

Tell us about yourself in general:

I love star-gazing, fairies, cheese, films, books, trees, cake and Christmas. I live in Oxford with my husband and two sons.

I filled my school books with stories instead of maths, which is probably why I only just about got some A levels. However, I did learn to type, which helped when I worked mainly at companies with Oxford in the title (Radio Oxford, Oxford Mail, Oxford University). My favourite job was at the Oxford mail where I once starred in Inspector Morse (honestly, I'm in the background if you look closely enough).

I didn't return to writing until much later, when I was inspired by author talks at the Oxford Literary Festival. Now my sons are past the age of needing to be looked after 24/7 (as opposed to just 20/7), I have more time to write. Thank goodness I learnt to type because my handwriting is atrocious.

Is there a particular book, author, or film that had a particular impact on you in your childhood?

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. I wanted to trudge through the snow and have tea with Mr Tumnus.

What did you enjoy most at school?

English – I was lucky to have two brilliant teachers, Mr Brennan and Mr Chamberlain, who gave out homework I actually didn't mind doing.

I also really liked skipping, still do actually, it's quite an efficient way of getting about.

What is your earliest memory?

Looking up at a big fluffy dog.

Is there a particular holiday destination that you have visited that you would love to return to?

Anywhere with amazing trees – giant redwoods on the Tall Trees Trail in the New Forest, or the Major Oak in Sherwood.

Is there anything you'd like to tell us about your pets, past or present?

Every gerbil I've ever owned escaped. Luckily they came back when they were hungry. And Arfur Rabbit lived till he was 13 even though he also escaped.

What would you say is your greatest talent?

Typing as fast as I can think because it's ideal for writing stories.

What new skill would you love to learn?

The American Smooth with Pasha Kovalev.

What is the most unusual job you have done?

School photographer – and yes, I had to use the blue mottled background.

What is your most treasured possession?

My writing notebooks – I collect all my ideas in them.

Of all the places you have lived, where have you felt most at home and why?

Oxford – I was born here and have never lived anywhere else. Not just because I’m surrounded by family, but I love Oxford buildings, trees, authors, museums, and The Cake Shop in the Covered Market.

What are your hobbies?

Star-gazing, photography, and woodland walks.

Can you think of 3 things we don’t know about you?

I was awarded a Highly Commended medal for my cha-cha-cha at the age of 10

I once had a letter published in Smash Hits magazine

I played the part of ‘cave wall’ in the school panto Aladdin

When did you first start to write/illustrate stories?

I filled my school rough books with stories through primary school, and when Mrs Braybrook taught us how to bind our own books, I turned them all into hardbacks for my poor sister to read.

Where did your idea for this story come from?

My sons. As soon as they started to talk, I realised they were hilarious, so I wrote down all the things they said and did.

What made you write this book?

Stan and Fred begged me to write about them. Well, that’s what it felt like in my head. They were originally part of another story, but they wanted one all of their very own.

What have you enjoyed most about working on this book?

Creating Stan’s charts, and thinking up naughty things for Fred to get up to.