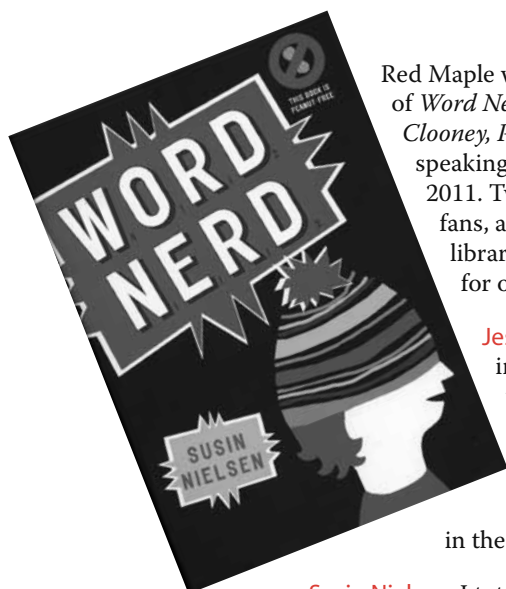


Meet the Author

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Red Maple winner Susin Nielsen, author of *Word Nerd* and the recent *Dear George Clooney, Please Marry My Mom*, was speaking recently at Super Conference 2011. Two of her most determined fans, along with their teacher-librarian, decided to interview her for our Meet the Author feature.

Jesegan: We've been chosen to interview you and I've enjoyed your book so much! I read it three times and I love it.

Parth: Me too. And you probably heard us "Woo-ing" in the crowd.

Susin Nielsen: I totally did, thank you so much!

J: Okay, so let's start with number one okay? Number one: is there going to be a second book?

SN: There's not going to be a second *Word Nerd* book, but my next book, *Dear George Clooney, Please Marry My Mom*—

J: Yeah, I read the preview. I loved it.

SN: So you know then that Amanda and Cosmo are in it, and that even Ambrose makes a little tiny cameo? That's what I try to do in my books because they're all set in Vancouver. I try to keep in touch with my characters and Ambrose is actually in the third book too, just a tiny bit, so that you know that they're doing okay.

P: Alright, next question. How old were you when you wrote this book?

SN: How old was I when I wrote *Word Nerd*?

P: Yes.

SN: That's a bit personal, boys. <laughs> I was 22...no I was...

Katherine: We talked about these personal questions, didn't we? Not to ask them?

SN: He's smooth! Did you hear? I said I was 22 and he said "Oh, that's recent then."

J: What inspired you to write this book? Like kept you motivated and all that?

SN: Well I always knew that I wanted to write an original Young Adult novel. Many many years ago I wrote four books in the *Degrassi* series of books—*Shane, Snake, Wheels* and *Melanie*. First I thought it was gonna be about a curmudgeonly old man that the character met at the library. Then I thought there'd maybe been a lot of stories about kids befriending curmudgeonly old people and it doesn't feel real enough for me somehow. I thought well why does he have to be an old guy? What if he's the neighbour's son and what if he's not actually that many years older than Ambrose and he's really trying to get his life together? So that was where Cosmo started to form in my head.

K: Do you boys have any questions about what Ms. Nielsen has spoken about today?

J: Where did you get your honesty and your humour from?

SN: That's a really good question. I think I've gotten a bit braver the older I get. But also I do think that I've probably always been somebody who speaks my mind for better or for worse. Sometimes it gets me into trouble, sometimes I don't think before I speak. And then my humour. You know when I was a teenager, everything I wrote was very maudlin; very very depressing. So I think the humour developed over time, and I guess I just think that when I look back at being your age, it was really hard sometimes, right? But there's also a lot of humour too. I personally think that there's a lot of books out there for young people that have no humour at all, and then there are books that are sort of just straight-on humour. I really wanted to work in that world where you could do a bit of both. Where some of the stuff that happens to Ambrose, you just, you really feel for the guy, but life is also funny, right? So I like to be funny, and I like to look at life in a funny way.

J: We searched on the Internet and we found out you're optimistic, your ice cream flavour is cookie dough, and