



Eric Huang

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

The idea was always floating around, but I liked dinosaurs so much that I decided to be a palaeontologist instead of a writer! It makes sense because palaeontology is about stories. Other science students laughed at us. 'We rely on data,' they said. 'You palaeontologists pick up a rock and make it up.' Exactly—we're storytellers! But we do rely on data, too.

It was during the pandemic that I properly decided to become a writer.



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

Oh yes! I mainly read in bed with the door shut and the radio on.

What was your favourite book as a child and why?

I read a lot of nonfiction—dinosaur books of course, and books about plants and animals. The first book I ever bought with my own money is a guidebook called Zoo Animals. I still have it! I was also into sci-fi and fantasy thanks to Star Wars and Greek myths. I loved Dune, the Dragonriders of Pern, and Piers Anthony's books set in Xanth—a magical version of Florida.

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

It's unreal—especially when the books are in a window or some other display. Unreal!

What is the best part about being an author?

Meeting teachers, librarians, students, and booksellers has been very cool. Chats with them have shaped how I think about storytelling. It's also been awesome meeting other authors and illustrators: sharing tips, comparing notes, helping each other out.

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

As an author you want everyone to love all of your books. It's difficult sometimes when someone doesn't like them and doesn't like your ideas. When this happens, I remind myself that of course not everyone is going to love everything I write - and instead, I think about all of the happy readers that have enjoyed my books!



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

Our world and realities are so much bigger when we read! Every book and story is an inspiration. So many inventions were dreamed up by people who were inspired by books they read when they were young.

What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

Anything can be an inspiration. The Guardians of the New Moon books are inspired by the bedtime stories my dad told me and my sister when we were little: Chinese legends, stories about magical creatures and deities. My tuxedo cat McNulty is the inspiration for Miaow the temple cat. Ming the nine-tailed fox is based on my sister Penny.



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

Aside from my editors Mattie and Charlotte—who are awesome!—my partner Brian has the fortune (or misfortune?) of reading early, early versions of drafts I'm not ready to show Mattie and Charlotte. I think I'm quite good at taking feedback. I might not always agree on a suggested solution for a problem, but I always want to address it, find a fix that works for us all.

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

My friend Joanna has a family lake house in upstate New York. It's surrounded by woods. There are deer, muskrats in the lake, and lots of water birds. There's a small pier in the back, where you can dangle your feet in the water. I'd sit there to read on a cool, sunny spring day with a pitcher of iced tea within easy reach and McNulty next to me, snoring in that squeaky way he does when he's dreaming.