

Book Fair Author Spotlight On...



Vikki VanSickle

Words That Start With B

Q What inspires you to write?

A When I started to write as a kid, it was because I loved books. One day I decided- hey, I can do that-and ever since I've been creating characters and imagining their life stories. Now I realize I write because I love people. I'm interested in people's stories and the many different paths their lives can take. I am inspired by my friends, family, the people I meet, books, plays, movies; anything can be a source of inspiration. There is a story behind everything; that's what makes life so rich.

Q What advice do you have for young writers?

A First and foremost, read! People say you are what you eat; I believe writers are what they read. There is no better way to absorb structure, storytelling, and language than by reading widely. Second, write everything down. I keep journals full of all sorts of random information: books I need to read, anecdotes people have told me, words or names that I like, interesting facts or news clippings, etc. You never know what might turn into a great story. Third, find a buddy. Taking a writing class was the best thing I could have done for my career, not only because it introduced me to great books and writing techniques, but it was in this class that I met my writing soul mate. We send each other something every month, no matter what, and encourage and inspire each other to keep on writing.

Q What was your favourite book when you were growing up?

A I read everything I could get my hands on, but my top five books were (in no particular order): *Catwings* (by Ursula Leguin) *Anne of Green Gables* (by L.M. Montgomery) *Watership Down* (by Richard Adams) *As the Waltz Was Ending* (by Emma MacAlitz Butterworth) Plus the *Nancy Drew* books by Carolyn Keene.

Q What do you like to do when you're not writing?

A When I'm not writing, I enjoy reading, searching for treasures in thrift stores, browsing for books, going to the theatre or the movies, making dinner for friends, exploring new neighbourhoods in the city, and singing.

Q What has been the biggest achievement of your career so far?

A Having my first novel, *Words That Start With B*, accepted for publication is the biggest achievement of my career so far. For as long as I can remember, I have wanted to write books. Not so long ago, getting published seemed unattainable and almost magical, and yet here I am, a published author! It is an indescribable feeling.

Q What is it about Clarissa, the main character from your newest novel, *Words that Start With B*, that readers will relate to?

A Have you ever had a moment when you wish you could speak your mind, but you're too shy or polite or nervous to say what you're really thinking? Clarissa is the kind of person who speaks her mind no matter what. Sometimes this gets her into trouble, but she never apologizes for being anyone but herself. I love this about Clarissa. I also think she happens to be an amazing friend. Clarissa is the kind of friend who will stand by you no matter what, even if you have spinach in your teeth during your oral presentation or strike out every single time at baseball. My friends are one of the most important things in my life, and I aspire to be the kind of friend that Clarissa is.