



I always loved books and reading. When I was a child my parents had an old set of encyclopaedias from the 1920's; the pages were silky and magical and the illustrations were tiny.

The information was way out of date.

I could read them for hours at a time, and was never bored.

To me their ancient provenance, was enough to ensure I would be captivated by them. They fit in with the tiny stuffed crocodile my grandmother had brought back from her honeymoon and the old wooden toys carved by my great uncle. All were portals, portals to a mysterious place and time, which I would create and people without knowing what I did. Books led me to imagination, and imagination to creativity. Reading *Treasure Island* or *The Black Arrow* by RL Stevenson was (a still is) a direct call to the imagination. There and with many other authors, I would completely lose touch with reality and be there, watching, listening, wondering and reflecting. Stories are the way I made sense of that reality, the people I knew, the geography of my world. Stories provided me with the transferable skills I needed to negotiate life. I will never tire of them as they continue to fill me with what I need.

I try to write to fill that need in others, the need for narrative, action, and a view of complex people who experience life differently to me; i.e. in different places, with a variety of cultures and customs, encountering the passion of the emotions and the quiet of the intellect, humour, and in short, the roller coaster of life. Storytelling takes its place as one of the tools we use to make sense of things. It can make our lives better, or bleaker. We are the sum of what we absorb. Each person, each story, is a unique tattoo in a world of repetitions. What genre do I write? Perhaps it's not so easy to label, but I like it to have interesting characters, a sensible plot, definitely humour, and few surprises. I want people to enjoy a good read, but also to find themselves reflecting on what has been offered.