

# THE REBEL READING SOCIETY

Author Spotlight



## Beccy Blake

### When did you decide that you wanted to become an author?

I've always loved drawing and writing stories from a very young age so there was no definitive 'when' that I wanted to be an author and illustrator. I always dreamed of going to art college, which was a first step and initially wanted to be a political cartoonist for newspapers, however I loved writing and illustrating for children particularly comics so went down that fabulous rabbit hole and have never looked back.



### Did you read lots as a child - if you did, where did you mainly read? If you didn't, what was the reason?

Yes I did read lots as a child, I was lucky in that I had loads of willing grown ups always happy to read to me too, my dad in particular encouraged comics and I was completely hooked, and from these I went onto chapter books and books with no pictures but the visual switches and imagination were already there ready and waiting in my head to discover new adventures, mysteries and books with that hook! I read everywhere, home, libraries and going to second hand bookshops with my parents. There's something still warmly comforting about the graphic novel section in a bookshop or library. A world of escapism.

### What was your favourite book as a child and why?

When I was 6 my dad bought me "Captain Slaughterboard Drops Anchor" by Mervyn Peake and I loved it! The jokes, the characters, the piracy and drama and sheer fun drew me in. I still love it now, big belly laughs and the drawing is beautiful.



### How does it feel to see your books in shops and being sold?

It feels unreal to see my books in shops and being sold. I feel warm inside and completely honoured every time someone buys a copy and enjoys the sheer silliness of Chicken Hill.

### What is the best part about being an author?

The best part of being an author is having the freedom to share the world that lives inside my head, bringing all the ideas and stories to life, and also the added bonus of drawing the illustrations to go with my writing is amazing.



## What are the 'not so fun bits' in being an author?

I'm not sure there are many 'not so fun bits' about being an author. Maybe all the admin gets a bit annoying sometimes and it's tricky when you're either writing and drawing and you get interrupted and lose 'that flow' you have. But other than that it's a good life!



## Why do you think it is important for children to read?

It's important for children to read because it opens them up to wonderful worlds, adventures, new jokes and also knowledge about things they may be curious about. Reading also helps explain feelings and emotions in a cool way, you can find something in a book that you've never thought of. And reading sets us up for what life has in store, it helps us think outside the box when solving problems. Reading flicks switches we never knew we had.

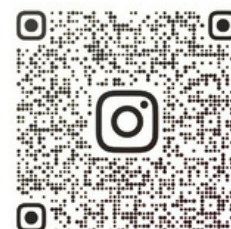
## What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

The inspiration for my books and writing comes from my own life, my friendships, my family and pets, hilarious happenings and real life stories, travel, past part time jobs and people I worked with. There's always something funny I'll spot or experience and I have a library of jokes in my head ready to pop out into the real world and say hello.

## Who gives you feedback on your drafts and how do you act on the feedback?

My fabulous editors and designers at Bloomsbury give me feedback and advice on my drafts, they'll often solve a puzzle or conundrum that I'm having especially when writing plots. And my designers are terrific at suggesting different compositions and layouts when I'm drawing up the panels. All the team at Bloomsbury are so supportive and are my backbone!

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## Finally, if you could read for an hour, on your own, anywhere in the world - where would it be?

If I was lucky enough to read in peace for an hour, anywhere in the world, it would be lazing in a hammock, overlooking the Mediterranean sea, from a beautiful Italian garden, with Tink asleep at my feet.