

# FAQs

## **Are you a full time writer?**

I wish I were! I'm a lawyer by day - I'm an in-house attorney at a tech company. My writing happens really late at night, super early in the morning while it's still dark, or on the weekends when I can sneak it in!

## **Do you find it difficult to write at those odd hours?**

It's not the easiest thing, but if you want to make something happen, you have to stick with it and push through the challenges. I went to a conference recently where two of the speakers shared advice that resonated very loudly. One was "Figure out what you really want, and relentlessly go after it", and the other was "Drive it like it's stolen". That's compelling advice - I'm a big believer of living in the moment, seizing the day, and going after your dreams, even when sometimes the day to day challenges don't make it easy.

## **What was your favorite book growing up?**

I remember devouring every book ever written by Roald Dahl. One of my favorites then (and now!) is *Matilda*. The humor, the sassiness of the main character, the cliffhangers, everything about that book is delightful. I've read all of Roald Dahl's stories written for adults too and think of him as a creative genius.

## **Who is your role model?**

I don't have just one role model. I learn something from every person I admire, and I am fortunate to have several people in my life who inspire me to be a better version of myself. From my Dad, I've learned the value of hard work, from my Mom I've learned the value of building relationships. My husband is an adventurer and from him I've learned that you can enrich your life by taking a few risks and going outside of your comfort zone (like spontaneously moving from the East Coast to the West Coast with two tiny kids!). And from my close friends who are strong, incredible women, I have learned valuable life lessons.

## **When you were a kid what did you want to be when you grew up?**

I've wanted to be a writer ever since I was six years old and read *Amelia Jane* by Enid Blyton. I can vividly recall the thoughts that went through my mind as I read that story. I myself had imagined and pretended that dolls might come to life when nobody was watching. So I remember thinking "Wow - can people really just write about whatever fun stuff they're thinking of? I want to grow up and do that too!"

## **Other than the writing, what do you most enjoy about being an author?**

I've been able to go into classrooms and read to children and engage in activities that help them connect with the stories at a deeper level. Doing my part to spark an interest in language and the arts is incredibly rewarding. There is no greater feeling than watching a young child discover the magic of storytelling.

## **Your picture books are collaborations with illustrators. Can you make your own illustrations?**

Definitely not. If I did, they're not picture books anybody would want to read! I mean maybe they would, just to gawk in horror at the mess I'm daring to call pictures! I'll stick to painting a picture with words instead!

### **All your books are picture books. Do you intend to write for older children or adults?**

I have lots of stories in me, and they're not all for the lower grades! I do want to eventually write books for middle grades, and possibly even Young Adult fiction. Also way at the back of my mind I have a couple of ideas for novels that are for an adult audience. I'm excited to continue my journey and write for a variety of audiences over the next few years.

### **It sounds like writing was a big dream for you, and now you've made it come true. Are there any other dreams you want to fulfill?**

Well, writing a book for adults is still a really big dream! It's a challenging aspiration so I'm going to keep it in the 'still dreaming' category! Apart from writing, I have a pretty long bucket list of places I want to visit - like China, Egypt, Nepal, New Zealand. The list just goes on. Traveling to all those places is a big dream.

### **You mentioned earlier that you took yourself outside of your comfort zone by moving to the Bay Area. Can you talk about that?**

It has been an incredible experience moving to California from Toronto. If it had been up to just me, I'd never have done it. But my husband is the one who jumps into new and crazy adventures, and so we did it together. It has been a roller coaster ride since we moved, and very difficult to be far away from family and friends. But I've also met some wonderful people and seen and done things that I wouldn't have if it hadn't been for the move. I do think that we are the sum of our experiences, and in my case I feel like the move and everything I have gone through will make me a stronger person and more free-spirited and creative writer.

### **What comes first, the story or the character?**

With me, it has always been the character, and then it's the character telling me her story. All I'm doing is writing down what she tells me to write.

### **Do you plan out your story or do you just start at the beginning and find yourself at the end?**

I've done both. With longer books that are not picture books, I do plan out the story with the characters, the basic plot, the beginning and the end. At least a rough outline and then I just let the words fill it out. Almost always though, I have the last sentence of the story in my mind long before I start writing. The last line is the destination, and the story that comes before it is the character's journey to that end point.

### **What do you do for fun?**

I love spending time with family, especially outdoors when the weather is nice. I love traveling and seeing new places and sights, and I also enjoy hanging out with my girlfriends and laughing until we're crying.

### **What advice do you have for aspiring authors, both young and old?**

Read, read, read. Read anything and everything from books to magazines to newspapers to brochures. The more you absorb different writing styles, the more likely you are to develop your own. Then just start writing. Stop trying to write perfect words, and just write from the heart. You can work out the kinks later. Like anything else, writing well takes practice and a pinch of faith.