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Ann Jungman

1. When did you start writing? How old were you?

While teaching I discovered that when had a very noisy class, it was better to tell stories, than read them, because I could keep an eye on everyone. My naughty class liked my stories and encouraged me to write them down. My class insisted send the stories out to publishers and eventually someone published a story and called 'Fang The Fiery Dragon'. After that it got easier to get my works published. By then I was about twenty-five.

2. Why do you write? What motivates you?

Writing is such fun! I love creating worlds in my head and then writing them down. Most of my books are funny and I like the idea of adding to the amount of laughter in the world. Sometimes, when I am serious, I like to write stories on subjects that other people don't bother with but I think it is important that the story should be known, like 'Matti's Miracle'. I like this book because it is a story about very generous, good people and is based on truth.

3. How do you start to write?

It all begins with an idea. Sometimes an idea just hops into my mind. I will do a whole lot of thinking. Then I will write an outline. Next I will put a version up on the screen and print it out. After that the real work begins, making sure it makes sense, sharpening up the dialogue, checking that it isn't boring, generally trying to be sure the story is as good as it can be. When I am sure it is ready to go, I will send it to my agent.

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4. How do you get inspiration for writing?

Inspiration is everywhere: a conversation overheard on a bus, something on TV or in the papers, a story a friend tells you or sometimes for no reason an idea just turns up. Sometimes I think ideas have a life of their own. For example, one day I was talking in a school in Australia, when the fire bell went. Everyone trooped out into the playground and there was a fire in the stockroom. The headteacher was puzzled, no one had been into the stockroom that day. I decided it was a dragon and wrote several stories about that dragon, and they were very popular.

5. Where and when do write? Is there a good time of day?

I either write in my study or on my laptop at the kitchen table. Times, well I either write because I feel like it or because there is a deadline I have to meet. Usually, I find the afternoon is best.

6. What was your favourite book as a child and what did it mean to you?

'The Swish Of The Curtain' by Pamela Brown was my favourite book. It is about a group of children, who are bored in the holidays. They set up their own theatre group and write their own plays and pool their talents. It was every teenager's dream come true and I longed to be part of the group. It did teach me that if you want something, go for it.

7. What are your 5 top tips for budding young writers?

1. Read as much as you can.
2. Be aware of the world around you, notice how people behave and talk and move.
3. Listen to people, learn how different people use language and express themselves and the varied ways they look at life.
4. Be very critical of your own work. Read it through several times and then leave it for a few days and read it through again and make changes if necessary. It is so easy to make changes on the computer. Be your most severe critic.
5. Read in a conscious way, be aware of how characters are created, how atmosphere is conveyed. How dialogue works, how tension is created etc.

Ann Jungman has written the following titles for Collins Big Cat:

978-0-00-723087-7, *The Footballing Frog*: Band 14/Ruby

978-0-00-723124-9, *Matti's Miracle*: Band 15/Emerald

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