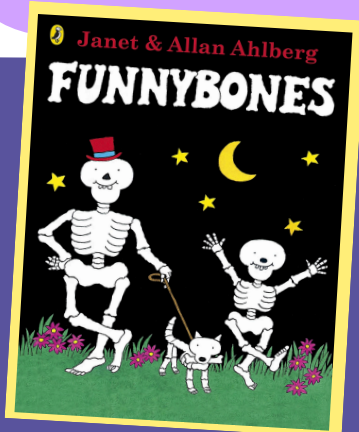


Elissa Elwick

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

I always knew I wanted to be an artist – I've loved drawing for as long as I can remember. The author part came later, when I was at university studying illustration and needed to create stories and worlds for the characters I was drawing, and then it was like a door in my brain was opened and I've not wanted to shut it since!



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 lots with my Mum and twin brother. We used to get a new book out the library every week. When I was older I LOVED *The Goosebumps* series! We read at home mostly, but the good thing about books is you can take them anywhere!

What was your favourite book as a child and why?

Favourites include *The Jolly Postman*, *Funny Bones* and *Can't You Sleep Little Bear*. I loved the interactive element of *The Jolly Postman*, and the way the letters made me feel I was entering that Fairytale world. *Funny Bones* still has one of my favourite opening lines of all time, and *Can't You Sleep Little Bear* is so gentle, lyrical and the illustrations are beautiful, what's not to love?



What is the best part about being an author?

Being able to create my own characters and worlds. To dream up characters that run around my head and then I getting to draw them and discover what they do, and say and get up to is just the best fun.

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

Deadlines! The bit where you have to finish the book but if the characters are misbehaving and taking longer than you'd like to finish it can feel a little stressful.

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

Really proud of all the hard work I put in, not just for that book but for all the drawings and stories I made before that book, to get me there. It's the reason I used a photo of myself as a child for the "About" section in the back of *The Gumdrops* books – I know little Elissa would be really proud of us.





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

To escape your own world for a while, to grow your imagination, to see the world from the perspective of other people, to grow empathy, to experience different lives and worlds, and - mostly importantly - to have FUN!

What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

The *Gumdrops* series was inspired by my love of the cartoons I grew up watching in the 80s and 90s - the fun, bright and loveable characters I watched every week - but also some of the books I grew up with. Like the interactive element of *The Jolly Postman* and the *Usborne Choose Your Own Adventure* stories, which felt almost like a game. The *Gumdrops* stories feature the Narrator who gets the reader involved with the plot and talking directly to the characters - something I have always done while reading with my daughter. I want this series to be fun, a bit silly and get the reader feeling excited about entering a story.

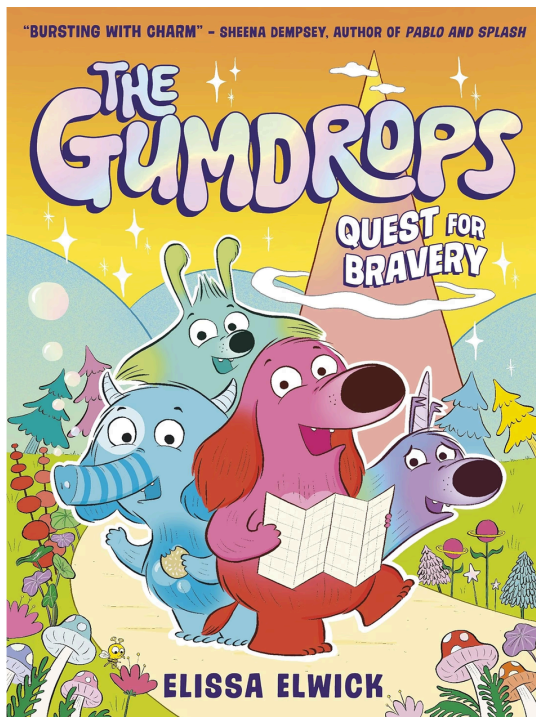


Who gives you feedback on your drafts and how do you act on the feedback?

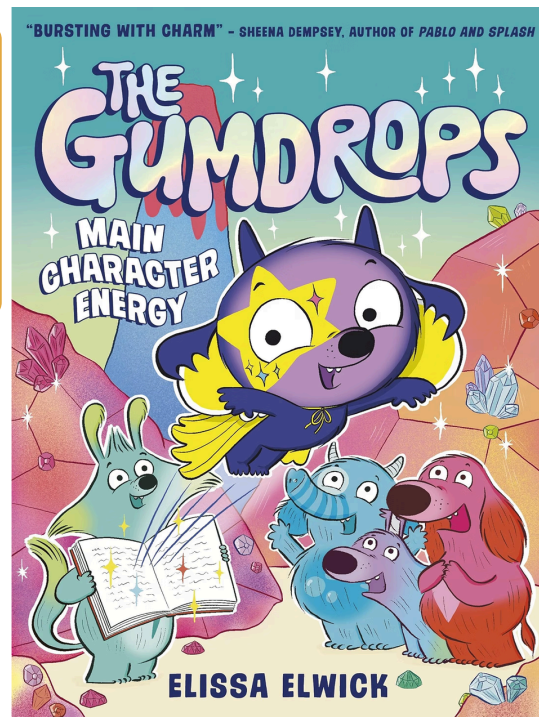
If I'm working on a pitch, it would be my lovely agent that gives me feedback, and she knows what she's talking about so I trust her, even though sometimes it might be hard to hear if a story might not be what publishers are looking for.

It might be my agent if it's a draft I'm hoping she'll pitch to a publishers, and I trust her judgement so if she says a story isn't what publishers are currently looking for it can feel a bit deflating!

At my publishers it's my editor, designer, Editorial Director and Art Director, and I know any feedback is going to make the books better. Making a book really is about teamwork, even though you only see the author and illustrators name on the cover.



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

Good question! I wrote my first published book in the French Alps, with blue skies and sunshine. I'd go back there!

