

THE REBEL READING SOCIETY Issue. 4



Author Spotlight

Alice Primmer

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

It's been my lifelong dream to be an author, even before I really knew what an author was! I have always loved writing - I still have the picture books that I made when I was six years old. But it was only in the last few years that I decided to take it a bit more seriously, and to be brave enough to show other people my writing. I'm very glad I did, as it resulted in my first book being published!



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

I read a lot, but not as much as I wish I had. Here's a pretty disgusting secret: I used to read on the toilet! In fact, in our house there was often a book left in the bathroom especially for toilet-based entertainment purposes.

What was your favourite book as a child and why?

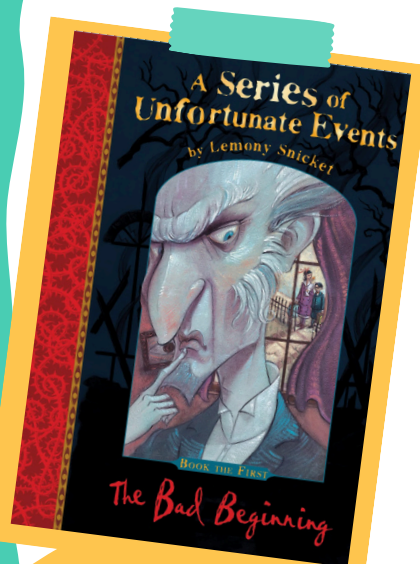
I find it really hard to pick a favourite! I'm going to cheat and mention a few that stand out in my memory. One is Goodnight Mister Tom - I remember being so affected by that, I tried to write my own version. I also loved a Series of Unfortunate Events, and how the narrator was part of the story in such an intriguing and unique way. And Horrible Histories - I'm a big fan of reading non-fiction, and I think those books are where it all started.

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

Surreal. The thought that there are people out there meeting the characters that have previously only existed in my head is very strange! The best thing has been going into my local bookshops, where I've bought books for years, and seeing my own book there, side-by-side with some of the greats (thanks to my surname I am often shelved next to the legendary Terry Pratchett!).

What is the best part about being an author?

I really love when I'm on a roll, when I'm making myself laugh with what I'm writing, when I feel like exciting ideas are springing up in my brain faster than I can write them down.



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

The times when I'm not on a roll! Some days I don't feel inspired, and everything I write seems to come out wrong. The only solution is to keep going, telling myself I can come back later and make it better. The funny thing is, when I read it back when I'm in a better mood, it's never as bad as I thought!

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

Not only is reading fun, it's so good for your brain. It's a brilliant way of escaping from your worries, it's relaxing, it builds your empathy and your imagination. When you find the right book, it can feel like the author is speaking just to you, finding ways to express things you'd felt but never known how to say - it's like magic.

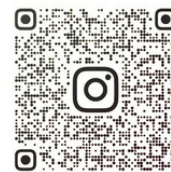


Who gives you feedback on your drafts and how do you act on the feedback?

For very early drafts, I have a good friend who I trust to tell me kindly if what I've done is terrible. Otherwise I'll get feedback from my agent, and further on in the process, from my editor. I love getting feedback - I find it incredible that people are taking seriously stuff that I've made up. It encourages me to push myself to make my writing the best it can be, and often sparks new ideas and helps me see different ways of approaching things. Maybe it's because I'm an editor in my day job, I have a deep appreciation of the editing process!

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

On the seafront in Northumberland - although now I say that, I realise it's very windy there, so maybe I'd better be indoors in a nice armchair, with a big window and a sea view!



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What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

Inspiration for me can come from anywhere. The idea for my first book, The World's Worst Alien, came from a non-fiction book about prehistoric life on earth. That's why I love to read non-fiction, because real life often has the most fascinating and surprising material. When I have an idea, my first instinct is to make it funny. Then, I have to start writing. I can start with a random scene, but I have to start working out where the story could go and who could be in it. It makes a messy first draft, but I find it's the best way to be creative!