *Pizza Pete* if it all worked out. Luckily it did!

My highlight – apart from that first email from Bella – was meeting a wonderful group of writing buddies on my Curtis Brown course (hi Dead Pets Society!)

“...what if chilli could make you breathe fire?”



## What three pieces of writing advice would you give a young, aspiring writer?

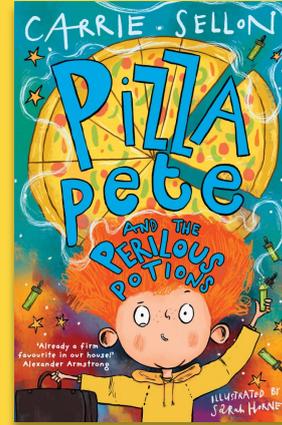
Enter competitions – if you get listed (or win!) it's a massive confidence boost and you never know where it might lead...

Read as much contemporary stuff as you can – not to copy trends (the publishing process takes too long so don't bother), but to see what children are reading *now*.

Keep it short – I keep on reading that librarians and booksellers are asking children's and YA authors to keep the word count down. Attention spans are shorter than ever since Covid.

## Are you working on anything at the moment? Are there more *Pizza Pete* books on the horizon?

I'm currently writing the second *Pizza Pete* book. It comes out in June 24, and the third book in June 25. 



*Pizza Pete and the Perilous Potions* is out now and published by Guppy Books.

## Carrie's Writing Prompt

Imagine you stumble across a mysterious briefcase full of potions, just like Pete and Anna. One of them is labelled with your dream superpower. You open it up, take a sip and... what happens? Maybe it's not what you expected...

Read a review of *Pizza Pete and the Perilous Potions* in our Book Review Corner over on page 28

## CARRIE SELLON

Carrie Sellon lives in Hampshire with her husband, three children, dog friend (Mabel), tortoise friend (Sid), chicken friends (Bluebell and Snowy) and 30,000 bee friends (Andy, Pamela, Ellie, Mark...you get the idea).

She used to travel the world making wildlife films for the BBC, but now, much like Pete, prefers hanging out at home, eating too much pizza. *Pizza Pete and the Perilous Potions* is her first book, out now with Guppy Books.

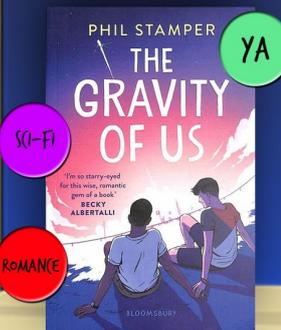
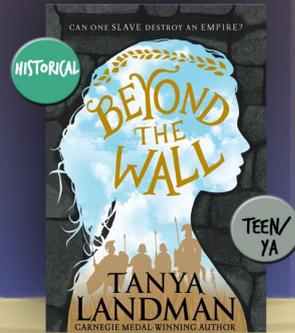
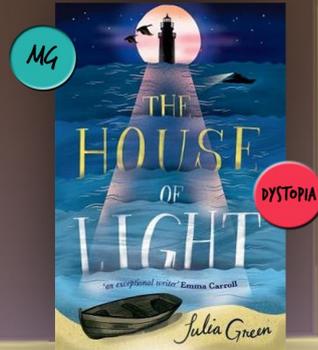
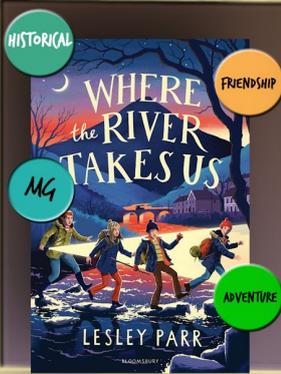
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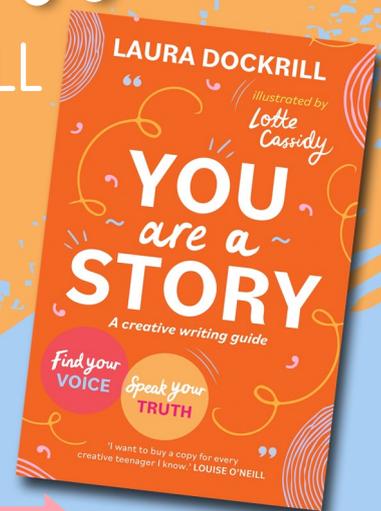
SNEAK PEEK *inside*

# YOU *are a* STORY

BY LAURA DOCKRILL

Illustrated by  
Lotte Cassidy

WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET A SNEAK PEEK  
INSIDE LAURA DOCKRILL'S NEW CREATIVE WRITING  
GUIDE, AND NOW YOU CAN TOO!



## LAURA DOCKRILL

Laura Dockrill is a performance poet and novelist whose inventive and vibrant approach to life is reflected in the vividly imagined worlds she creates. She is author of the Carnegie Medal nominated YA novel *Lorali*, as well as *Big Bones*, and for younger readers, *The Dream House* and *Butterfly Brain*. Laura has appeared on Blue Peter and CBeebies and is a frequent poet performer at festivals such as Glastonbury, Hay, Edinburgh and Latitude. Laura lives in London with her husband and young son.

You can follow her on Twitter @LauraDockrill

# MAGIC-DUST WRITER TIPS

Writing is not just found in the act of writing itself. It's about becoming the bacteria of life, growing in the gaps between . . . well . . . everything! Here are some simple tricks you can do when long writing stints aren't available to you for whatever reason – ways you can keep soaking up the wonder of the world and feed your creative mind while getting on with what you do best: living.

## KEEP EVERYTHING.

Keep everything. In a drawer, a shoebox, a file, an email account. If you've written on the back of an envelope, keep it, take a photo of it. Email it to yourself. Keep all the bits you write on, no matter how scrappy. You never know when the smallest word or sentence could end up being just the word or sentence you're looking for in the future.



## BECOME A MAGPIE

Pinch a little here and a little there. Be an honest thief of essence – of sense – of all the intangible nuances of life. Take ideas from the newspaper, social media, the radio, blend it with gossip overheard in the park, bits borrowed from TV, nick words you like in books, phrases your friends use in conversation. Dial into the frequency of real life (even if you're writing something set in fantasy).



Ask questions when being told a story, interrogate, keep your eyes open, your ears peeled and your brain active and alert. There are stories **EVERYWHERE** happening all the time, **ALL DAY LONG**. Think of your brain like a piece of Velcro, or a net. Spread your wings, sharpen your beak, open your claws, constantly catching what you find. Collect, catch, collage and bring it back to your nest (your writing, obvs). See living as research and the material around you as golden. 

*YOU ARE A STORY IS OUT NOW FROM HOT KEY BOOKS*

# the STORM

by Arden Jones

It's been months since I've seen another live human. A year maybe.

I've lost count of how many 'sleeps' I've had since that horrific night, which has been the only way I've been able to understand how much time has passed. The sun no longer rises or sets, it's as if the storm froze that too.

No one prepared for the Ice Storm. No one knew about it until it was too late and no one survived. Well, apart from me ... I think. I run my fingers across my bronze bangle, which sits unscathed on my wrist. Mum and Mumma gave me this for my seventeenth birthday just before the world ended. They'd found it at an antique market and said that they just knew I would love it. The engraved dragon head glows red, sending heat through my veins, warming every part of my body. It's what's keeping me alive, I'm sure of it.

My stomach rumbles, growling at me to feed it. I've not eaten for days, surviving only on water from the thousands of icicles scattered around. The remains of whatever animal I've been dining on for the last few weeks have finally gone bad. The putrid smell of rotten flesh makes me gag. I know I need to leave this place soon. But the thought of leaving the home I've been able to create with broken stones and sticks – the sturdiest and warmest one so far – to venture into the pitch black of the unknown sends a chill through my now burning veins.



Everything I touch thaws within a split-second, only to turn to ice the moment I lose contact. My hands and knees sink into what I'm guessing is earth. It feels soft, almost feather-like, and from the unusual bright white glow of the dragon's head, I can make out a colour ... green. Grass! I've not found grass, only ice, snow and water since the storm dumped me here. Wherever here is. I can't help but take a big sniff. The fragrant smell reminds me of summer days with my mums. I smile.

The ground stays soft, the dragon's head somehow guiding me with bursts of brightness and warmth. My arms wobble as I drag them one in front of the other as I desperately try to keep my head above the rising snow. Every movement is heavier. My

arms and legs feel as though they're weighted with iron and I'm struggling to breathe. Hot and cold flush through my body, beads of sweat fall from my face, forming holes in the snow in front of me. I can't go on, but shots of heat and light zip up my bangled arm, pushing me forward. I'm drowning in mouthfuls of slush. I can't keep my head above it any longer. I need to stand. But with nothing to feel as a guide, I could end up anywhere. It's better than dead though, I think to myself.

My legs shake as I pull myself up onto my feet, exhausted from hours of crawling. I put my arms out to the sides to steady myself. The light from my bangle turns from white back to red, catching a silhouette of something a few feet in front of me. I head toward it, using the glow to lead the way, and put my hands on the shoulders of what looks like a bronze statue of a hybrid human dragon.

My bangle shines brighter than it ever has, and I can see for miles. All there is around me is white. I can't imagine ever finding another place to make a home, or another living person. I turn in a circle until I'm back facing the statue. My blue eyes lock onto their burning orange stare and I can't look away. Its head is just like the dragon head on my bangle, but its chiselled body is human. From out of nowhere, I'm wrapped in its wings and staring into a gaping mouth of an oncoming blaze of fire.

The searing heat is unbearable as it encompasses me in the hybrid's fiery breath and, within seconds, I crumble. My bangle spins atop my ashes.

It's not the physical shell that makes a mortal. Matter is the building blocks of any living thing, and even when you're dead, or even reduced to ashes, your matter still exists.

My ashes lift off the ground, spinning like a whirlpool. Nausea hits me hard and if I could physically be sick, I would. But I'm merely atoms and dust now.

I feel like I'm floating – weightless, free, alive! Any physical pain from before is gone. Suddenly, I feel something taking shape. I'm no longer floating, but grounded. Solid ice melts under my new feet. A body is forming. I shake my head and stretch out my legs, my bangle still tight where my wrist was, wriggle my claws and stab them into the ground as I look back into the now bronze eyes of the motionless statue.

I bellow a fire-breathing roar, spread my wings and take to the dark sky. 🐉

## Arden Jones

Arden is a working-class writer represented by literary agent Molly Jamieson at United Agents. She lives in Essex with her musician husband, her two children, a crazy cat and an ever-growing TBR pile.

Twitter: @ArdenEJones Instagram: ardenjonesauthor

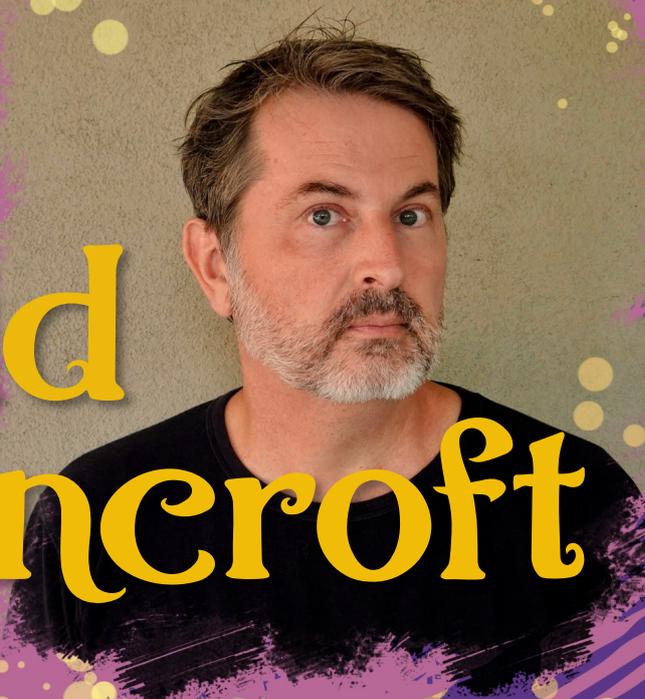
YouTube: @ardenjonesauthor Facebook: Arden Jones Children's Author

[www.ardenejones.com](http://www.ardenejones.com)





# David Wolstencroft



What would you do with an extra hour? Author **David Wolstencroft** tells us all about his fascination with time, and his debut children's book, *The Magic Hour*.

**Your debut children's book, *The Magic Hour*, is set to be a huge release this year. Could you tell us a little more about it?**

Hi! Yes, my book is out June 8th and it's all very exciting. *The Magic Hour* is a page turning fantasy thriller for ages 8 and above - it's about a young girl, Ailsa Craig, who lives in Edinburgh and is always late. It always seems like everyone else has stolen a march on her, is more together, has more time to get things done and stay on top of things. Then, one day, Ailsa stumbles upon a huge secret - there's an extra, 25th hour in the day. One that can be accessed if you know how... so at first, Ailsa is delighted by this news, and is

suddenly able to use that extra time and succeed where she had previously failed. But as we all know - there's no such thing as a free lunch, and a free hour is much the same. It all comes at a horrifying cost. And the moment Ailsa realizes this, she races to save the day - and, indeed, the world.

**Time is such a huge theme in this book and the key to Ailsa's adventures throughout the story. Have you always been fascinated by the concept of time, or wanted to include it in your writing?**

Yes, time is at the centre of the book and it's very much an obsession of

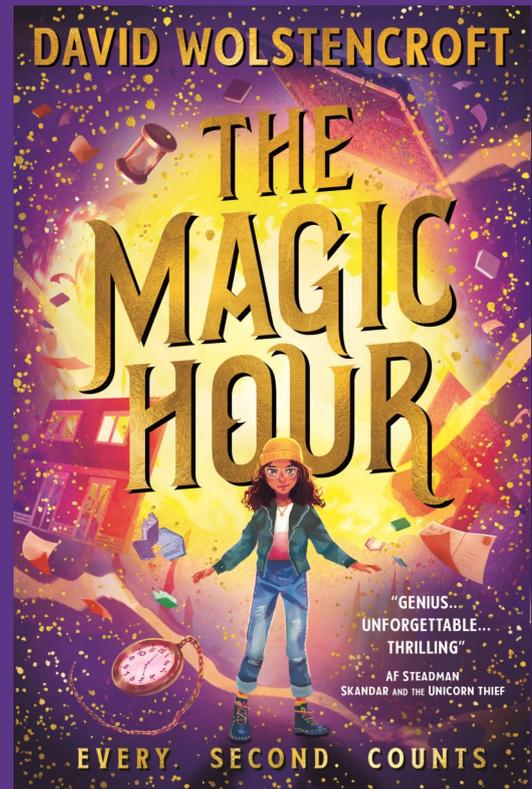
mine. I feel time has become something very bizarre recently and (perhaps because I'm a parent) I hate the idea of time being taken away from young people. I once had a teacher at school who taught me that if you just have 15 minutes, there are so many things you can get done – and that's always stayed with me. I try to see the time we have as more valuable than gold, and I've tried to get that across in the book – but in the form of an exciting, page-turning adventure story!

“I try to see the time we have as more valuable than gold...”

**You are already an established screenwriter and author, but this is your first book for children. Have you always wanted to write for this age group?**

Yes, I have, but it was always a combination of time (here we go again) and nerves... I have always admired children's authors' ability to grab attention, move a reader emotionally, and pitch their stories with focus and energy, all inside a much more economical word count. I wrote two 'grown up' novels earlier in my career which I hugely enjoyed – but nothing

has felt as challenging, or as rewarding, as *The Magic Hour*.



Cover illustration by Alessia Trunfio

**Without giving anything away, the end of *The Magic Hour* leaves readers on a bit of a cliff-hanger. Does this mean Ailsa's adventures might continue with another book?**

It does, and they will! By the end of Ailsa's adventure, she starts to feel as if she has saved the day – but in fact, in solving one huge problem, she's created another, even bigger one.

**Ailsa has a close-knit bond with her grandmother. How important was it to show this throughout the novel?**

Hugely important. I didn't have much of a chance to know my own grandmothers very well – they were taken long before their time. So, I suppose I was channelling some of that yearning

into the story. I also have a child and a mother, and that relationship between them is very special. I also wanted to write about a woman in science who would have had to battle with all manner of obstacles to get where she was – and whose presence, and absence, is acutely felt.

### Do you have any advice for young writers starting out on their own writing journey?

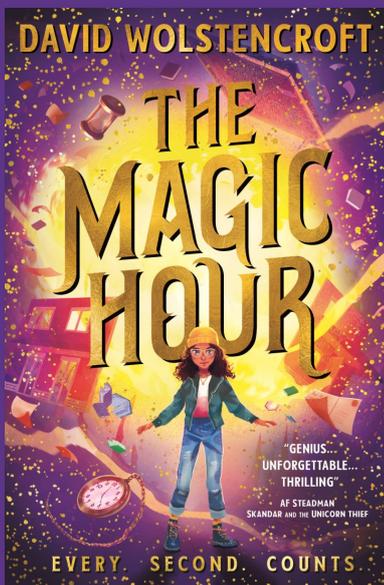
It's the same advice I give myself on a daily basis: write and read as much as you can. Only you can tell a story from

your unique point of view, so embrace it. And crucially – keep going and finish what you start. Because quite often (in fact, universally in my case): you only know what your story is about when you get to the end. 

*The Magic Hour* was published in the UK by Scholastic on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2023

### David's Writing Prompt

*The Magic Hour* plays with the idea of time, something that is familiar to all of us, something we often take for granted. Write a story where you change one thing about the world – small, large, it doesn't matter – and see where it goes!



### David Wolstencroft

**David Wolstencroft** is a multi-award-winning screenwriter and author. After winning the RTS Best Newcomer Award for his first script, *PSYCHOS* (Channel 4), he went on to create and write iconic BAFTA-winning spy drama *SPOOKS* which ran for 10 seasons on BBC One.

His other work includes Scottish BAFTA-nominated legal thriller series *THE ESCAPE ARTIST*, starring David Tennant, and co-creating epic drama *VERSAILLES* (BBC). David is also the author of two bestselling adult thrillers, *GOOD NEWS BAD NEWS* and *CONTACT ZERO* (winner of Ian Fleming Silver Dagger award), both of which are currently in development as feature films. *THE MAGIC HOUR* is his debut children's novel.

# PRINTABLE PAST/FUTURE WRITING PROMPTS

Cut up the dates below and pop them in an envelope.

Do the same with the settings.

Pick one at random from each envelope and create a story set during the time period, and in the setting, that you have selected.

Some combinations may be trickier than others, but let your imagination go wild!

1666



City

1940s

Desert

240 million  
years ago



Forest

2070s

Coast

1984

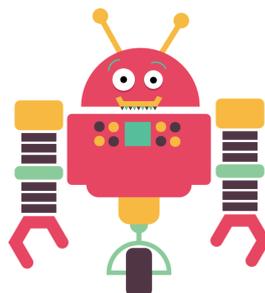


Lake

1530s

Castle

3000

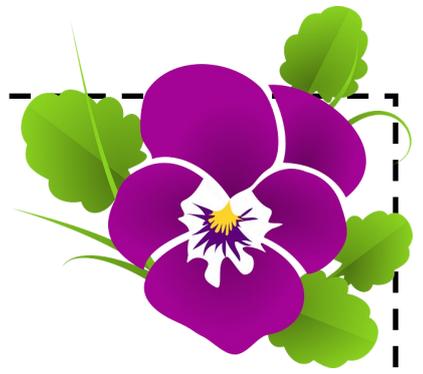


Wasteland





# PRINTABLE WRITING PROMPTS



**Claire Lewis** has written an article all about violets, how they've been used throughout history, and how they could be used in the future.

Taking one of the points below as inspiration, create a piece of writing. This could be a poem, a short story or the start of something longer.

We'd love to read what you come up with. Send it here: [paperboundmagazine@outlook.com](mailto:paperboundmagazine@outlook.com)



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Ancient Greeks used violets to make love potions, sleeping potions, and medicines to make people feel less angry.

The Ancient Britons used violet flowers soaked in goat's milk as a beauty treatment.

The Romans made violet wine. If they drank too much, they wore a crown of violets to cure their headache.

Violets contain a natural painkiller and have been used for hundreds of years to treat bruises, sore throats and painful joints. They also contain chemicals that can help asthma and coughs.

Sweet violets smell nice, but their perfume seems to go away after just one sniff. This is because the flowers contain chemicals called ionones which makes your nose unable to smell for a short time. Researchers think ionones could be used in drugs to help fight cancer one day.

### CLAIRE LEWIS

Claire is a picture book author/illustrator who lives in Mid Devon with her husband, teenage sons and a charmingly disobedient border terrier. She is represented by Kate Scarborough of Tyild's Agency, and her poems and illustrations have appeared in *The Toy* and *The Dirigible Balloon*. When she's not writing or drawing, she can be found doing design and display work for her local independent non-profit bookshop or doing 'Sound of Music' impressions in the wild landscapes of nearby Dartmoor.

You can find out more about Claire on her website: [www.claireflewis.com](http://www.claireflewis.com).

Follow Claire on Twitter: @ClaireFLewis and Instagram: @claire\_f\_lewis



# Book Review Corner

THANKS SO MUCH TO ALL OUR REVIEWERS. IF YOU'D LIKE TO WRITE A REVIEW FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE, CHECK OUT THE DETAILS ON OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.COM/SUBMIT](http://WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.COM/SUBMIT)

NEW RELEASE

## HOW FAR WE'VE COME BY JOYCE EFIA HARMER

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

*How Far We've Come* is a significant time-slip YA novel that deals with the legacy of slavery and the horrendous human acts that occurred - both in 1834, where the novel begins, and in the 21st century.

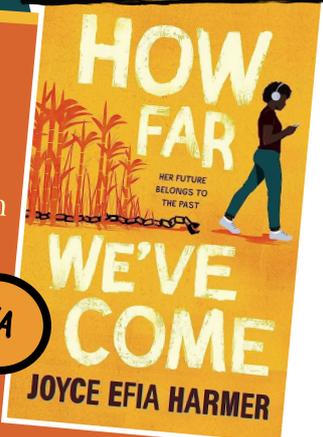
It's 1834 and Obah is enslaved on a plantation in Barbados, where she dreams of freedom. A strange boy appears and promises to make those dreams a reality. Jacob is from the 21st century, and is desperate to give Obah a better life. When Obah arrives in the future, she is overwhelmed with the changes in the world, but it isn't long before she starts to wonder if things have really changed that much at all.

This novel examines what it would be like to jump forward in time and compare the world in terms of equality and freedom. It references contemporary issues and incidents, making it uniquely relevant and timely, and doesn't shy away from the horror and realities of our own history. Obah is both inspiring and hopeful, as we follow her thoughts and emotions from one time period to the next.

This is an engaging, thought-provoking book, with strong themes of friendship and freedom. The 1834 Barbados plantation setting is particularly vivid. It looks at today through a different lens and asks not only how far we've come, but how far we still have to go.

Note: this book deals with some mature issues and themes.

*HOW FAR WE'VE COME IS PUBLISHED BY SIMON AND SCHUSTER AND OUT NOW*



MORE REVIEWS

## PIZZA PETE AND THE PERILOUS POTIONS BY CARRIE SELLON

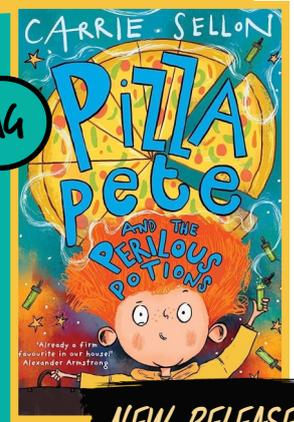
REVIEWED BY STEVE BLACKMAN (TWITTER: @BLACKMANG6)

In *Pizza Pete and the Perilous Potions*, twelve-year-old Pete has a fear of going outside. But competition from robot-assisted Fox Pizza means he and his dad only have four days to make enough money to save their Little Pizza Place. If they fail, Pete will HAVE to face his fears when they're forced to move out.

With his best friend – the irrepressible Anna – Pete discovers an old briefcase full of potions that – when sprinkled on pizzas – lead to magical results. Pete's granny does cartwheels, Useless the pesky, farty dog breathes fire, and Anna's clones fill the shop. People can't get enough of the pizzas, but will it be enough to save the shop? And when the pizza flour settles, will it be the potions that finally give Pete the confidence to go outside again, or was it within him all along?

*Pizza Pete* is a pacy, perfectly-plotted story that blends laugh-out-loud capers with moments of genuine tenderness. Full of loveable characters – skilfully brought to life in the illustrations of **Sarah Horne** – this stunning debut from author Carrie Sellon deserves its place as a future classic.

PIZZA PETE AND THE PERILOUS POTIONS IS PUBLISHED BY GUPPY BOOKS AND OUT NOW



## JACK AND THE TIME MACHINE BY SCOTT JONES

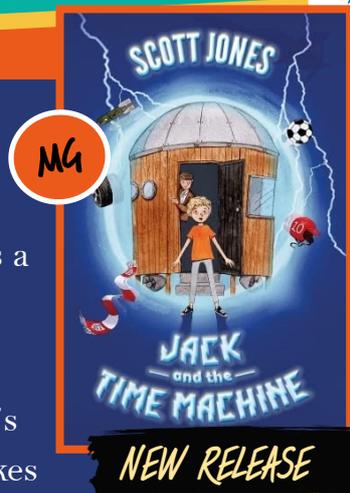
REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

Set in Cornwall, this debut middle grade novel from Scott Jones is a delightful romp across time, filled with adventure, friendship and plenty of laughter.

From the strength of the grandparent-grandchild bond that's anchored throughout the story, to Grandad's habit of cracking jokes – paralleled with Jack's quick-fired wit right back at him – *Jack and the Time Machine* is told through both the voice of Jack and his granddad's younger self, opening up Jack's world wider than he thought possible – all within the walls of his granddad's garden shed. Featuring snapshots of World War II, as well as some of the most unforgettable sporting moments in history, this book is a charming read and already a firm favourite with younger readers, highlighting themes of family, loyalty and what it means to achieve your dreams.

This book is also filled with gorgeous artwork and illustrations by **Lucy Smith**, who illustrated the spring 2021 issue of PaperBound.

JACK AND THE TIME MACHINE IS PUBLISHED BY HERMITAGE PRESS AND OUT NOW



## THE TREASURE HUNTERS BY LISA THOMPSON

REVIEWED BY CARRIE SELTON

Vincent is distraught when he gets picked to go on a wilderness activity weekend. His parents are desperate for him to go and make friends, but he doesn't get on with the other three kids and he's embarrassed about his dyspraxia.

The band of misfits get off to a terrible start and almost give up, until one of them reveals the real reason she was keen to join – there's treasure buried in a nearby mountain. But someone else is determined to get to the loot before them. The classmates will have to rally together and work as a team if there's any hope of stopping the thief and finding the treasure.

*The Treasure Hunters* has a wonderful cast of flawed characters, learning to overcome their challenges and bonding in the face of mud, blisters and booby traps. At the heart of the story is the struggle of a young boy to accept himself for who he is. If you enjoy fast-paced, heart-warming adventures, this book is for you. Wonderfully illustrated by **Gemma Correll**.

THE TREASURE HUNTERS IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND OUT NOW



RECENT RELEASE

## THE METAMORPHOSIS OF EMMA MURRY BY REBECCA LAXTON

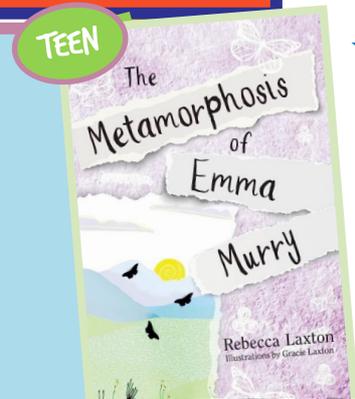
REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

This book is a wonderful take on the importance of staying true to who you are and fighting for what you believe in, while balancing pressure from outsiders' influence, friendships and first crushes in a small town North Carolina setting.

When thirteen-year-old environmental club member, Emma Murry, discovers plans to build a ski resort in her hometown, she determines to battle the developers at every turn, with best friend Sophie at her side. But when it turns out her Instagram crush, Jeb Scott, and his dad are the ones behind building the resort, she decides to make friends with Jeb in hopes of changing their minds. However, if she fails, the endangered butterfly garden she's worked hard to protect will be destroyed, not to mention the mission to protect a possible red wolf on the loose.

But is everything *really* as it seems on Black Mountain? With hints of the supernatural paired with a style like Sarah Dessen, this book is a brilliant read, and a great example of one which bridges the gap between middle grade and YA. Including lovely illustrations from **Gracie Laxton**.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF EMMA MURRY IS PUBLISHED BY WARREN PUBLISHING, INC. AND OUT NOW



RECENT RELEASE



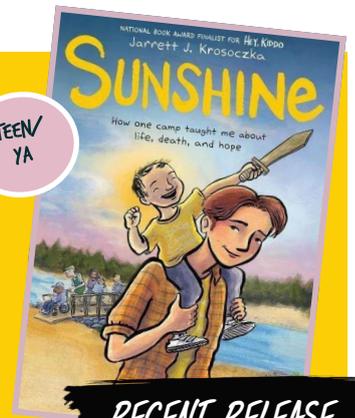
## SUNSHINE BY JARRETT J. KROSOCZKA

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

*Sunshine* is a heart warming graphic novel recounting the story of the author's time as a camp councillor at a camp for seriously ill children. It shows a snapshot of the author's teenage years, and how Camp Sunshine changes the life of Jarrett and the kids who attend.

The colourful illustrations are lovely, capturing the joy and the sadness where words wouldn't suffice, and the characters will stick with you long after it is over. If you are looking for an inspirational story and want to get into graphic novels, *Sunshine* is an accessible, beautifully produced book.

*SUNSHINE IS PUBLISHED BY SCHOLASTIC AND IS OUT NOW!*



RECENT RELEASE

## WENDINGTON JONES AND THE MISSING TREE

BY DANIEL DOCKERY

REVIEWED BY PAPERBOUND

This is a thrilling adventure novel with a high-stakes chase across the ocean, from London to Australia in 1920, aboard a huge ocean liner – complete with a dash of exquisite prose and dialogue, along with a bundle of mysterious circumstances and an outspoken, witty protagonist, Wendington Jones.

Whenever 15 year old Wendington Jones finds herself in trouble (which is pretty often), she lists what she's good at so as not to feel hopeless. But when she's expelled from boarding school, she also soon discovers that her mother, a famous worldwide explorer and writer, has tragically died in a car crash. Devastated, Wendington becomes determined to finish the plans her mother started to process her grief, and embarks on a mission to save the lost half of her mother's recent manuscript from her most dazzling adventure, which holds the key to secrets neither could have ever imagined. But, with the news of Wendington's mother's death and the missing manuscript, Wendington's journey becomes fraught with obstacles and soon she must learn who to trust and who to avoid – with dire consequences should she get it wrong.

If you enjoyed *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and the Enola Holmes mysteries, you'll absolutely love *Wendington Jones and the Missing Tree*. With wonderful charm – as well as an English newt companion – this is a must read.

*WENDINGTON JONES AND THE MISSING TREE IS PUBLISHED BY UCLAN PUBLISHING AND OUT NOW*



RECENT RELEASE



# TWIGS BREAKING

BY CADAN

Twigs breaking upon my feet, looking for clay.  
Around me, the dark narrow passage connected to a dark,  
damp hut, unfolding debris.  
Beneath the ground, weird noises coming from the dirt.  
A black, brown hole; unfurling a cute badger.

We worked with schools across Cornwall recently for **The Wild Escape Project**, a creative initiative led by Art Fund, and partnered with museums across the UK, to help inspire children to connect with wildlife and natural habitats.

We invited participating schools to enter a writing competition and, after a very hard decision, picked a winning entry, paired with a beautiful illustration.

Congratulations to Cadan for writing the winning entry 'Twigs Breaking' which we absolutely LOVED reading, and to Austeja for the accompanying illustration!

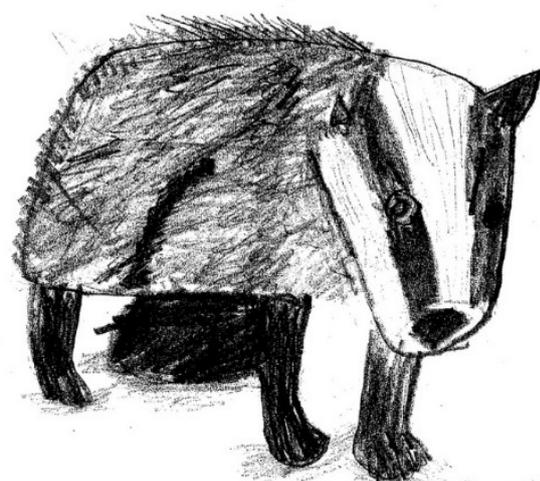


ILLUSTRATION BY AUSTEJA



I built a whirring Time Machine,  
with coloured flashing lights.  
I'd worked on it for ages  
and stayed up on countless nights.

At last my machine was finished  
so I sat down in its seat.  
I turned it on, it came to life,  
I thought, *wow this is neat!*

I set the on-board dial  
to one day in the past.  
I flicked the switch, buckled up,  
and watched time fly by so fast.

Nothing seemed that different.  
My room looked as it had.  
Had my machine worked properly?  
And then I heard my dad.

'Hurry up,' he said, 'or you'll be late.  
Your bus will be here soon.'  
It was 8am on Friday,  
no longer Saturday at noon.

So I now reset the dial,  
this time a few years past.  
I flicked the switch, held on tight,  
and waited. Then at last...

Everything was different.  
How could this even be?  
I'd set my dial for forty years  
instead of just for three.

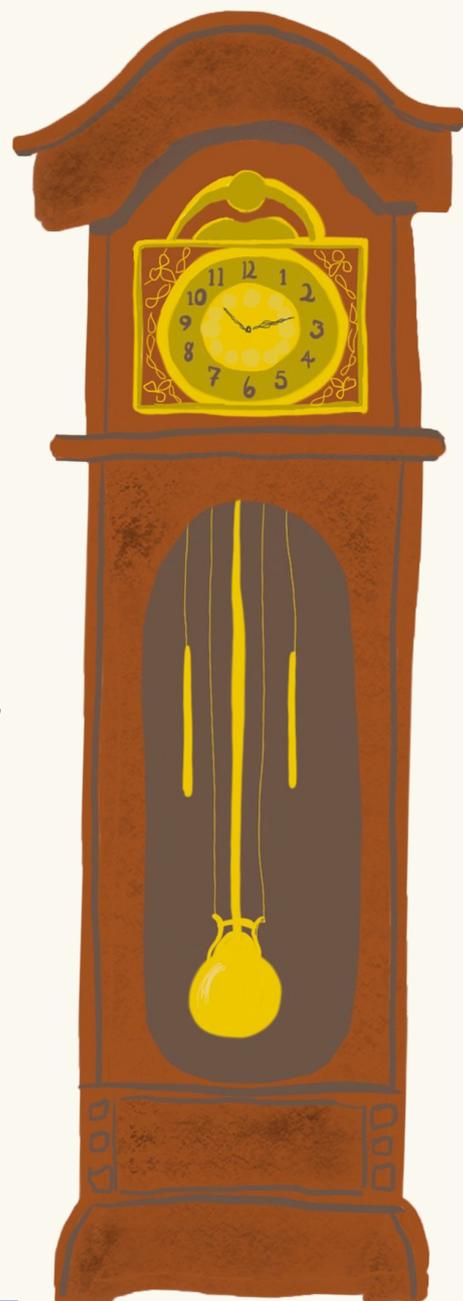
I heard a groaning, moaning sound,  
and where my machine had stopped,  
a grown-up man was lying down  
and I was parked on top.

He looked just like my father  
but his hair was going grey.  
I jumped down to help him  
but did not know what to say.

'My name is Jim,' he whispered.  
I knew things had turned out bad.  
For this man was not my father,  
This man was my Grandad.

*Oh no, I thought, this cannot be!  
This old man must not die.  
For if dad's not born and marries mum  
My end is surely nigh.*

I tried to keep him breathing –  
I really did persist –  
But soon his heart stopped beating  
And I ceased to exist...



## Dorian Hampton

Dorian's written poetry since an early age and, over the years, most of it ended up in the bin. Some say that this policy should continue today. He only writes when inspired to do so and having a literary magazine asking for ideas based on a given subject is just the inspiration he needs.



*The Time Machine* includes illustrations from

**Imogen Hartland.**

Find out more about Imogen on page 52

# Three tips for giving great feedback on writing

by Hannah Friend



One of my first jobs as a journalist was working at the Guardian, a large newspaper and online news organisation based in London. It was a great job and my family loved to tell people about it because it sounded impressive. Like all jobs, there were good parts and bad parts. The worst part was the way my editor gave feedback on my writing.

In a big office with no private rooms, he would loudly read out all of my mistakes, including every bit of punctuation or spelling that was out of place. He would laugh out loud at things I had done wrong. It made my face go red and hot, and I felt like I wasn't a good writer. I didn't know this at the time, but it was because of the way he gave the feedback. He was focussing on every small error, while not saying what he liked or what he thought would help me to improve. This unhelpful feedback didn't help my writing or my confidence as a writer.

It took me a while to gain confidence again

in my writing, and not to get upset when people gave me feedback. Now I know that no one writes a first draft perfectly, and that's okay. That's why we get feedback, and all writers do the same. Now I see feedback as a gift, it's to make our work better, and we always have a choice to say thanks and ignore it.

So I always try my best to not be like my old editor when giving feedback to my writing friends. We improve our writing by getting other people to read it and tell us what they think. And the best way to do this is by being truthful, useful, and kind.



# Here are my top tips:

## Useful

When giving feedback, it is helpful to ask questions if you don't understand something in the writing. It is also a great way to gently make suggestions for word changes and changes to the plot, as a question respects the writer and their choice to take your suggestion or not. Always remember writing is personal and subjective, so if someone doesn't use your feedback, that's totally fine.

Don't say: *'This part is rubbish.'*

Do say: *'Who is this character talking to?' or 'Can you add another sentence to make this clearer to the reader?'*

### Hannah Friend

Hannah Friend is an aspiring picture book author. She works in marketing at a social enterprise, and is also a trained journalist and chef. Her favourite colour is orange.

Follow Hannah on Instagram:  
[@hannahfriendauthor](https://www.instagram.com/hannahfriendauthor)

[hannahfriendauthor.com](http://hannahfriendauthor.com)



## Kind

Let's start with kindness: this doesn't mean lie (see the last point), but it does mean say what you like in the writing. Sometimes we feel overprotective and shy when we share something we've made. This is true for all creative people and writers, so remember this when you give feedback. Always make sure you balance your comments with things you loved and suggestions that are useful (see the next point).

Don't say: *'This part doesn't make any sense!' or 'I can't believe you spelt this word wrong!'*

Do say: *'I love your main character and I really cared about what happened to them. But the story felt a bit lonely in the middle, could you include a friend or a dog friend they meet along the way?'*



## Truthful

When we share our writing with others, there is an element of trust that goes with it. We trust that people won't be mean, and we also need to trust that the feedback they are giving is what they really think. When you tell the truth about what you love, any questions you have, and try your best to make helpful suggestions you are helping your fellow writer to make their writing the best it can be. 

# THE BALLAD OF THE PLAGUE CHILD

by Carole Bromley



We were tourists on the lookout  
for something good to eat  
so we stopped and looked in cafes  
at the end of College Street.

My mum and dad and grandma  
were talking yack, yack, yack  
so I wandered past York Minster  
to a small house round the back.

*Let me out, oh, let me out!  
Why dun't no-one hear me?  
I'm all alone, I'm clemmed, I'm clemmed  
and nobody comes near me.*

Something made me stop there  
and linger in that place  
when, at a first-floor window,  
I thought I saw a face.

The clothes were so old fashioned,  
she wore a lacy cap  
her face was thin and frightened,  
her hands lay in her lap.

*Let me out, oh, let me out!  
Why dun't no-one hear me?  
I'm all alone, I'm clemmed, I'm clemmed  
and nobody comes near me.*

but just as I was looking  
she vanished from my sight  
and I was left there wondering  
at this odd trick of the light.

I overheard a tour guide;  
'...a family bricked inside  
to stop the plague from spreading,  
it's said both parents died.

*Let me out, oh, let me out!  
Why dun't no-one hear me?  
I'm all alone, I'm clemmed, I'm clemmed  
and nobody comes near me.*

A child, they say, was trapped in there  
and starving in that place,  
some say they've seen a figure,  
others a hungry face.

The child was only six years old,  
Imagine. Scared and small.  
See the lack of windows,  
note the bricked-up wall.'

*Let me out, oh, let me out!  
Why dun't no-one hear me?  
I'm all alone, I'm clemmed, I'm clemmed  
and nobody comes near me.*

The tour moved on. I walked away  
but couldn't eat a bite.  
I never breathed a word of this  
or closed my eyes all night.

She haunts me, still, the plague girl,  
I never will forget her  
crying out to be released  
when nobody would let her.

*Let me out, oh, let me out!  
Why dun't no-one hear me?  
I'm all alone, I'm clemmed, I'm clemmed  
and nobody comes near me.*

So, if you walk down College Street,  
you might see as you pass,  
a hand upon the window pane  
a nose pressed to the glass,

or maybe just an empty house  
where silver pigeons fly  
and settle again in Minster Yard  
as ghost walks hurry by.

*Let me out, oh, let me out!  
Why dun't no-one hear me?  
I'm all alone, I'm clemmed, I'm clemmed  
and nobody comes near me.*



In the Middle Ages at the time of the Bubonic Plague, infected people could not leave their homes and sometimes the authorities would seal up the doors and windows to prevent the spread of the disease. The Plague House at 5 College Street, York is said to be haunted by a little girl who was trapped in there after both her parents died.

\*clemmed is Yorkshire dialect for starving.

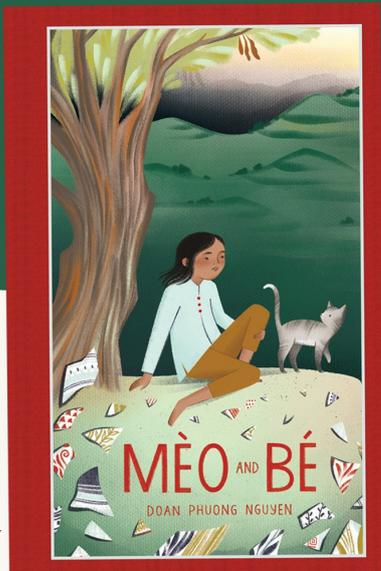
## Carole Bromley

Carole Bromley lives in York, UK and writes for both adults and children. Her children's poems have appeared in anthologies from MacMillan, Emma Press and Nosy Crow and in *The Caterpillar* (winner of Caterpillar Prize 2022) *Tyger, Tyger, The Toy, Dirigible Balloon*, Little Thoughts Press as well as in her first children's collection, *Blast Off!*

Twitter: @carolebromley1  
carolebromleypoetry.co.uk



# DOAN PHUONG NGUYEN



Cover  
illustrated by  
Jesse White

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SHARE AN INTERVIEW WITH MIDDLE GRADE AUTHOR **DOAN PHUONG NGUYEN**, WHERE SHE TALKS ABOUT HER GORGEOUS AND HEARTFELT DEBUT NOVEL, *MÈO AND BÉ*, SET DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

**MÈO AND BÉ IS A REALLY BEAUTIFUL STORY SET DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, WHICH FOLLOWS 11 YEAR OLD BÉ AND HER THREE LEGGED KITTEN TOWARDS SAFETY. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THIS BOOK?**

*Mèo and Bé* is an upper middle grade novel about an eleven-year-old girl growing up in the 1960s in the middle of the Vietnam War, and her three-legged cat, as they suffer the hardships and atrocities of war.

Bé is living a happy life with her single mother in a village in Vietnam, but when the war becomes worse, they have to

move into her father's home. Her father is married to Big Mother, a vicious woman who hates and resents Bé's existence. After her mother has to leave her behind to find work, Bé is tormented by her stepmother and soon loses her voice and ability to speak. Her only solace is her kitten, Mèo. Not long after, Big Mother sells Bé, and our protagonist finds herself in an underground bunker with other imprisoned women.

Bé is too young to understand what's happening, but soon, she makes friends with another girl her age, and she finds a

new found family in the women she's imprisoned with. However, the war is becoming dangerously close, and one day, the village where they are being held burns, and the women help the girls escape amidst the chaos. Can Bé and Mèo, and their newfound friend, Ngâm, find their way to a safe place they can call home — even though the world is literally exploding all around them? This is a literary work, full of kindness and compassion amidst the devastation of war.

**WAS THERE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT INSPIRED YOU TO TELL THIS STORY?**

This novel is partly inspired by my adopted aunt's childhood. She suffered at the hands of her stepmother (Big Mother) after her mother abandoned her. The seed of my aunt's story inspired me to think more closely about the Vietnam War, the hardships that some children had to suffer through, and as I thought about my aunt's childhood, *Mèo and Bé* came into being.

**WE LOVE HEARING ABOUT WRITERS' CREATIVE HABITS. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR WRITING PROCESS, OR WRITING ROUTINE?**

I try to write every day. However, I'm a mom of a young child and a full-time photographer, so sometimes I fail at writing every day. But I do attempt daily writing, whenever my schedule allows. Sometimes, however, I do have to take

writing breaks when I get stuck to help refuel my creative brain. I'm not an author who can write 365 days a year. I have to take breaks to read, enjoy watching movies and TV series, and just enjoy life. All of these experiences help inspire me. Plus, my brain has to recharge, or else writing feels like a boring job, and I don't want writing to ever feel like a job! I do tend to be a pantsner when writing. I love the journey of seeing the book unfold as I write. But, recently, I've started to outline major plot points for ideas using the Save the Cat method, and that's been helpful!

**YOU WERE ABLE TO DRAW ON A LOT OF YOUR OWN FAMILY MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES AND HERITAGE FOR THIS BOOK. DID YOU FIND ANY PARTS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS DIFFICULT?**

“ I TRY TO STRIKE A GOOD BALANCE SO THAT READERS CAN ENJOY THE STORY BUT FEEL GROUNDED IN THE HISTORICAL BACKDROP. ”

Writing a historical novel is always a challenge. Trying to balance the research with the narrative can be overwhelming. In first drafts, I feel like I tend to describe everything I've learned and it ends up being more like a historical textbook than a story, but as I revise and refine, I try to strike a good balance so that readers can enjoy the story but feel grounded in the historical backdrop. For this book, I feel like I spent an equal amount of researching as I did writing. I tend to be an author who researches as I write. I research whatever it is that I am working on at that moment. I am not sure if this is a good thing or a bad

thing, but that's my process. Some writing days, I do so much research that I feel like I'm doing very minimal writing.

**LOTS OF BOOKS SET DURING THE VIETNAM WAR CAN BE FROM THE AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW. DO YOU THINK IT'S EXTRA IMPORTANT TO BE ABLE TO SHARE BÉ'S STORY?**

The Vietnam War is so much more than just the battles and the political climate. There are many stories from a soldier's perspective, or for the families in America with loved ones fighting overseas. There are also novels set at the end of the war, and those about immigrating to other countries after the war. I wanted to discuss a different perspective.

When I was looking up comparative titles to read, I couldn't find any novels that were set during the war itself. So I decided that I should set my story in the 1960s, before America became involved, about a girl living in the atmosphere of this climate.

In my novel, we see Bé's family hiding after dark in a room with only kerosene lamps lighting their space. This was a common occurrence during the war, where you stayed hidden and hoped the Viet Cong didn't know you were home, and they'd leave you alone. This scene was inspired by the stories that my Vietnamese grandmother told me.

I wanted to share this with readers because the fear of living in a war zone isn't often discussed from a Vietnamese perspective, and I wanted to share that with a Western audience.

**WE ARE SO EXCITED TO READ ANYTHING ELSE YOU WRITE. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU ARE WORKING ON RIGHT NOW, OR ANY OTHER BOOKS WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO?**

I have a middle grade verse novel coming out in fall 2024, and I am so excited for readers to read it! It's loosely based on my own experiences growing up in Vietnam, and then immigrating to America as an elementary aged child. 

## DOAN PHUONG NGUYEN

Doan Phuong Nguyen was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the United States when she was in elementary school. After growing up in the South, she settled in the Midwest.

Doan Phuong loves anything pink and cute but enjoys writing incredibly sad, emotionally evocative novels. She received her MFA in Creative Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. This is her first middle grade novel.

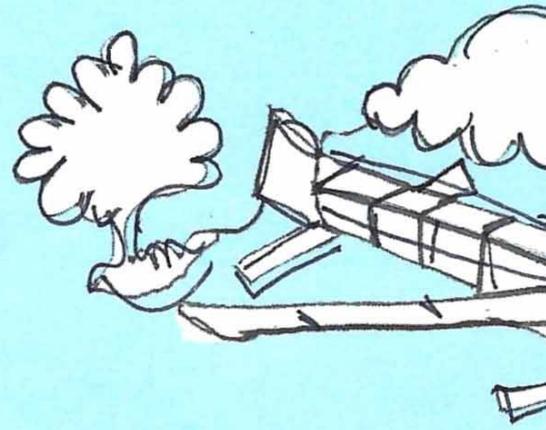
Find her at [doanphuong.com](http://doanphuong.com)

*Mèo and Bé* is out now and published by Tu Books, an imprint of Lee and Low, the largest multicultural children's book publisher in the United States.

### WRITING PROMPT:

Close your eyes and imagine what it would be like if you were stuck in a war-torn country. Write about where you would hide, and what you would eat to survive.

# QUIZZES

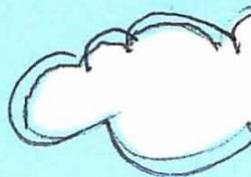


DON'T FORGET TO UNSCRAMBLE THE ANAGRAMS ON THE NEXT PAGE.  
CLUE: THEY ARE ALL BOOK TITLES ON OUR PAST AND FUTURE BOOKSHELF!

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CAN YOU FIND ALL THE WORDS IN  
THE WORDSEARCH ABOVE?

HISTORICAL	SETTING
DYSTOPIAN	DESTRUCTION
PAST	UTOPIA
FUTURE	TIME TRAVEL
DINOSAURS	SPACE
TECHNOLOGY	ERA
WAR	





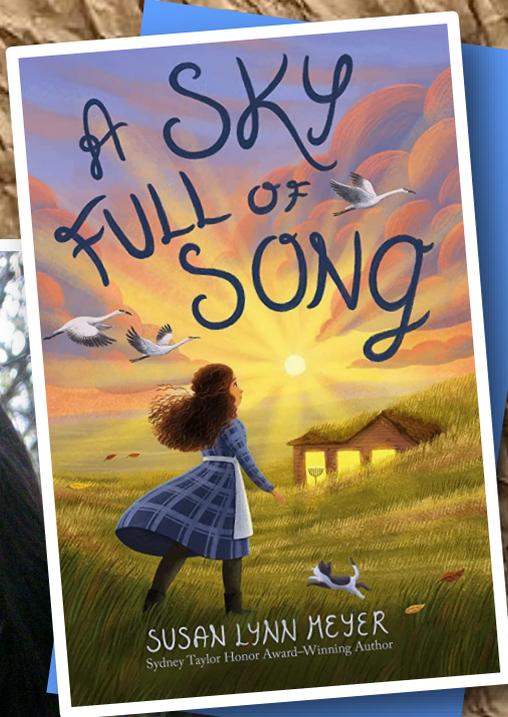
1. RETRIEVE WEATHER HUSKS

2. HATED TRENDS

3. YOUR FAVE TIGHTS

Illustration by the  
brilliant...  
**Jayne  
Leadbetter**  
You can find out more  
about Jayne on page 52

# Susan Lynn Meyer



Susan Lynn Meyer joined us to chat about her brilliant new book for middle grade readers, *A Sky Full of Song*, a story of hope, resilience and belonging, set on the American prairie at the turn of the 20th century.

Susan Lynn Meyer is the author of three middle-grade historical novels — *A Sky Full of Song*, *Black Radishes*, and *Skating with the Statue of Liberty* — as well as three picture books. Her works have won numerous honours, including the Jane Addams Peace Association Children’s Book Award, the Sydney Taylor Honor Award, the New York State Charlotte Award, and many others. Her novels have also been translated into German and Chinese.

She is Professor of English and Creative Writing at Wellesley College and lives outside Boston.

**A SKY FULL OF SONG IS A BOOK FULL OF HOPE WHICH ALSO TACKLES HARDSHIP FOR THE MAIN CHARACTER, SHOSHANA, AND HER FAMILY. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE MORE ABOUT IT?**

In 1905, Shoshana, an eleven-year-old girl, comes to North Dakota where she lives in a dugout on the prairie with her parents and her four brothers and sisters. It's a completely new world for her, because her family are new arrivals who have fled the persecution they experienced as Jews in the Russian Empire. It is a beautiful but challenging landscape and the family also faces antisemitism in America. Shoshana and her older sister Libke, formerly very close friends, feel very differently about how hard they should try to fit in and how much they should adapt to this new world. Shoshana wants to, and Libke doesn't—and this causes a painful rift between the sisters.

**WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK, AND DID YOU ALWAYS SET OUT TO WRITE AN AMERICAN FRONTIER STORY?**

One day, I was looking at a photo of a family in front of a dugout in Oklahoma and I suddenly began to wonder if any Jews had ever homesteaded on the American prairie. It seemed a very incongruous idea, given what we see (and don't see) in Laura Ingalls Wilder's books and Willa Cather's. Could there have been any Jews homesteading on the prairie with Laura and Mary

Ingalls? I began researching the question and found out that yes, some Jewish refugees from persecution abroad, especially in Eastern Europe, did take advantage of the Homestead Act. It happened mostly in the early twentieth century and mostly in North and South Dakota. I read and read—and then the idea for this novel came to me!

**READERS HAVE ALREADY DESCRIBED THIS BOOK AS A 'MODERN CLASSIC'. WHAT INGREDIENTS DO YOU THINK MAKE A RICH STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE?**

“ I read and read — and then the idea for this novel came to me! ”

Thank you! That is so wonderful to hear! This novel is obviously historical fiction, so it is based on an experience very far from my own in time. But to make the novel “breathe,” I had to enter deeply into Shoshana's experiences in whatever way I

could. In some places, the novel grows out of my own experiences transposed in time. Shoshana's awe at the grandeur of the prairie grew out of my own feelings in Great Plains landscapes. I just couldn't get over how much sky there was when I first saw the prairie—in all directions, there is nothing but endless sky!

Shoshana is from a family with five children, and I grew up in a family of six kids. So I know sibling dynamics in a large family very well! The Rabbi Hillel / standing-on-on-foot competition, for example, in which Anshel pushes Libke over backwards when she is bearing his record—well, I can't resist saying that this was inspired by a somewhat

similar incident in my own childhood and that I still have the scar on my elbow to prove it!

I also think it is important for a novel to tap into deep, universal human feelings. Shoshana's experiences as a Jewish refugee at this time are very particular. But the novel is also about a struggle we all go through at one point or another and often very painfully at this age. Do we change and accommodate and sometimes distort ourselves and our beliefs to fit into a group or do we hold onto what is distinctive and particular about ourselves?

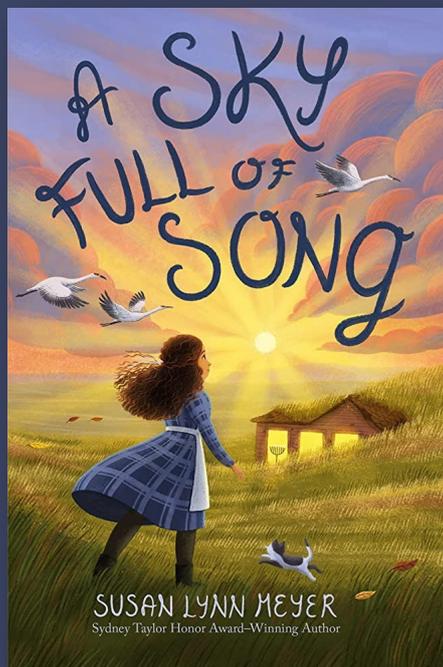
“It is important for a novel to tap into deep, universal human feelings.”

**DID YOU HAVE TO DO A LOT OF RESEARCH FOR THIS BOOK (THE HISTORY, THE LANDSCAPE, THE PERSECUTION OF JEWISH FAMILIES AT THIS TIME, CULTURAL TRADITIONS, ETC.)?**

I did—I love doing research! I read as many memoirs of Jews living in this time and place as I could find and also some by non-Jewish settlers. (Some of these memoirs were quite grim). I read works of history about homesteading, about the situation of Jews in the Russian Empire, and about the displacement of Native Americans. I found that the North Dakota

Historical Society has oral histories from this region, and I listened to many of them. I also asked many people many questions: scholars of Jewish history and culture, scholars of Yiddish, Ukrainian immigrants, and Native sensitivity readers, as well as a rabbi.

Here's the kind of question I tend to run into while writing historical fiction. I had written a sentence about the next-door neighbour in Liubashevka (in Ukraine) helping out while Mama is injured by washing the twins' diapers—which their older sisters are none too eager to do! Then I began wondering whether the babies would have actually worn diapers. Even the quite knowledgeable scholars of Eastern European Jewish history whom I consulted didn't know—scholars don't tend to know history in such granular, intimate detail, the details of daily life. But through research I was able to find a mention of diapers in a grim account of a woman caring for illegitimate babies in the general area of Ukraine where the family lives. So I learned that yes, diapers were used.



Cover illustration by Ramona Kaulitzki

WERE YOU INSPIRED BY ANY OTHER WRITERS, OR MEDIA, BEFORE WRITING *A SKY FULL OF SONG*?

I was probably most influenced by the Laura Ingalls Wilder books, in her description of a homesteading childhood and by Willa Cather. You may notice some reworkings of Wilder in various ways—and there’s a nod to her when Shoshana’s friend Evie mentions what her “Auntie Laura” says about cats!

WE CAN’T WAIT TO READ WHAT YOU WRITE NEXT! CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ELSE YOU ARE WORKING ON RIGHT NOW, OR WHETHER ANY NEW BOOKS ARE ON THE HORIZON?

Thank you! Hmm. I feel a little superstitious about sharing too much about my next novels, but I’ll say that I’m working on two, one about a teenage maid working in 1913 at a women’s college in Massachusetts and also one set in the present day about a girl from the US who goes to live for a few months in a village the UK with her great aunt and uncle. 

*A SKY FULL OF SONG* IS OUT NOW, PUBLISHED BY UNION SQUARE KIDS.

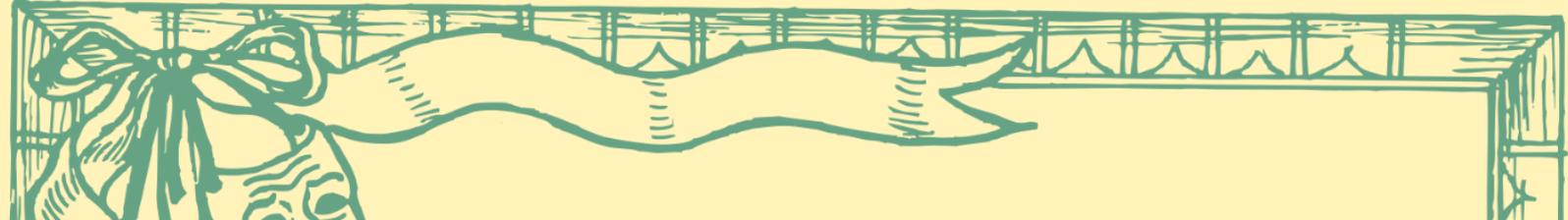
### Susan's Writing Prompt:

AN INCIDENT IN THE BOOK WHERE ZISSEL ESCAPES IN THE PAY TOILETS AT THE TRAIN STATION WAS INSPIRED BY A STORY MY MOTHER TOLD ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TO HER AS A CHILD!

FOR THIS PROMPT, ASK YOUR PARENTS TO TELL YOU ABOUT SOMETHING FUNNY THAT HAPPENED TO THEM WHEN THEY WERE KIDS, OR ABOUT A TIME THEY MISBEHAVED WHEN THEY WERE KIDS.

WRITE A STORY WHERE SOMETHING SIMILAR HAPPENS TO THE MAIN CHARACTER.

We’d love to read what you come up with! Send your writing to [paperboundmagazine@outlook.com](mailto:paperboundmagazine@outlook.com)



# Will and his Quill

by Val Harris

## Val Harris

Val lives in Surrey with a horse, a husband and a family nearby. She writes poetry for young people (and grown-ups). Her poetry book, *A Classroom of Stars*, was published last year, and she has poems published in various magazines and online poetry resources.



Follow Val on Twitter: [@dragontripper](#) and  
Instagram: [@valpoet](#)



Will, with his quill, was a famous writer.  
He wrote and performed for the Queen, to delight her.

He came from a place called Stratford-on-Avon,  
but he spent many years in his London haven.

He wrote sonnets and ballads and plays, did our Will,  
scratching away with his goose-feather quill.

Plays about Kings with murderous themes.  
Humour and tragedy, fairies and dreams.

His plays were performed in a place called the Globe,  
where he strutted the stage in his doublet and hose.

The Queen came to see him and Will was delighted.  
But alas, though quite famous, poor Will wasn't knighted.

When the old Queen died, he performed for the King:  
Macbeth and Hamlet – *'The play's the thing...'*

But demands from the King, were too much for Will,  
who scribbled so hard, that he blunted his quill.

He died, legend says, from an excess of think.  
Poor Will and his quill had run out of ink.





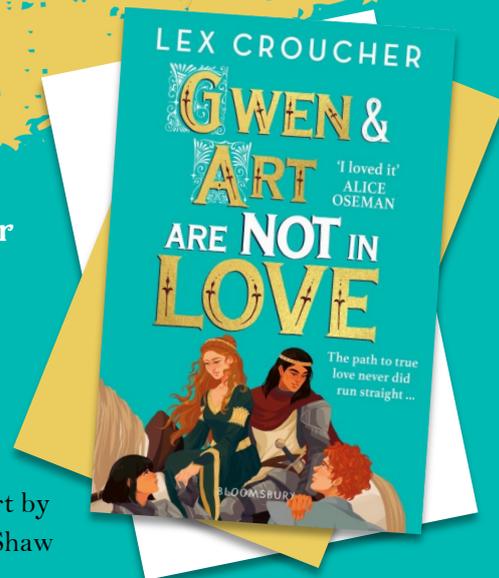
# LEX CROUCHER

We caught up with author **Lex Croucher** to chat about their debut YA novel ***Gwen and Art are Not in Love***.

**We loved *Gwen and Art are NOT in Love* – with its funny character interactions and distinct tone of voice. Can you tell us a little more about it?**

*GWEN AND ART* is a book about two people who've been engaged since birth and have hated each other for almost as long; a very sheltered, inflexible princess of England who likes routine, embroidery and hanging out with her brother, and a rakish, outrageous future Lord who spends half his time waking up in ditches. They are not and will never be in romantic love, but when they're forced to spend the summer together at Camelot, they discover that they're both queer, and they form a reluctant pact to cover for each other.

It's also got a timeshare cat in it.



Cover art by  
Natalie Shaw

**How did you get into the heads of both *Gwen and Art*? Were both characters equally as fun to write?**

I basically just write until I understand who these people are! I start with the basic facts and some of their close relationships and then by the end of a second draft I feel like I have a good grasp on them. Both characters were equally fun to write, Gwen because she finds everything so horrifying and Arthur because his instinct is to always try to be funny even when it's deeply inappropriate.

**This is your YA debut but you have written historical fiction before. How did it differ from writing your previous books?**

It didn't differ much, except for the fact that Arthurian England is a mythical setting rather than a historical one so there are no set rules. Regency is *very* concerned with rules, and half the fun comes from breaking them, which is what I do in my novels *REPUTATION*, *INFAMOUS* and *TROUBLE*. There's also a bit more drama and action in this book that doesn't revolve around dinner parties and balls.

**Do you have a favourite period of history?**

I don't! Human beings have always been fascinating, and each era of history brings its own quirks and horrors.

**The England in this book is recognisable but also divergent from the history we actually have. The addition of the Arthurian cult was great and seemed so likely. Were there any other new worldbuilding elements you wanted to add?**

I think it would have been fun to see them try to put together a round table at the end of the book, and also to

explore what would happen if other mythical objects from the legends cropped up again, but the book was already too damn long so I didn't really consider exploring either of those at

this point. I would *kill* to see the gang go on a quest, because they'd just be *so* bad at it.

**Both characters were equally fun to write, Gwen because she finds everything so horrifying and Arthur because his instinct is to always try to be funny even when it's deeply inappropriate.**

**Something we found refreshing was how this book is written in third person with two**

**points of view, when a lot of YA is written in first person. What made you decide to write the book in this way?**

It's just how I write! I don't know why, but I do think it makes sense for historical because it adds a bit of formality. I do want to explore other tenses and points of view, though, because I think it's a lot easier to get inside a character's head very fast in first person. 📖

*Gwen and Art are Not in Love* is out now and published by Bloomsbury

## Lex Croucher

Lex grew up in Surrey, reading a lot of books and making friends with strangers on the internet, and now lives in London with an elderly cat. With a background in social media for NGOs, Lex now writes historical-ish rom coms for adults (*Reputation*, *Infamous*) and historical fantasy rom coms for teenagers.

*Gwen and Art are NOT in Love* is their YA debut.

# ★ MEET THE ILLUSTRATORS ★

IF YOU'RE AN ARTIST OR ILLUSTRATOR AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOUR WORK IN A FUTURE ISSUE, YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE HERE: [WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.COM](http://WWW.PAPERBOUNDMAG.COM)

## SAMANTHA KAY DAVIES

Samantha Kay Davies originally grew up in the Somerset countryside but moved to Bournemouth to study and gain her degree in illustration. She now lives in the seaside town of Weymouth with her partner George and pooch Mabel. As well as her passion for illustration, she is also an avid writer and storyteller. Samantha's work is colourful, playful and always includes a generous serving of fun! When she isn't digitally illustrating using Procreate and Adobe Photoshop, painting and drawing with traditional media or writing at her desk – she can be found snuggled up with Mabel the dog, enjoying a good book, watching a movie or drinking endless amounts of Earl Grey Tea! Recently taking the leap into the freelance world, she continues to work on her own art and stories, with hopes to one day have a published picture book on the shelves! Samantha illustrated the cover and a writing prompt in this issue. We loved the illustrations so much that Samantha is this issue's submission winner!

To see more of Samantha's work visit - [www.etsy.com/uk/shop/manthakaydavies](http://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/manthakaydavies) - or give her a follow on Instagram (@manthakaydavies)

**Winner!**





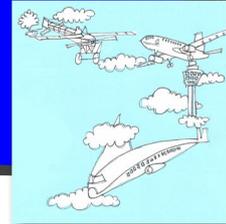
## JAYNE LEADBETTER

Jayne, originally from the UK, is a teacher living on the land of the Gadigal and Bidjigal peoples. She's writing two novels while studying for a master's degree in creative writing at Uni and loves to paint, illustrate picture books and gallivant through forests and over beaches with her huge dog Clifford.

Jayne illustrated our Quizzes page this issue.

You can see samples of Jayne's artwork on Instagram:

@jayneleadbetter



## IMOGEN HARTLAND

Imogen Hartland is an aspiring picture book author/illustrator. She's inspired by all the extraordinary things in life masquerading as the everyday—and she's grateful to her two young kids for always pointing them out! Imogen lives and works in Dharawal country in Sydney, Australia, near some rock pools and the bush. You can find her online on Instagram @i.hearts.arts.and.crafts, and on her website, at [www.imogenhartland.com](http://www.imogenhartland.com).

Imogen illustrated the poems *Helios* and *The Time Machine* in this issue.

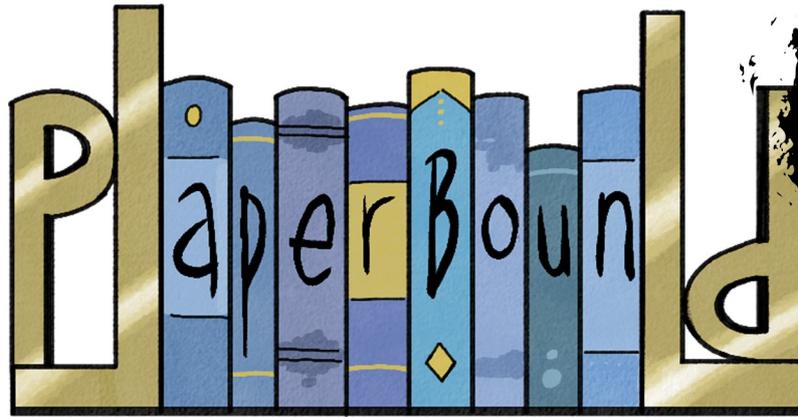


## Kim de Haan

Kim de Haan is an illustrator creating on Guringai Land in Sydney, Australia. She's been drawing for as long as she can remember, and loves getting lost in creating. In her past life she designed houses and furniture. Now, she writes and illustrates stories for kids that are warm, quirky and optimistic. Kim illustrated the contents page this issue. Say hi to Kim on instagram @kimdehaanstories or on her website [www.kimdehaan.com](http://www.kimdehaan.com)



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for the young, and the young at heart

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**New Art**

**Author Interviews**

**Writing Tips**

**Book Recommendations**

**and more...**

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