

This is always a tough one to answer! It feels a little like choosing which of my children I prefer. I guess the best answer I can give, is that my favourite changes from time to time. I used to say that it was my first book (*The Gargoyle in My Yard*), because everything started there. Then for a long time, my answer was, “I like the book I’m currently working on,” which is also true.

These days, I answer that my favourite book is *The Strange Gift of Gwendolyn Golden*, because Gwendolyn is the closest character to what I was like as a teenager (but without the gift of flight). It was the fastest book to write (about four months), and Gwendolyn just came to life with her own voice, her own mind, right from the start.

You've written that it's important for authors to “love their monster.” Please explain what you mean.

I love creating monsters. Most authors probably do, since they're the most fun!

When writing my latest book, *Everton Miles is Stranger than Me*, I went looking for inspiration for my monstrous antagonist, a bitter, dangerous, fallen character named Abilith. I re-read Mary Shelley, Melville, Dante, Milton, Lovecraft, and others.

What makes their monsters so memorable, I wondered?

Mary Shelley's monster was lonely. Milton's Lucifer had pride and rage. Dante's demons in the Inferno were bored, workaday employees. In *At the Mountains of Madness*, Lovecraft's monsters returned to bury their dead.

Loneliness, rage, boredom, loss. We can relate.

How to create a memorable monster? I decided that you have to love your monster enough to give them a touch of humanity, a fatal flaw that we can all understand.

What do you read for personal pleasure? Are you reading anything right now?

Oh, guilty pleasure time! My personal reading pile is eclectic.

I read a lot of YA and middle-grade books for pleasure. I pick up whatever looks interesting. I read *The Rest of Us Just Live Here* by Patrick Ness recently, and really loved it.

I like historical fiction, so I'll admit to a little Diana Gabaldon—dabbling now and then. I also love a good mystery, so I read P.D. James (she's one of my literary heroes, writing into her 90s), Robert Galbraith/J.K. Rowling and whatever looks good.

I like non-fiction as well. I'm about to start the Jared Diamond book, *Collapse*, on why societies fail. I loved *Guns, Germs and Steel*, and so I'm looking forward to it.

If you hadn't become a writer what other careers have caught your interest?

I have an M.A. in English. I was really tempted by the academic life at U of T when I was there, and considered doing a Ph.D. But in the end, I knew my real love was writing.

I've also played classical guitar since I was 12. I would have loved to be part of the professional music world, but it didn't happen. I do play baroque music with a flute-player friend, and record my musical compositions with my long-time editor, Allister Thompson, and that's been fun.

What are you working on next? Have you considered writing a young adult dystopian series?

I currently have two more books coming in the *Weird Stories Gone Wrong* series, so they are at various stages of completion. I'm also pondering writing something to celebrate the ten year anniversary of the *Lost Gargoyle* series in 2019. And I AM working on a middle-grade dystopia, something I've had up my sleeve for a while. Stay tuned!

Thank you, this was fun!

Thank you Philippa! I

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