

Book Fair Author Spotlight On...



Helaine Becker

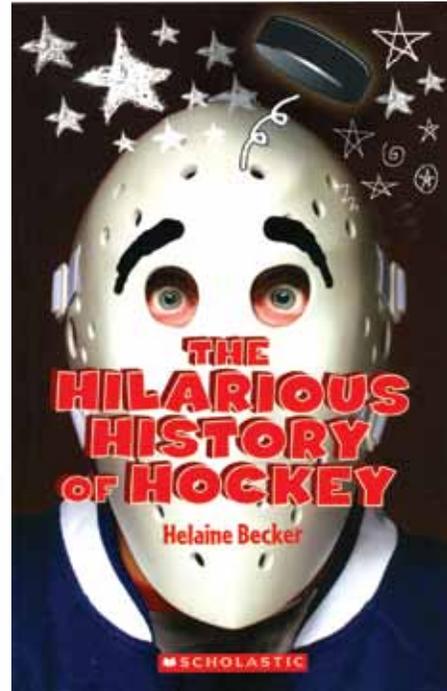
**The Hilarious History of Hockey
& The Quiz Book for Girls**

Q What inspires you to write?

A Other books, of course! I always loved to read, because every time I opened up a new book, it was like opening a door into a new world. Sometimes, the book might take me to a new place, or to meet interesting and exciting people. Sometimes, it might help me learn new things. And other times, it might make me laugh my head off with silly jokes or riddles. All of those adventures with words inspired me, not only to keep reading, but to try my hand at creating something equally as entertaining.

Q What advice do you have for young writers?

A Most writers will tell you the best things to do to hone your writing skill is to a) read a lot and b) write a lot. Practicing writing will help you improve, for sure, but reading a lot also helps because you absorb the “tricks” of language without really trying. I’d also add to this list c) get out there and live your life. You need something to write about, don’t you? The more interesting experiences you have in life, and the better you know and understand the world and people, the better your writing will be.



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

A How on Earth can I pick just one? I had different favourites every week, every month, every year. In general, though, I loved books that told stories about kids doing all kinds of things, especially crazy or wild things. I’m thinking about *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* now. I loved fantasy and adventure stories, like *The Chronicles of Narnia* series, and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* and *The Borrowers* and everything by Edward Eager. I loved “real” stories too, about kids that were either like me, or that I could imagine, like *Harriet the Spy* or *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret*. A book called *I Am David*, about a boy trying to survive alone in Europe during the Holocaust also made a big impression on me. Did I mention *A Wrinkle in Time*? Or *The Four Story Mistake*? Or...?

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

A Anything and everything. I love to read – but you already know that. But I'm also very social. I like to get together with my friends, hang out and laugh and talk! I loooooove to travel, and do that whenever I can. I run, and swim, and cycle, which keeps me fit so I have enough energy to go out and play, play, play. I love to play with my doggie, Ella. And I love to cook and eat. Eat mostly.

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

A I'm really proud of winning the Lane Anderson Award for Science Writing for Children, for *The Insecto-Files*. I am NOT a scientist, so being able to learn about all the science, and then communicate it in a way that works for kids who are like me – not necessarily heading toward science careers – made me feel very, very good. But mostly, I'd say my greatest achievement is being able to do what I love day in and day out – write for kids on many, many topics, and visit them at schools across the country. Not everybody has this chance to both enjoy their work enormously AND (with a little luck) inspire kids to follow their own dreams. (Hint: you can make your dreams come true, as long as you are willing to work really hard at it!)

Q Hockey is considered such an integral part of being Canadian. What made you decide to look at the fun and sometimes ridiculous side of the game in *The Hilarious History of Hockey*?

A I think any time you get a bunch of people sliding around on the ice chasing a little black object – well, that's funny.

Q I'm sure you took a lot of your own quizzes when creating *The Quiz Book for Girls...* what was the most interesting thing you discovered about yourself?

A My totem is the Raven. I'm Penelope (from the Which Classical Goddess or Heroine Are You? Quiz), Lara Croft (Which Superheroine?), Poison Ivy (Which Super Villain?) and Judy Moody (Which Kids Book Character?). And I'm a Chocolate Chip Cookie (What Kind of Cookie Are You?)!

