THE REBEL READING SOCIETY Author Spotlight

Liz Flanagan

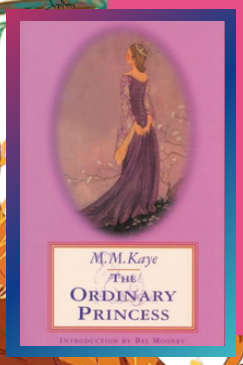


When did you decide that you wanted to become an author?

I learned that I loved to write when I was at school – thanks to a fantastic teacher in Year Four! - but didn't realise it was an actual option as I'd never met an author in real life. When I had children, that's when it became a dream and I started writing seriously. Then it took me about ten years of trying before I was 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 did read lots as a kid. I think I became a bookworm when I was seriously ill aged eight and had weeks off school. Afterwards, I worked my way through the shelves of my local library, reading pretty much everything they had – magical stories, sci-fi, adventure, horse stories, non-fiction. I still love to read everything – all except horror, because I'm too easily scared!



What was your favourite book as a child and why?

Hmmm, tough question, but I remember I loved *The Ordinary Princess* by M.M. Kaye so much, re-reading it till it was falling apart. It's about a girl who doesn't want to be a princess so she runs away to the forest. I can trace a direct line from this book to my story *Wildsmith: Into the Dark Forest* – no one else might see it, but I know it's there!

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

It feels amazing, like a dream come true. If that eight-year-old me could see my books in a bookshop or library, she would be so very happy!

What is the best part about being an author?

Can I have three best parts, please? Part one: being in charge of your own time and sitting at home in your comfiest clothes making up stories - what a lovely way to work. Part two: when you get a new idea and it's really exciting and you can't wait to find out what happens. Part three: chatting to readers in real life, especially when they say they've enjoyed your book!





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

In most jobs you know what to expect and how much you will earn – for authors this is less predictable! I hope that readers will keep loving my stories and that I'll get to keep doing this job, but I know it's a privilege and I don't take it for granted.

Illustrations by Joe Todd-Stanton

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

Not only for the way reading can improve mental health and outcomes in life, but also because it's a joy, a comfort and an escape. It's magic that you create in your own imagination, interacting with words on a page. It can show you limitless possibilities, other lives, other worlds. It's a portal in so many ways, and all children should have the right to step through it.

What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

I definitely get inspiration from the beautiful landscape of my hometown here in Yorkshire, from my pets and foster kittens, but also from a lifetime of reading voraciously.

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

I have some trusted writer friends, my editor and my agent. And sometimes I have to find experts on a particular issue and ask them if I've got it right in my story. Right now I'm writing a wildlife book with an expert scientist who is sharing their research and checking my text – this feels like a real luxury and a huge relief! I do lots of edits and rewrites when I get feedback – there are always many more edits than you think…

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SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



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?

Is it wrong to say my own sofa, with a dog on either side? That's my happy place.

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