



## Editorial

You may have noticed that there was no TLM in March – I do apologise I have no idea what happened. One moment I was in February, the next thing I turned around and it was April. So on with the show, first up may I ask everyone reading this to sign the petition to ensure that all students have access to a well-run school library.

Rookie Mag is an American e-magazine for teen girls. Anti-bullying charity BeatBullying is offering a range of teaching resources for teachers to tackle bullying.

As fans of the bard are no doubt aware, Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April is Shakespeare Day, I have put together some suggestions to celebrate his life and works.

Following on from that I bring you news of two competitions, one from Aesthetica Magazine (creative writing) and the second from Chatterbooks and Shelterbox coming together to offer a creative design competition. There is also some bad news (if you hadn't already heard) about Google Reader.

Finally the interview this month is with Joanne Macgregor, author of *Turtle Walk* and *Rock Steady*.

## **Petition: Department for Education: Ensure that all school students have access to a well-run school library**

One in 5 children have no books at home. Many more have limited access to public libraries, or to the expertise of a professional librarian. By ensuring that all schools have libraries, and that they are properly run with professional library support, either full-time in the case of secondary schools, or part-time in the case of primary schools, the government can ensure that all children have good access not only to books and information but also the support necessary to use these effectively. Making this provision statutory

would stop the current uneven provision and give all children and young people access, regardless of family income or easy access to a public library. Far too many schools have either no school library, or no professional library support, with consequent lack of access for their students.

<http://chn.ge/WzDBUK>

## Rookie Mag

Rookie is an online publication for teenage girls featuring writing, photography, illustrations, videos, and more from staff writers and readers submitted content. The site features monthly "issues," each revolving around a theme. Content is posted daily – after school, after dinner, and before bed (American time).

<http://rookiemag.com/>

## Anti-Bullying Teaching Resources

BeatBullying is the UK's leading bullying prevention charity, creating a world where bullying, violence and harassment are unacceptable. BeatBullying empowers people to understand, recognise, and say no to bullying, violence and harassment by giving them the tools to transform their lives and the lives of their peers. Working with families, schools, and communities to understand the problem, campaign for change and provide a sustainable efficient and proven solution.

Whether you want to keep your pupils safe, aware of bullying in its many forms, cyber-savvy, or clued up on their rights and responsibilities, we have a huge range of lesson and assembly plans, activities and information available for you, for free.

<http://bit.ly/11lqUmT>

## Shakespeare Day

April 23<sup>rd</sup> is celebrated each year as Shakespeare Day, this is a good day to promote library Shakespeare collections. Get your manga enthusiasts into Shakespeare with the Manga Shakespeare books by Self

Made Hero Press, Classical Comics has a brilliant selection of full text graphic novels in the original text as well as modern text and simplified English for struggling readers – all in a high quality full colour package.

There are also fantastic films based on many of Shakespeare's plays including *10 Things I Hate About You* (The Taming of the Shrew), *O* a modern adaptation of Othello set in an American High School, *Romeo+Juliet* by Baz Luhrman and many others.

If you are not a fan of Shakespearian entertainment you have other choices!

The 23<sup>rd</sup> is also St George's Day – patron Saint of England (and several other countries).

It is also UNESCO World Book and Copyright Day – a day set aside to pay a worldwide tribute to books and authors and to encourage people to discover the pleasure of reading. It is hoped that this will lead to the renewed respect for those who have made irreplaceable contributions to social and cultural progress. In some years, the UNESCO Prize for Children's and Young People's Literature in the Service of Tolerance is awarded. It is also hoped that World Book and Copyright Day will increase people's understanding of and adherence to copyright laws and other measures to protect intellectual copyright.

### **Win £500 and publication with the Aesthetica Creative Writing Competition!**

Aesthetica Magazine is inviting all writers and poets to submit their work into the Creative Writing Competition.

The Creative Writing Competition is a fantastic opportunity for existing and aspiring writers and poets to showcase their work to a wider, international audience: previous entrants have gone on to achieve success and recognition across the world. There are two categories for entry: Poetry and Short Fiction.

Deadline for entries: 31 August 2013. Finalists will be announced on the 31 October 2013.

Winners will be announced on the 1 December 2013.

#### Prizes

- There will be two winners; one Poetry winner and one Short Fiction winner.
- Each winner will receive £500.
- Each winner will receive a selection of books from our competition partners.
- Winners and finalists will be published in the Aesthetica Creative Writing Annual.

<http://bit.ly/LMOKyS>

### **Competition to illustrate Shelterbox disaster story**

The disaster relief charity ShelterBox has launched its fourth annual Young ShelterBox Illustration Competition in collaboration with [Chatterbooks](#) reading clubs.

The search is on to find the UK's best young artists, whose drawings or paintings will be published in a picture book entitled *The Day the Bombs Fell*. This will be the latest in a series that vividly brings to life natural and man-made disasters, helping children to express their feelings and explore their responses to world news.

<http://bit.ly/11pODiv>

### **Google Reader Shutting Down**

By now the news of Google announcing plans to shelve its RSS reader should have reached everyone that uses it. If you do use Google reader but managed to miss the news that on the 1<sup>st</sup> July it will be no more – sorry to be the bearer of bad news!

RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication. It's that little radar-like button on news sites and blogs that let you subscribe to everything they publish. In RSS readers like Google Reader, you then get a reverse chronological list of stories from every source you're interested in. (courtesy of Mashable)

If you are still looking for a replacement or are new to RSS in general here is a link to a list of possible Google Reader replacements: <http://on.mash.to/ZJME90>

1. **Hi Joanne thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed! Can I ask you to introduce yourself for the audience please?**

Hi Matt, thanks for having me to “chat” to all your wonderful, bookish readers! I’m a born and bred Joburger and have lived here among the Hadedahs and mine-dumps all my life. Johannesburg isn’t a beautiful city – though we have fabulous trees – but there’s something about the vibe and the pace that’s exciting. Or maybe we all just have altitude sickness! After I finished school, I trained as a high school English teacher and I loved doing that for a while. I must confess that in my early days, I did a lot of things “for a while”. I have done IT training, business consulting with one of the Big Four consultancies (awful job!), been a general factotum in a children’s theatre, answered phones, arranged flowers, done in-store demonstrations of cooking frozen vegetables. Along the way I collected a fistful of degrees and for the last 15 years, I have practised as a Counselling Psychologist.

2. **Your new novel Rock Steady has just been released – it is your second book for young adults and a sequel to Turtle Walk, can you tell us something about the series?**

Rock Steady is the second in the series that began with Turtle Walk. Although it’s a sequel, it reads just fine as a stand-alone novel.

My inspiration was a desire to write something different to the books I saw on the YA bookshelves at local book stores – books written almost exclusively by foreign authors, set in Europe or the US, telling stories very often based in fantasy, with a preponderance of male protagonists and feeble girl sidekicks who served as loyal friends, victims to be rescued, or passive foils to the boy’s actions. With this series, I wanted to write realistic fiction (a break from wings and wands and fangs), telling South African

stories set in our beautiful country, with smart, funny, resourceful, kick-ass heroines.

3. **Did you make a conscious decision to write for a teen audience?**

For this series, yes, though I like to write what I would like to read, and I love reading YA books. I don’t think there were very many of them around when I grew up (we seemed to go from Enid Blyton straight to Wilbur Smith), so maybe I’m indulging in a second adolescence! I have also written two books for younger middle grade readers (Jemima Jones and the Great Bear Adventure, and Jemima Jones and the Revolving Door of Doom, both of which are available as ebooks) as well as an adult novel. But I really enjoy writing in the YA “voice”. There’s a lot to like about YA fiction as a writer. It’s very direct, raw and emotional, there’s not too much in the way of flowery, literary descriptions, and there’s always room for writing with humour – which seems to be my style. So though I don’t want to be locked into writing one genre only, I’m very comfortable in the YA zone.

4. **What is your favourite part of the writing process?**

I think it’s that the work is so varied that even I can’t get bored. There’s a rhythm to getting the idea, fleshing it out in pleasant daydreams, getting it down on paper, editing and rewriting, and these days, of course, marketing, but it’s never the same. Each new book is like a new baby, and you can’t quite be sure what it might become!

5. **Were you a reader as a teen and did you have any favourite authors?**

I was a reader as a foetus! Seriously, ever since I could read, I’ve read everything that would stand still long enough, be it the classics, trashy novels, or the back of the cornflake box. I loved it all –from the minute microcosm of Jane Austen’s world to John Steinbeck’s spare

style; from the rollicking romances of bodice-rippers to the detailed excellence of PD James. I read, and always have, every genre except high fantasy and science fiction – I think I must lack the imagination to see other worlds, because I don't think I could write those genres either. I suspect I might be a low-brow, because I generally prefer gripping stories and authentic characters to literary fiction.

**6. Can you recommend any other YA writers (from SA or international)?**

Oh, wow, where to begin? In South Africa, Jayne Bauling, Edyth Bulbring, S.A Partridge, Kabelo Kgatea, John van de Ruit and Christine Porter, among dozens of others. Internationally, the usual suspects: John Green, Suzanne Collins, Veronica Roth and, of course, Jo Rowling, but also Gwen Hayes, Lauren Oliver, Stephanie Perkins and Australia's Melina Marchetta. I've just finished "Poison Princess" by Kresley Cole and thought it was fabulous.

**7. Are you working on anything new at the moment?**

At the moment, I'm writing a YA romance, and I'm loving it! It's based on a contemporary (and non-fantasy) retelling of a classic fairy-tale. I'm a bit superstitious of saying more about it, though, in case I jinx it. My psychological thriller for adults, *Dark Whispers*, is scheduled for publication next year. Writing that book, which was based on a newspaper article I read, scared the pants off me, and it definitely won't be one for my YA readers.

**8. Do you ever visit school or library reading groups either in person or virtually via Skype? If you do what is the best way to contact you about a visit?**

I love visiting schools and talking directly to teens – I want to get as many young people as possible addicted to reading! I've done school visits in Johannesburg

and Cape Town and would definitely be available to speak to groups via Skype. I do talks on my specific books, as well as on the broader writing process and the ecological issues tackled in my eco-warrior series. I'd love to chat to readers and schools outside of South Africa. Travelling is always a possibility as, like many South Africans, I have family in London and Atlanta. The best way to reach me is probably via twitter [@JoanneMacg](https://twitter.com/JoanneMacg) or via the contact form on my website [www.ioannemacgregor.com](http://www.ioannemacgregor.com).

This interview appeared in longer form on the Teen Librarian website. You can read the full interview with Joanne here: <http://bit.ly/WpFA2w>