



WITH ANNE FINE



Q. What book did you love as a child and why?

A. Until I was about eight, my favourite books were all by Enid Blyton, especially *The Magic Faraway Tree* series. Then I discovered Anthony Buckeridge (*Jennings Goes to School*, and other books about Jennings). After that, I had a passion for all Richmal Crompton's *William* books.

Q. Who are your current favourite children's authors/illustrators and why?

A. If I were a young reader today, I know I'd love Hilary McKay's enchanting family stories. I'd devour Geraldine McCaughrean's very varied books, and anything written by Eva Ibbotson or Philippe Dupasquier. I'd make sure I never missed anything by Frank Cottrell Boyce. My favourite illustrators are Shirley Hughes, Helen Oxenbury and Kate Aldous.

Q. What tips would you give to encourage children to read?

A. Children are horribly slow to take good advice and frighteningly quick to follow a bad example. So if I wanted a child to read, I wouldn't plonk myself in front of the telly whilst telling them they should be making time for books. Young children love being read to by adults and older ones enjoy a good argument. So read to them, or along with them. (Ignore that phone!) And use your library.

Q. What do you enjoy best about being an author?

A. I love the silence most. There's something magical about sitting in perfect peace and quiet and creating a world in which people are laughing and crying and scheming and arguing. I think more people than dare admit it need at least some hours of solitude every day. This is the perfect job. I think of it as a total joy and privilege.

Q. Tell us something about yourself that you think might surprise people.

A. Not a lot of people know that I have triplet sisters - and they're identical. (They used to confuse the teachers by swapping round their different coloured cardigans.) And my other well-kept secret is that I am a remarkably skilled parallel parker.



FICTION BY ANNE FINE



These books are ideal for reluctant readers because of their length (they are all 128 pages or less) but also because of the great warmth and humour in Anne Fine's writing.

From the way that three unhappy kids at Nitshill School deal with Barry the bully, through to Anneli's discovery of a painting that changes her view of art, the stories all explore real issues in a fun way. It's no coincidence that Anne, who has also written *Madame Doubtfire* and many other books for older children, was the second ever Children's Laureate.

7+ / £4.99

