

Author Interview With Lois Wickstrom by Itsy Bitsy Book Bits

For those new to your work, please tell us a bit about yourself, your books and your genre/s

- I'm split among many genres. My picture books are science based, involve imaginary playmates, and magical adventures. My middle grade books have shape-shifters, imaginary playmates, and political activism

What lessons have you learned as a writer?

- I need more than one beta reader. One isn't enough to catch all my first-draft mistakes.

If you won the lottery what would you do with the money?

- Donate it to local homeless shelters

In your everyday life how do you give back to the world?

- I help neighbors with their computers.

If your life was a song what song would it be and why?

- 59th Street Bridge -- on good days, I talk to inanimate objects and cook with herbs.

Name two authors you wish more people knew about

- Jessica Townsend, Nancy L. Haines

What are some of your hobbies?

- drawing, swimming, cooking

When reading reviews, what is something you love to see written?

- This book made me think about ... differently

What are you currently working on?

- A middle-grade novel about a dog that wags Morse Code.

What books are currently in your to-read list?

- Sal and Gabi Break the Universe, Beyond Majority Rule, Truth of the Heart

What is your favorite book made into a movie/tv show?

- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

- I have an artificial hip and owe my mobility to my physical therapist

What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a book?

- I'm currently researching a book on witchcraft. This will require at least a year of research at the library and online.

Where do you come up with the ideas for character names or towns/places to have books set in?

- When I was a child I hated books that had characters with my name. The fictional person was never like me and I didn't want people to think the book was about me. I go to baby name sites and look for unusual names, or just make them up and check that they aren't on baby name lists. When I write a science folktale, I'm stuck with the names in the originals. Goldilocks by any other name wouldn't be the same. Fortunately, I've never met anyone named Goldilocks. For towns, I often pick towns I've lived in or visited.

Do you hide any secrets in your books that only a few people will find? If so have you provided a treasure map of sorts so the reader gets that something extra?

- no

If you could tell your younger writing self anything, what would it be?

- Outline before you start writing, and then don't be surprised when the plot changes on its own as you live in the world of the story.

Everyone has one thing that takes away their best self. What is your writing Kryptonite?

- Rejects on work that was so-close-to-selling.

**You are filling out this interview as part of a tour with Itsy Bitsy Book Bits.
What made you choose Itsy Bitsy Book Bits?**

- Laura Backes interviewed Colleen on her KidLit podcast.