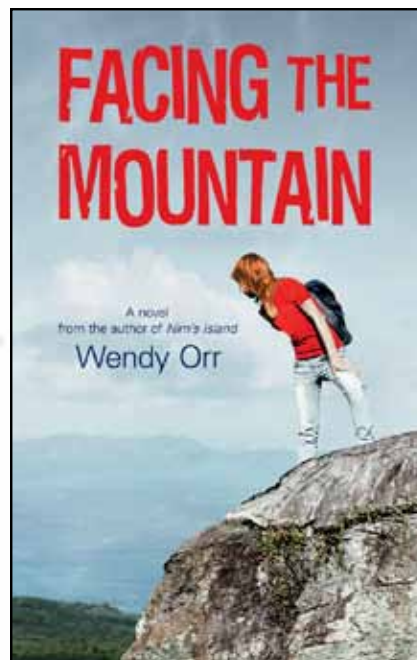


Book Fair Author Spotlight On...



Wendy Orr



Q What inspires you to write?

A I love stories. I believe that the world is made up of stories, and writing them is the best way I know to find out what I believe about life.

Q What advice do you have for young writers?

A Read a lot, and write a lot. Write the stories you want to read, and the stories you love to live in. Remember that you learn something from everything you write, even if it doesn't work out and you don't want to finish it. Maybe you'll come back to it one day; maybe you'll move on to something completely different. But the most important thing is to have fun with all parts of the writing: the words, the characters, and the story.

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

A I had so many different favourites! At Raven's age I still loved *Anne of Green Gables* and *Little Women*, but also all of Rosemary Sutcliff's historical novels like *The Eagle of the Ninth*, *The Yearling*, *Two Little Savages*, *The Incredible Journey*, *The Queen's Music*, the *Narnia* series... that's probably enough!

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

A Read, walk on the beach with my dog, do tai chi, or have a coffee with a friend.

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

A I know that most people would think that it was having *Nim's Island* become a Hollywood movie; the Red Carpet and the glamour was certainly an unbelievable thrill, but for me, my own achievement was that I had created a story that so many people believed in enough to spend years of their lives working with it. In some ways simply having my first book, *Amanda's Dinosaur*, published, still feels like the greatest achievement. And in other ways, it's getting a letter from a kid who says that one of my books started them reading, or helped them through a tough time in life. I feel incredibly grateful that my imaginary characters and I can do that.

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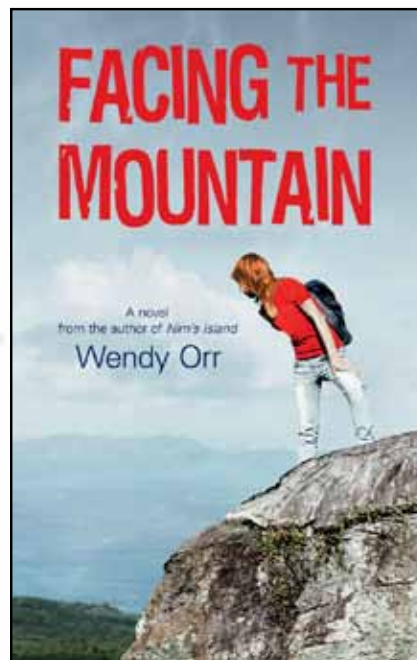
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Book Fair Author Spotlight On...



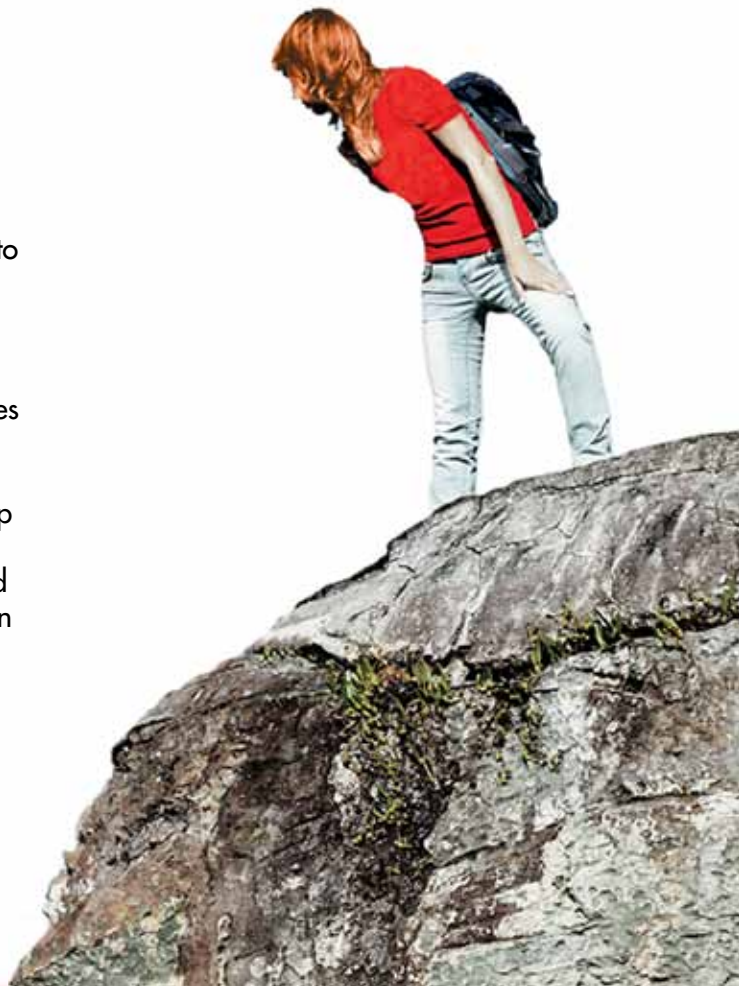
Wendy Orr



Q In *Facing the Mountain*, your character Raven has to endure tremendous adversity and look within herself to find the strength to save her family. What was your inspiration for this gripping wilderness adventure?

A When I was Raven's age and a bit older, I used to make up survival adventure stories for myself, wondering how I would manage if I had to do something like ride my horse back from Colorado to Red Deer, Alberta, where we'd moved from, or to Toronto, where we were moving next. I used that feeling when I was thinking of Raven's story.

The inspiration for the plot came from climbing Pikes Peak in Colorado with my dad and younger sister when I was twelve. My sister and I both remember the huge thrill and pride we felt on reaching the top (even though we were very disappointed to see a gift shop with buses parked out front — we wanted to feel that we were in the wilderness!). However on the way up we had to shelter from a hailstorm under a big rock, just like my characters did, and I've always wondered, 'What if you had to shelter under a rock for a long time, or you couldn't get out?...'



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