

Margaret Isaac

Where were you born and brought up?

I was born and brought up in the Rhymney Valley

Where did you go to school?

I went to Tir-y-berth primary school and Bargoed Grammar School.

What did you particularly like and dislike about school?

I loved singing lessons, especially the old folk songs of Wales and Ireland. I hated standing in the cold waiting for the school bus.

What was your favourite book as a child?

Peter Pan by J M Barrie.

Do you have any hobbies?

Walking by the seaside and reading legends from all over the world.

What makes you happy?

Seeing flowers blossoming in the Spring.

What makes you angry?

Not getting ready in time.

When did you start to write?

I have always written stories from the time I was in primary school, but I started writing seriously about fifteen years ago.

Which one was your first book?

Tales of Gold. I wrote five short stories about caves and gold and treasure for the Dolaucothi Education Project.

Do you find it easy to write?

Yes. I love writing out my ideas and then reworking the words until I'm satisfied.

Where do you write?

In my writing room overlooking fields and the river Usk.

From where do you get your ideas?

From Wales. I get excited by old stories about castles, standing stones, lakes and rivers, the magic of the place and the ingenuity and courage of the people. I like to imagine living in the past.

What advice would you give someone who is starting to write?

Don't give up, and always believe in yourself.

Are some of your characters based on yourself?

Yes.

Which of your books is your favourite?

Rhiannon's Way. But I usually like the last book I wrote. Last year I would have said *Nia and the Magic of the Lake*.

Which is your favourite character?

Huw from *Tales of Gold*. I felt so sorry for him when he was tricked by Merlin, I gave him the job of a gifted story teller at the end to compensate him for his troubles!

Is there something you would like to change about yourself?

I'd like to be more patient with other people.

Which are your favourite television programmes?

Anything with Rowan Atkinson, especially *Mr Bean*.

What is your favourite food?

Cawl.

What makes you laugh?

Watching the antics of kittens and puppies.

I have long had an interest in stories connected with place, and Wales is full of such stories. I have a strong feeling for my Welsh roots and I like to imagine what it would be like to live in Wales in different periods of time.

I particularly like researching my stories. I like to visit places like Llyn-y-fan Fach and imagine how the tale of the Lady of the Lake first began. I try to place myself in the time in which I have set my book, before using a bit of lateral thinking! I believe that people have experienced the same joys and sorrows whenever they might have lived. The bullying suffered by Wyn in *Nia and the Magic of the Lake* sadly hasn't changed much in contemporary Britain, and the Silurian need to preserve their identity and culture in *Rhiannon's Way* is as true today as it ever was!

Writing has led me to discover many new and exciting things. When embarking on *Rhiannon's Way*, I discovered the huge iron age fort at Llanmelin, and writing *Nia and the Magic of the Lake* took me to the village of Myddfai where the legend of Llyn-y-fan Fach continues to cast its spell.

Although I place my books in the past, I like to create a story which is contemporary. I tend to create characters loosely based on people I have known, or even on my own experiences.

I particularly like writing for children. They read stories with a fresh enthusiasm which is stimulating for any writer, and their criticism is honest and often quite demanding. They always inspire me to continue with my writing.

Books by Margaret Isaac which are in print:

Nia and the Magic of the Lake

0953726738 £9.50

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

0953726746 £8.50

Rhiannon's Way

0953726789 £12.50

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