



Tabitha Suzuma

Q: What were you like at school?

A: I was a terrible pupil. I hated school and refused to work and did astonishingly badly in all subjects except for English. I spent a lot of my time writing with my left-hand (I'm right handed) in an attempt to while away the hours. In secondary school I would sit at the back of the class and write stories, which I got away with because my teachers thought I was taking notes. Occasionally, when the boredom got too much, I would pull some prank like throwing my friend's shoes out of the window ...

Being half Japanese, I was sent to Japanese Saturday school. In the term report, the teacher commented that I would make more progress if I didn't always insist on sitting with my feet up on the desk. This still remains my favourite writing position, which is why I now have a reclining chair and a cordless keyboard ...

When I was fourteen, I just stopped going to school - much to my teachers' relief and my parents' anguish. I grudgingly did a few GCSEs by correspondence course and only turned up to some of the exams. I wanted to be an actress. My mother eventually tricked me into doing A levels (I thought I was signing up for a fun evening class). My fervent wish was not to go to university.

Q: What did you want to be when you were a child?

A: Either an actress (aged 8 I was picked out of the audience to play the part of a baby monster) or a writer.

Q: Which three words describe you best?

A: Mad, well-meaning, perceptive.

Q: What are you afraid of?

A: Illnesses, especially depression.

Q: What do you do as a hobby?

A: Cycling, swimming and go-karting with my 9-year-old godson.

Learning British Sign Language.

Q: What do you day dream about?

A: The book I'm writing or the book I'm going to write next.

Q: What profession other than yours would you like to attempt?

A: If I had the skill and the talent, I would love to be a concert pianist like my younger

brother.

Q: Do you feel younger or older than your current age?

A: I still feel 17 - the age at which I wrote my first full-length book. It was called 'Angels on the Wild Side' and was about gang violence, drugs, teenage pregnancy, homosexuality, physical abuse and suicide. My mother refused to finish reading it.

It didn't get published...

Q: If you could meet one person, dead or alive, who would it be?

A: My maternal grandmother.

Q: What quality do you most admire in a person?

A: Emotional intelligence.

Q: What is the best advice anyone has ever given you?

A: To accept the things I cannot change, have the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference ...

I always struggle with that last bit though.

Q: What would you most like to change about yourself?

A: I'd like not to suffer from depression.

Q: What has life taught you?

A: That to live is to keep on trying.

Q: How long have you been a writer?

A: I started writing stories for pleasure as soon as I learned to write ...

I wrote my first (unpublished) book at 17 ...

My first book was published in 2006.

Q: Was there a specific moment in your life when you decide to become a writer?

A: When I was 6, I announced to everyone that I was going to be a writer when I grew up.

Q: Where do you do your writing?

A: In my study, on my beloved iMac.

Q: What are the best and worst things about being an author?

A: The best thing is, without doubt, receiving emails from readers and getting to know them...

The worst is working night after night without even knowing if the book is going to get published.

Q: Where do you get your greatest ideas from?

A: The most difficult times in my life.

Special people I've met.

The young people that I teach.

Q: Which of your own characters do you most identify with?

A: Flynn - from 'A Note of Madness' and 'A Voice in the Distance'. He is part of me.

Q: What do you do to combat “writers’ block”?

A: Imagine a life without writing.

Q: What was your favourite book as a child?

A: There were so many. But my favourite author was KM Peyton. She became my mentor and told me if I wrote a book, she would read it. So I did.

Q: What book do you wish you had written?

A: 'I Am the Cheese' by Robert Cormier.

Q: What advice would you give to aspiring authors?

A: Only go for it if writing is something you can't imagine living without.

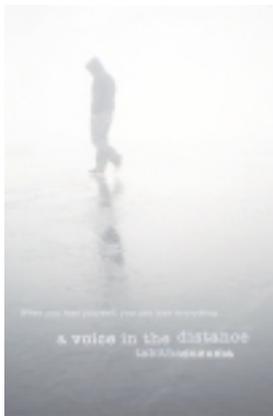
My Books



A Note of Madness



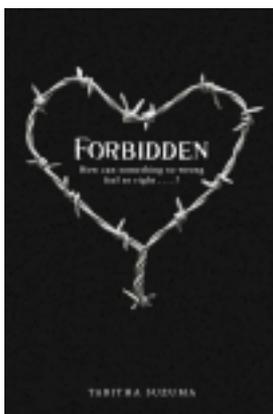
From Where I Stand



A Voice in the Distance



Without Looking Back



Forbidden