THE REBEL READING SOCIETY Author Spotlight

Sarah Hagger-Holt



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

I've always loved writing. I worked for many years as a charity copywriter, interviewing people, researching projects and reporting from events, and enjoyed shaping the stories I heard into articles, reports and briefings. I didn't intend to, or decide to, become an author… I just had an idea for a story that wouldn't let go until I wrote it down! That story became my first novel, *'Nothing Ever Happens Here'.*



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 read all the time. I was lucky that my parents read aloud to me and I had a great local library just around the corner. I'd get on my bike, cycle to the library and spend the afternoon, snuggled on a beanbag in a corner, reading.

What was your favourite book as a child and why?

Lots of favourites! I remember discovering Judy Blume's stories of growing up, which were funny and sad and compassionate and achingly real, without ever feeling worthy. As a teenager, I read everything by Terry Pratchett - I loved the wit and cleverness of the worlds he created and the way they reflected our world too.

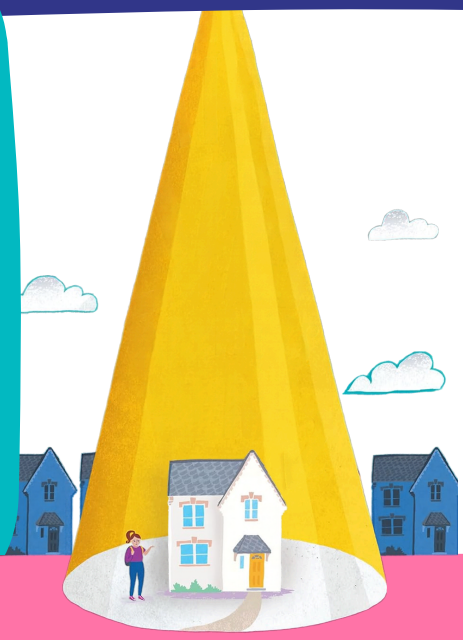
How does it feel to see your books in shops and being sold?

Oh, it's lovely! But even more exciting is seeing my books in the library, next to so many authors I admire. I work in a library, and have checked out my own books to customers several times which a weird and very satisfying feeling.



What is the best part about being an author?

The writing itself, when I'm on a roll. And hearing how my books have moved or connected with readers when they tell me about it.



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

It takes a long time to see an idea into publication, and I'm not a very patient person!

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

I love Katherine Rundell's idea of 'reading for power'. As readers, children - and all of us - are better able to take on a difficult and dangerous world. Reading sharpens our minds and imaginations and helps us see the world anew, as well enabling us to put our own worries into perspective and to know we are not alone in our thoughts and feelings. It's a radical act!



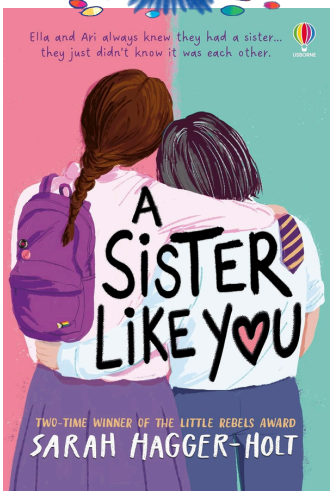
What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

In 2007, I co-wrote and researched a book about LGBTQ+ parenting called *'Pride and Joy'*. I spoke to over 70 queer families, with moving and fascinating and ordinary stories. Their stories and experiences have inspired the kind of stories I want to tell.

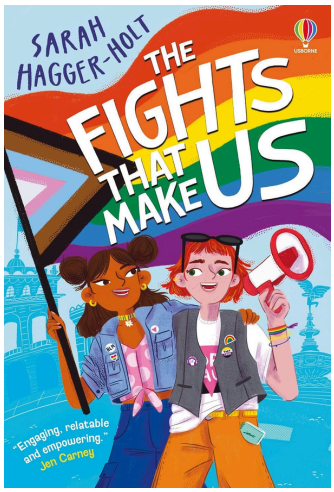


Who gives you feedback on your drafts and how do you act on the feedback?

My daughter, who's now 15, and my god-daughter, who's 11, are two of my first readers. I want to get the perspectives of children and young people first. Also my partner, a few trusted friends, my editor and agent. I actually quite like getting feedback - I'm used to it, having been a professional copywriter - it usually makes the story much better.



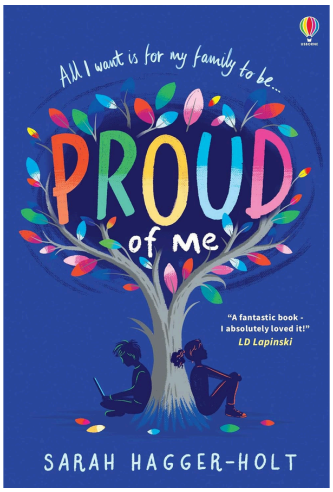
SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



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

Two of the things that make me happiest are being outdoors and reading a good book. So I would want to combine the two. It's not very far to travel... but there's a nature reserve near where I live, that I love to walk in, and there are lovely spots there to sit, read, look at the lake and listen to the birds.

Join us!

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