



Sample Q & A for children

Did you always think you would be a writer?

Not really. When I was a child, I wrote a few stories now and then. It was fun. But I got older and forgot about it. I went to university and then got a job as a tour manager.

One day, when I was in my twenties, somebody told me I should write. There was no reason for them to think I would be good at it, but I was curious and decided to try. I started doing little writing exercises and then writing short stories, and found that it made me really happy.

Is it easy then, writing books?

Definitely not! But it's really satisfying. The first bit is lovely, dreaming up the idea. The overall idea for *The Scar Gatherer* series was dreamt up while I was walking my dog.

Next there's the interesting bit, when I go away and find out everything I can about what I'm going to write about. Then comes the hard bit, when I write the first draft. You might be surprised to know that I really hate that bit! Just because I'm a writer doesn't mean I find writing easy all the time. After that, it gets much more enjoyable for me, because I really like editing. I work over and over what I've written, filling in the gaps, smoothing it out, and making it better in every way.

The last bit is lovely too, when I give the book to people to read and they tell me what they liked, and what they didn't like. You might think it wouldn't be very nice, hearing that someone didn't like something. But actually, it's great, just getting feedback from real readers - things that a reader didn't like or didn't understand can be fixed if they tell me.

So where do you get your ideas from?

All over the place: things I see in the newspaper or on the television, things people say to me, other books I read. Once you start looking, it's amazing how much you find. It's a bit like tuning your ears to really listen to the sounds around you - if you start properly paying attention, you'll find you hear all sorts of things you hadn't noticed before.

***The Scar Gatherer* series is about different periods in history. Was history your favourite subject at school?**

I had a wonderful history teacher up to GCSE, and I really loved it. But I studied French and German at Cambridge, not history.

If you didn't study history, how did you come up with idea for *The Scar Gatherer* series?

Like Joe in the books, whenever I visited an old castle or a ruin as a child, I wished I could travel back in time and see what it was like in the old days. I used to close my eyes and try and imagine it buzzing with life. When I started thinking about what I would like to write about, I felt suddenly very excited that I would be able to start time travelling through my books.

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Have you written any other books for children?

When I finished *The Scar Gatherer* series, I spent a lot of 2020 writing a book for young adults (which is actually 12 to 15 year olds). Even though that's now a while ago, I still haven't got it quite right, so I get it out and tinker with it from time to time. In 2021, I published a collection of tales with a bite which I tried out on kids at my sons' primary school, called *Unlucky for Some*. You can find out more about that on www.juliaedwardsbooks.com. At the moment, I'm working on a book for 8 to 12 year olds about a girl, a ghost and a guardian angel, called *An Idiot's Guide to Grave Robbing*. I'm also considering taking Joe and Lucy from *The Scar Gatherer* books to Ancient Maya for a new adventure together. Watch this space ...

Do you have children of your own? Did they give you ideas for your books?

I have three sons, all of whom have read *The Scar Gatherer* books. The eldest suggested the name for the monkey in *The Demon in the Embers* when he was 8 (he's now nearly 16!), and all three of them gave me feedback on *Unlucky for Some*. My second son is determined I should write a book called *Mining for Pharaohs*, but I've told him he has to write it himself!

And even though I'm now a grown-up, I remember really clearly how it felt to me, being 8 and 10 and 12 years old. Perhaps writers are always just children inside!

To find out more about any of Julia's books or her school visits, go to www.juliaedwardsbooks.com.

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