

## Kathryn Rossati

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

I can't remember exactly how old I was, but I know I was still in Primary School. I've always had tonnes of stories in my head, and as soon as I realised that books had authors and didn't just magically appear, I knew that's what I wanted to do with my life.



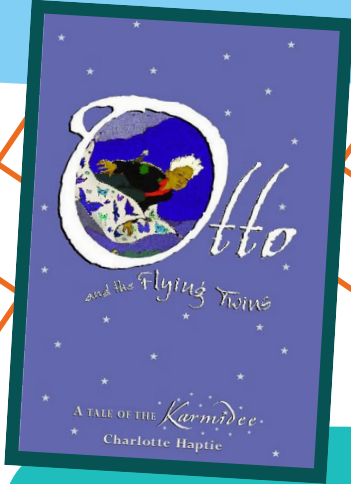
### Did you read lots as a child - if you did, where did you mainly read? If you didn't, what was the reason?

I read a TONNE. My dad regularly took me to our local library, and I'd take out books every time. We were also lucky enough to have quite a lot of books at home, and though most of them were too advanced for me when I was really young, just seeing them on the shelf made me want to read them. I was also gifted books for birthdays and Christmas, and I used to listen to cassette tapes (I was born in 1990, so old school audiobooks here!) before bed which had all sorts of stories on them, like some of the *Grimm Fairytales* and Hans Christian Andersen's tales. My nan even recorded herself reading some of the Enid Blyton books for me, such as *The Goblin Hat*.



### What was your favourite book as a child and why?

This is a super tough question! It's so hard to choose just one. I think one that's quite underrated is *Otto and the Flying Twins* by Charlotte Haptie, which is all about accepting people regardless of their background and how 'different' they are, with plenty of magic and mystery too. There's a lot of heart in that book, brilliant characters, and the world building is absolutely brilliant. It's also book one in a trilogy, and the sequels are great too. I think it's unfortunately out of print now, but you might spot a copy in a second hand bookshop or charity shop, so it's worth keeping an eye out. That said, there are so many brilliant books being published now that deserve more attention too.



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

When I was first published (nearly ten years ago now), I signed with a small publisher who printed books on demand as opposed to having a print run, so though my first few books were readily available online (and still are), not many shops carried them. It was still thrilling to know that my books were out in the world, though, and that people were actually reading them! Such a buzz (but also mildly terrifying, because what if they didn't like my writing?).

More recently, as I've had books come out with other publishers who have done print runs, my books have turned up in a few brick and mortar shops (Independent bookshops are champions for authors and often order in more books from small presses than shops that are part of a chain, so do support those indies!). Seeing my books on an actual physical shelf gave me such a sense of achievement, and it's really nice to know that readers can discover my books just by browsing the 'old fashioned' way.



### What is the best part about being an author?

Hands down, hearing from my readers and giving workshops! I've had such great feedback from readers who have loved one (or more) of my books, and at a school visit, one student even gave me fan art! How cool is that?

I love giving creative writing workshops to readers of all ages, as it's so exciting to see what ideas everyone will come up with. Human creativity is truly amazing, and I like to encourage it whenever I can!



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

As I'm AuDHD, it's trying to get my brain focused on writing when it really doesn't want to be... which is a LOT. But there are things that help, such as listening to music (without lyrics, otherwise I end up singing along instead of writing. Things like film and game scores are especially helpful, as well as atmospheric music for D&D campaigns), and having a mini exercise bike under my desk, as movement really helps me concentrate.



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

Reading expands imaginations and encourages curiosity, which in turn leads to learning. Not only that, but it's fun to be immersed in a story or sucking up facts about your favourite hobby! As an autistic person who struggles with interacting with people, books truly helped me understand how to talk to other kids and about the joys of having friends. I actually have a prose poem all about this:

### The Impact of Books by Kathryn Rossati

Without having access to books when I was younger, I wouldn't be me. Wouldn't have gained any skills in interpreting people's actions, or speech, or sarcasm. (I'm neurodivergent – these things don't come naturally.)

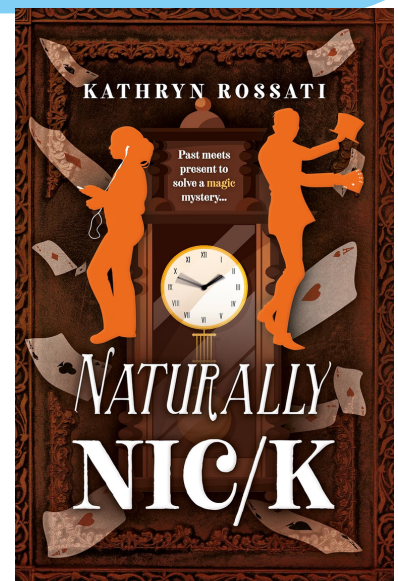
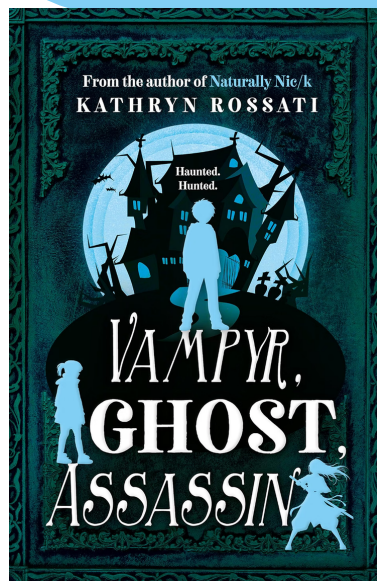
I wouldn't have experienced hundreds of lives from the comfort of my bed: soft cotton-covered duvet wrapped around like a cocoon, an open book resting on my knees, acting as a portal directly to each character's heart – keeping me up late, eyes drooping, plucking at the text just a little longer, reaching for that touch more.

Nor would I have thought about writing down the thoughts and worlds in my head, roughly scrawled at first, now neatly in print. (Like this!)

I'd be isolated, confused, resigned to holding everything in. I wouldn't have found solace, quiet, peace. Or realised the impact that sharing ideas can bring.

## What is the inspiration for your books and writing?

Everything and anything. Nothing in my life is safe from being used as an idea in one of my books! Everywhere I turn, there's something interesting to discover or investigate, and then my brain compiles these things into a mighty idea stew and those that don't work get sieved out, the rest get stirred into something more substantial, which with any luck, becomes a novel or poetry collection.



SCAN ME!



SCAN ME!



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

For my earlier books, my close family mostly gave me feedback on my drafts, and I'd take a few days to absorb their feedback (usually muttering under my breath when they didn't 'get' something), then eventually decide that most of what they said would improve the book and make those changes.

Now, it's usually an editor or, in the case of poetry and short fiction, one of my writer friends, and again, their feedback usually does help me improve my writing.

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

I don't know if this place exists outside of my imagination, but a huge, spacious library with lots of light coming in through windows which look out across the ocean. I'd be sitting in a cosy armchair or nook beside one of the windows, listening to the waves lap against the shore, with a hot chocolate within reach and a cool breeze on my face.

