

Children's Book Publishing: From Messy Drafts to Published Books!

Collated by Chris Soul

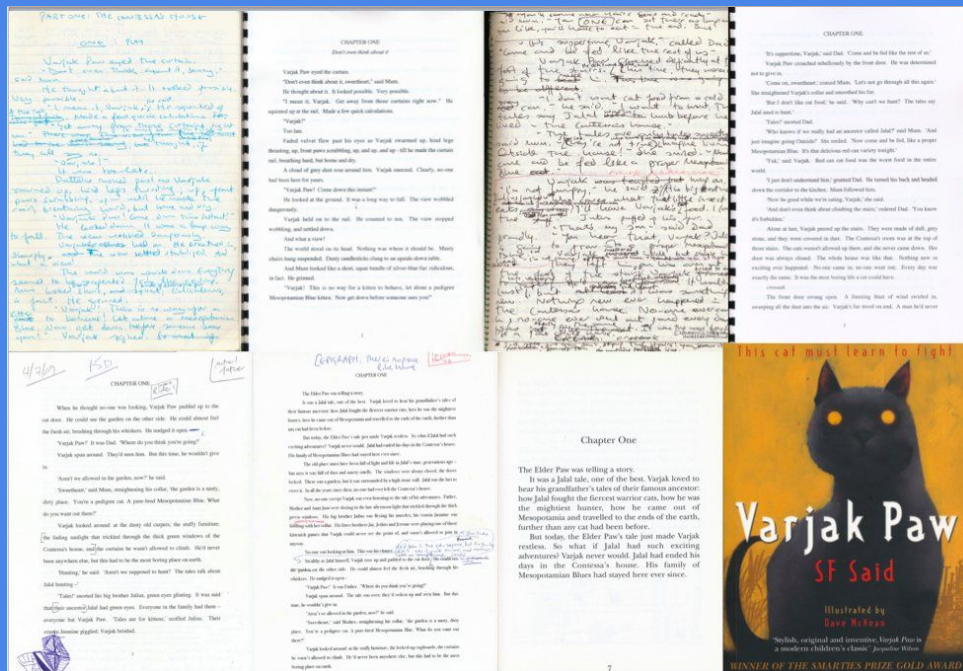
SF Said's process to publication for his wonderful book 'Varjak Paw'

You can see more of his process here at the British Library:

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/varjak-paw-by-sf-said-illustrated-by-dave-mckean-manuscript-drafts-a-and-printed-book>

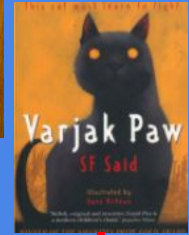
To show children the dedication, editing, time, perseverance it takes to get a book published.

Nothing is perfect straight away. Keep trying and you'll get there!



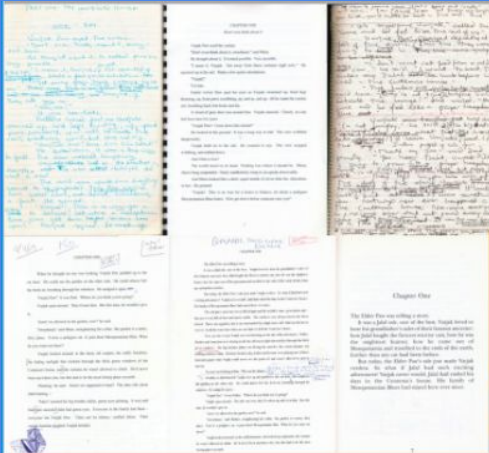
Children's Book Publishing: From Messy Drafts to Published Books!

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There is a huge journey from an author's idea to a book that appears in a bookshop.

- 1) Edit, edit, edit a book that an agent and a publisher wants to publish.
- 2) An agent and publisher will edit your story even more with you.
- 3) The publisher will have editors, designers, publicists, illustrators that work on the book to make it the best it can be.
- 4) The book is printed. Proof copies are printed first and further corrections made.
- 5) Finally the book is delivered to bookshops!



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Tamsin Winter, author of 'Jemima Small Versus the Universe' shows us a stack of drafts...

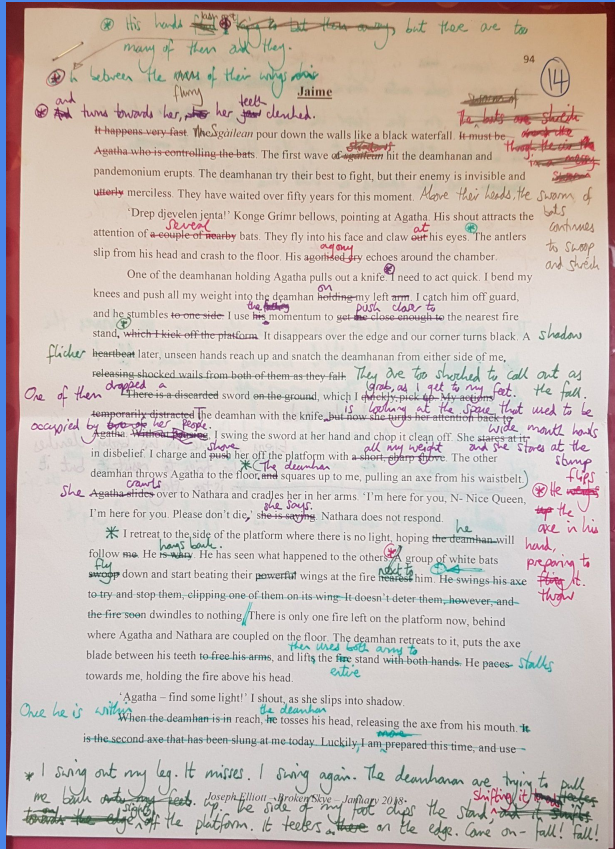
"The many many drafts of JEMIMA SMALL VERSUS THE UNIVERSE and (finally!) the finished book.
Don't give up!"



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Joseph Elliott, author of 'The Good Hawk' shows us the colourful notes he makes on a draft.



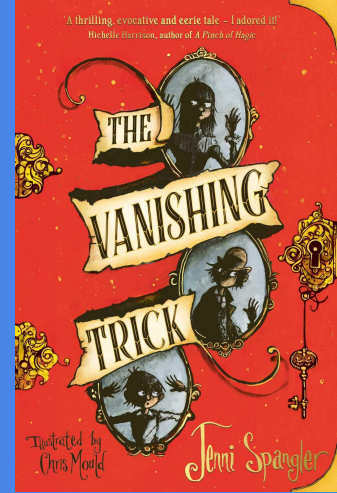
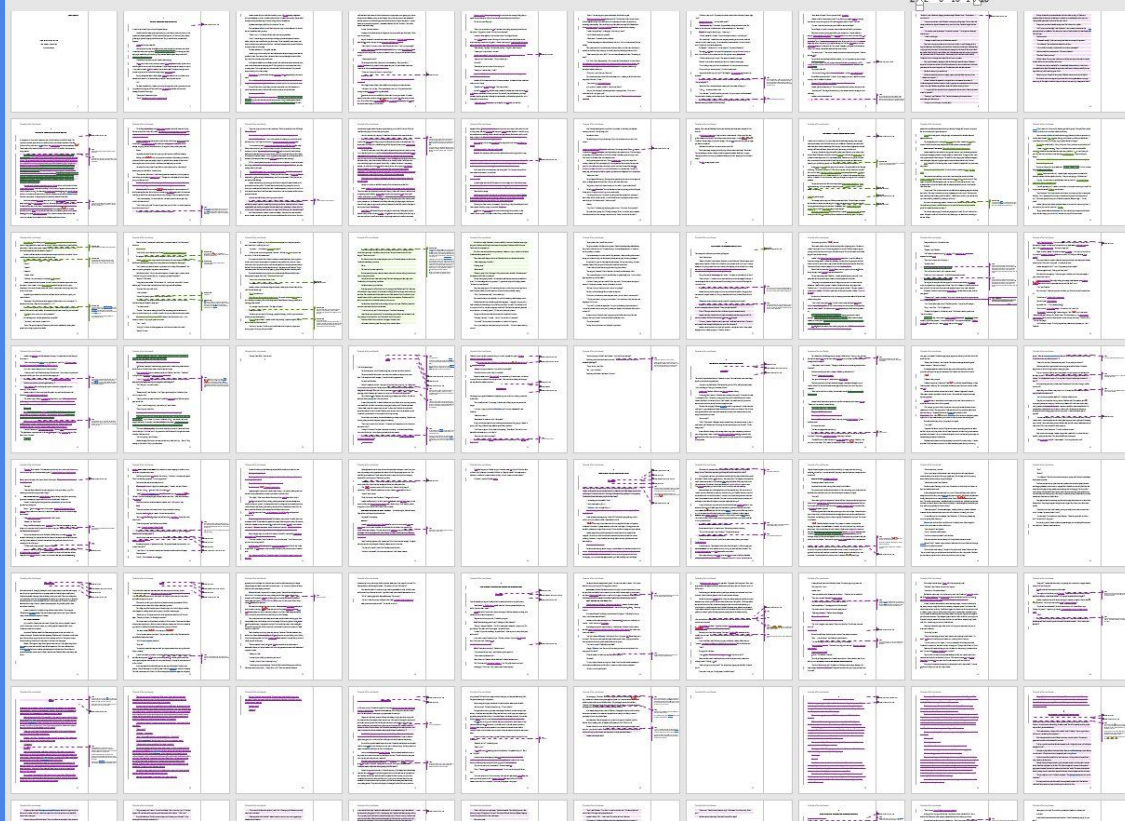
"A very messy (never seen before!) page from an early version of The Good Hawk. Think I was already on draft 4 by this point, and still LOTS of changes to be made"



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Jenni Spangler, author of 'The Vanishing Trick' shows us 50 edited pages - wow!



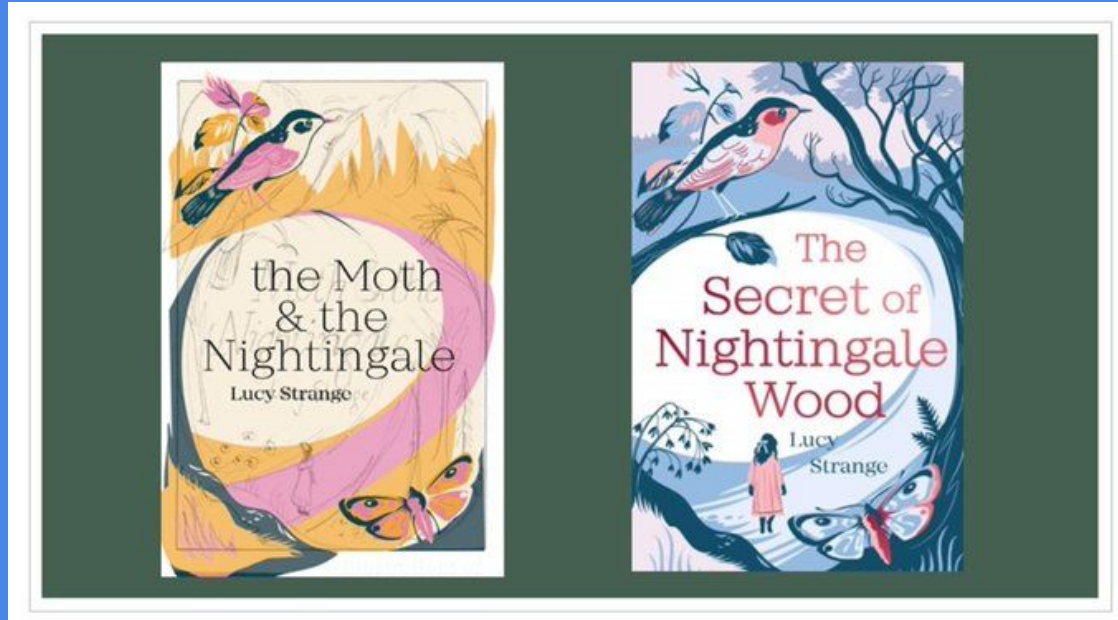
"This is the first 50 pages of The Vanishing Trick - the purple and green are the editor's notes. Think there might be one page in there which didn't need changes."

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Lucy Strange spent 3 years getting it right...

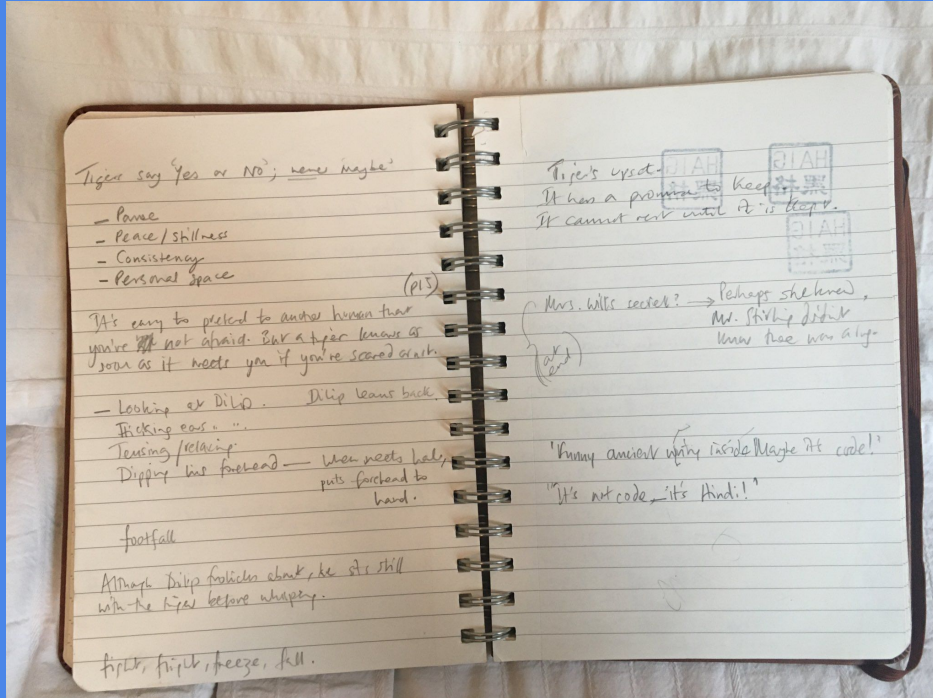
"My first book, THE SECRET OF NIGHTINGALE WOOD took 3 years from writing the first sentences to being published. Multiple rewrites and significant edits. It went from 106,000 words to 60,000 words (we CUT 46,000 words!!!). It was tough. But we got there in the end!"



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Joan Haig took 5 years...



"Ah, haven't revisited my early notes in years! They're just snatches of scenes and odd words & phrases. It was five years from this page before Tiger Skin Rug was a book



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Name	Date modified	Type	Size
THE MARINERS Chapter breakdown	19/08/2014 12:23	DOCX Document	170 KB
THE MARINERS Chapter breakdown[1]	19/08/2014 12:23	DOCX Document	170 KB
The Mariners d2 May 2014	19/08/2014 12:23	DOCX Document	329 KB
The Mariners d2 May 2014[1]	19/08/2014 12:23	DOCX Document	333 KB
The Mariners d2 May 2014-1	19/08/2014 12:23	DOCX Document	345 KB
The Mariners d2 rewrite notes	19/08/2014 18:16	DOCX Document	64 KB
The Mariners notes	20/12/2014 13:59	DOC Document	30 KB
The Mariners v2	03/01/2015 14:13	DOCX Document	56 KB
THE MARINERS version 2 d1 jan 2015	31/01/2015 15:30	DOCX Document	181 KB
the mariners additional	04/02/2015 12:00	Text Document	6 KB
THE MARINERS - d1 rewrite notes	20/03/2015 15:27	DOC Document	21 KB
mariners work pages	19/06/2015 10:42	DOCX Document	152 KB
THE MARINERS version 2 d1 jan 2015 - u...	27/06/2015 03:09	DOCX Document	290 KB
The Mariners v2d2 May 2015	30/06/2015 14:19	DOC Document	886 KB
The Mariners - notes for D2	01/07/2015 23:48	DOC Document	222 KB
The Mariners - V2D3 Jul 2015 - work copy	10/07/2015 18:08	DOC Document	793 KB
The Mariners - V2D3 Jul 2015	11/07/2015 14:22	DOC Document	861 KB
The Mariners - V2D3 working copy 2 jul 2...	15/07/2015 12:52	DOC Document	777 KB
mariners map - pavilion etc	15/07/2015 13:19	JPG File	1,507 KB
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mariners map rough	20/07/2015 10:52	PNG File	405 KB
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THE MARINERS draft 1 - reading copy jul...	19/03/2016 09:04	DOC Document	1,081 KB
THE MARINERS draft 1 - working copy wi...	19/03/2016 13:41	DOC Document	1,592 KB
The Mariners - draft 1 with map 2016	31/03/2016 09:50	DOC Document	1,588 KB
The Mariners - draft 1 chapter breakdow...	25/05/2016 09:08	DOC Document	64 KB

Tom Huddleston, author of 'Floodworld' took 8 years...

"Before we settled on FLOODWORLD, the book was called THE MARINERS. These screenshots illustrate the absurd number of drafts it went through, and the years it took. There's even one from 2010 somewhere. The moral is: keep going, you'll get there. Eventually."

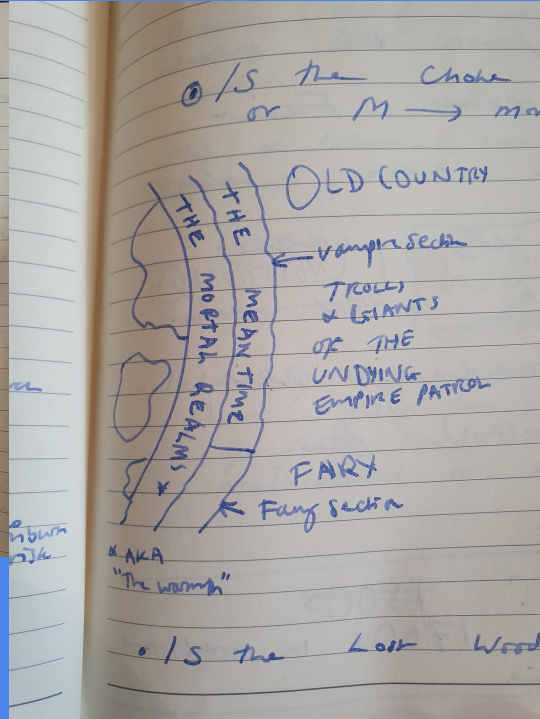
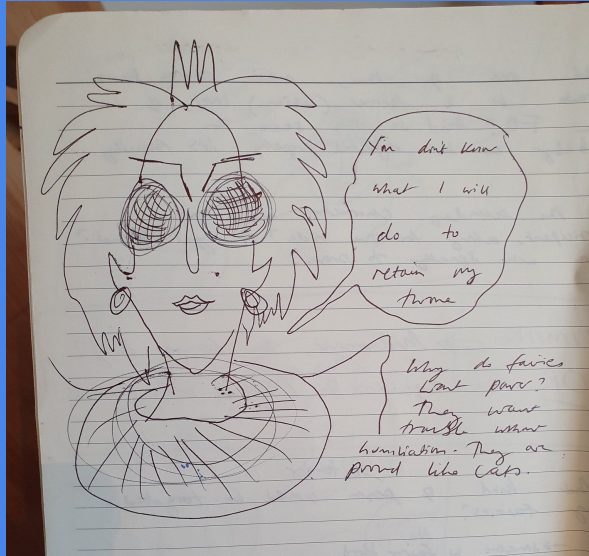
The Mariners - draft 2 jul 2016	24/09/2016 19:28
The Mariners - draft 2 notes	26/11/2016 14:33
mariners d2	20/12/2016 09:22
The Mariners - blurb for rights guide	16/01/2017 15:11
The Mariners - draft 2 working copy 2016	13/02/2017 09:27
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EK comments The Mariners - draft 2 feb ...	04/04/2017 08:03
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The Mariners - draft 5 - Jan 2018	12/01/2018 13:07
The Mariners d5A Dec 2017	12/01/2018 14:31
The Mariners - Jan 2018	19/01/2018 15:36
The Mariners - Jan 2018	19/01/2018 15:37
the mariners draft 5b notes dec 2017	14/03/2018 09:04
The Mariners Draft 6 notes	19/03/2018 13:56
FLOODWORLD aka The Mariners draft 7 -...	24/09/2018 12:09
FLOODWORLD aka The Mariners draft 7 -...	26/09/2018 14:06



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Louie Stowell shows her doodles and notes that formed ideas for 'Otherland' (20 years in the making!)

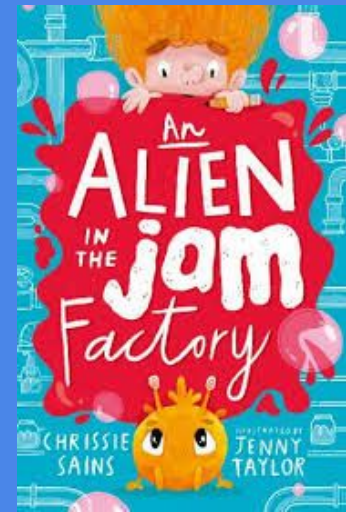
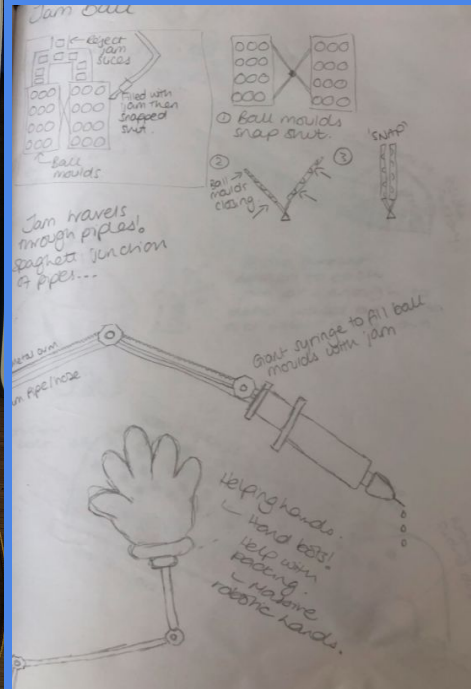
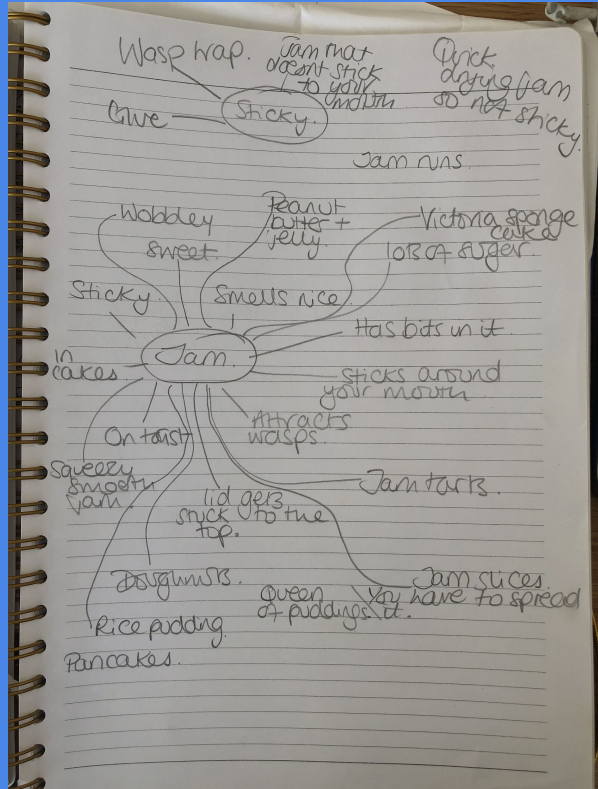


"I ask myself lots of questions while planning."

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Chrissie Sains used mind-maps and diagrams to help her write 'An Alien in the Jam Factory'

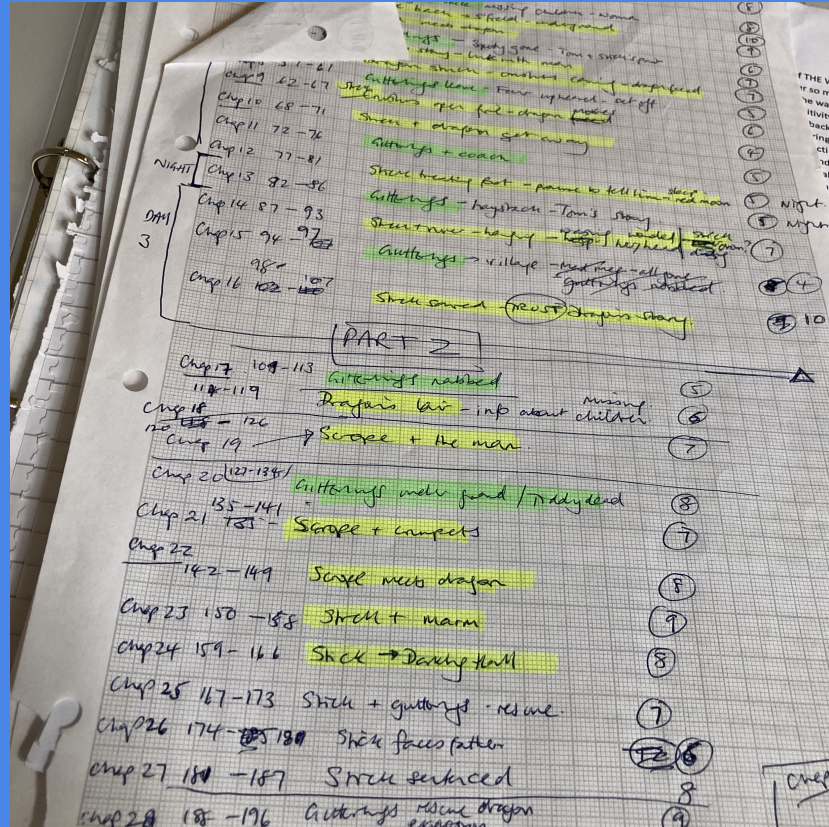


“#AlienintheJamFactory started with lots of sketches of machinery and brainstorming about jam to develop the factory. I got ideas from other places too and made a scrapbook which I'm still using for book 2”

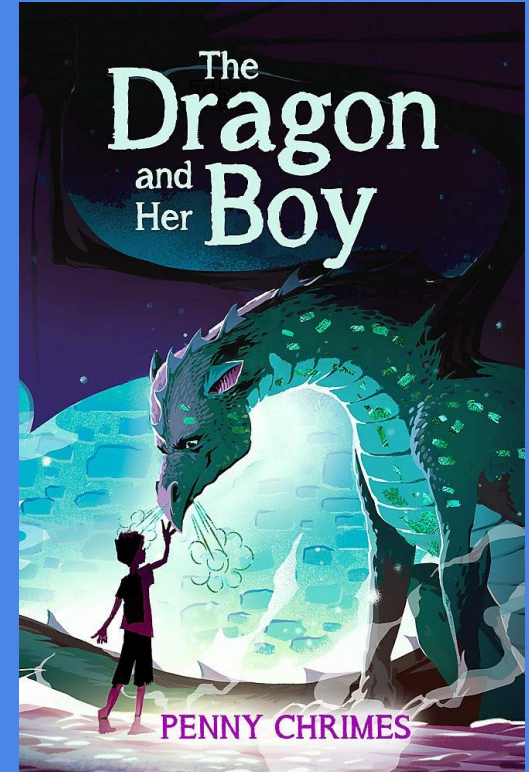
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Penny Chrimes wrote an outline of her chapters for 'The Dragon and Her Boy'

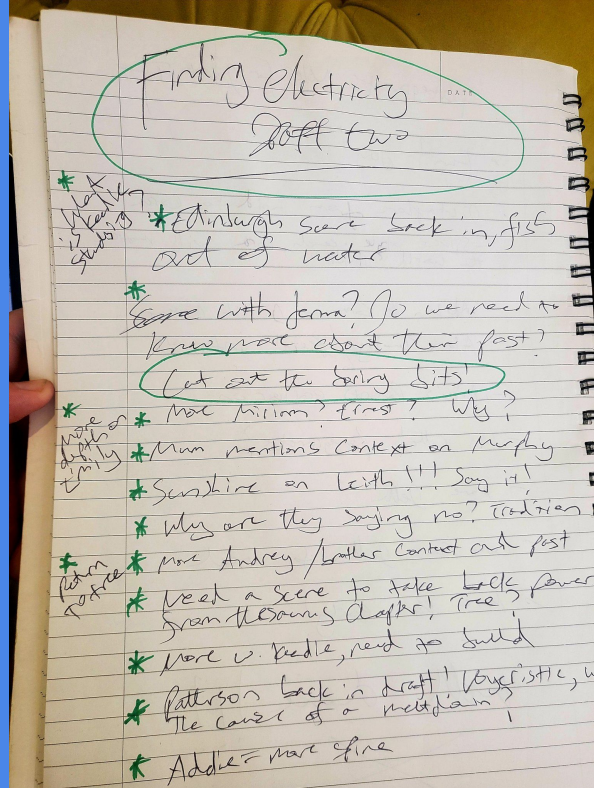


"The plan for
[#DragonAndHerBoy](#)! Organised
chaos!"



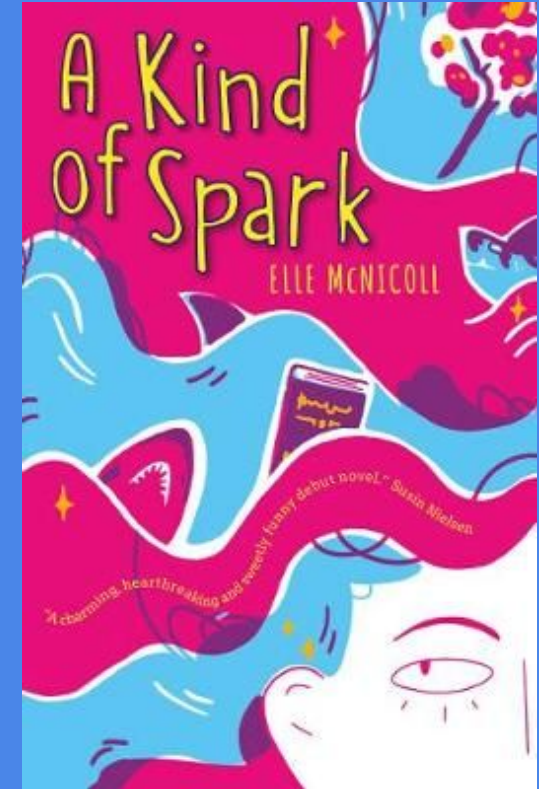
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Elle McNicholl's Waterstones Book of the Month 'A Kind of Spark' was originally called 'Finding Electricity'.

"I make untidy notes between drafts. This was between drafts one and two of A Kind of Spark (then called Finding Electricity)."



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Anna Houghton explains why messy scribbles are a sign of intelligence and creativity.

"When I was at school, I remember losing marks because I couldn't keep my ideas inside the boxes in exams. I would do stars and arrows all over the page and write in the margins and upside down. I always felt like I was failing when I saw how neat others were.

Then I had a teacher who told me that this was a sign of intelligence and creativity. It changed everything. Now, the messier my notebook is the better (I'd share a photo but I cross things out so fiercely that there's not a lot to see). Good ideas start as scribbles and chaos.

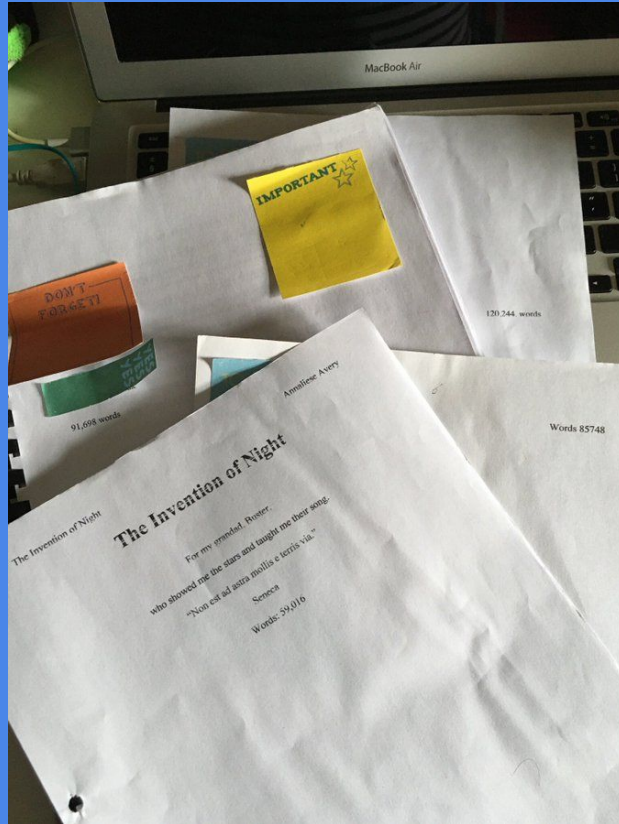
It takes dedication and perseverance to sit down and untangle those ideas into something that makes sense. But don't worry if your ideas don't start out like that. In fact, it's a great thing if they don't!"



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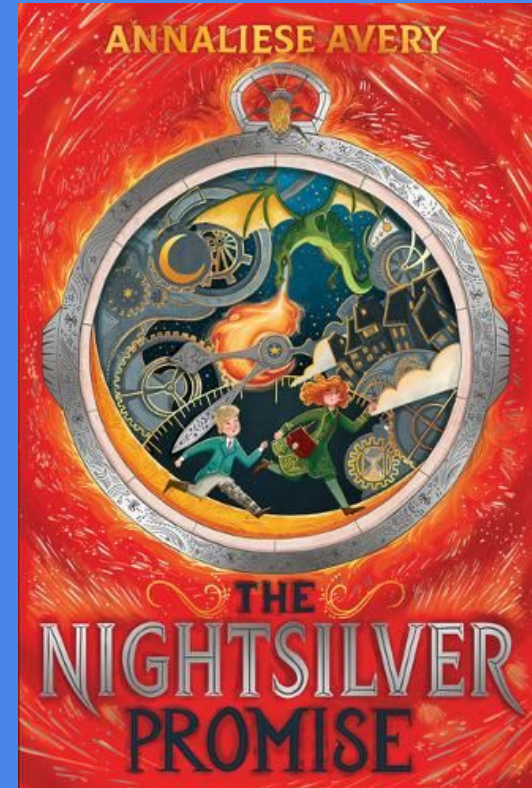
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Annaliese Avery shows us her drafts and post-its...



→

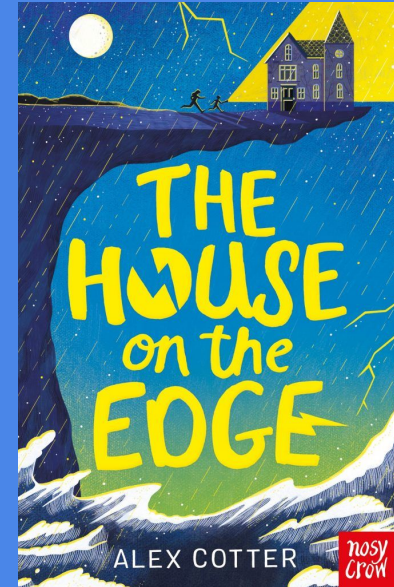
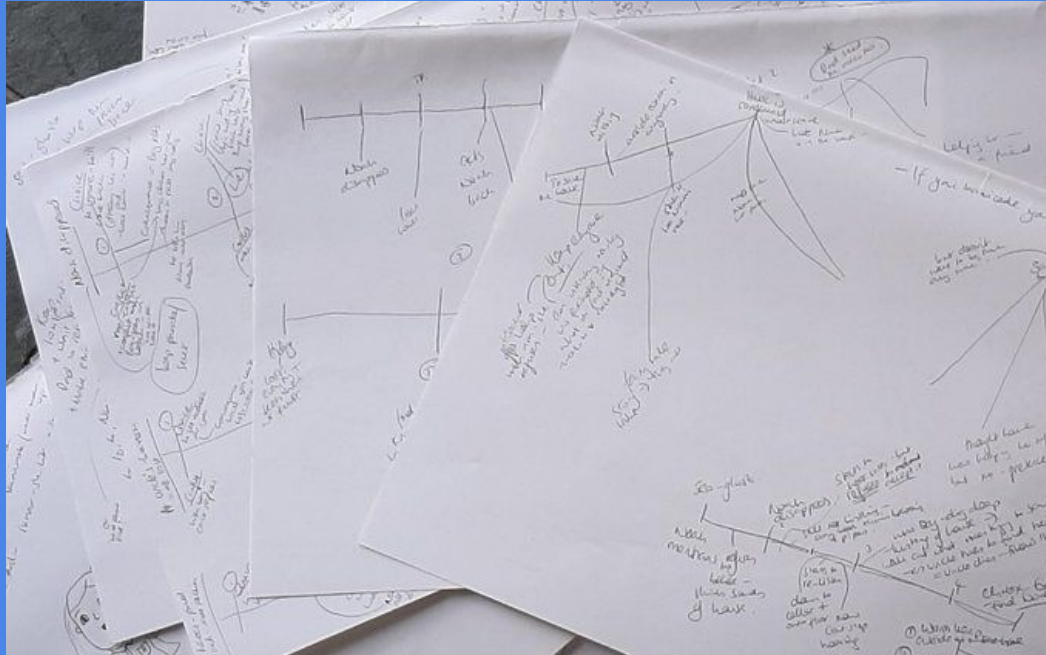
"My drafts of what was called The Invention of Night now The #NightsilverPromise final draft/edit came in at just under 65,000 words. Cutting and editing and chopping and rewriting to get it right!"



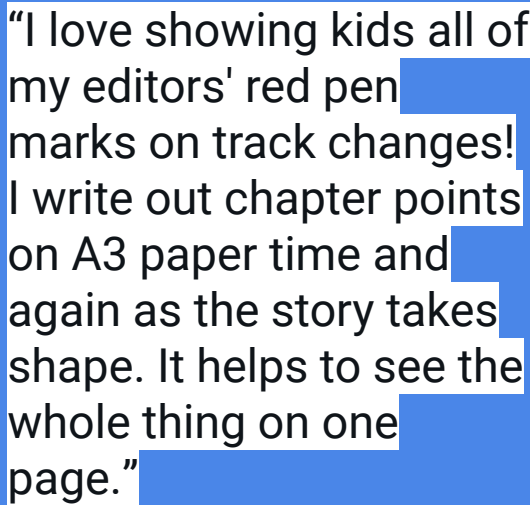
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Alex Cotter shows us her A3 sheets for planning.



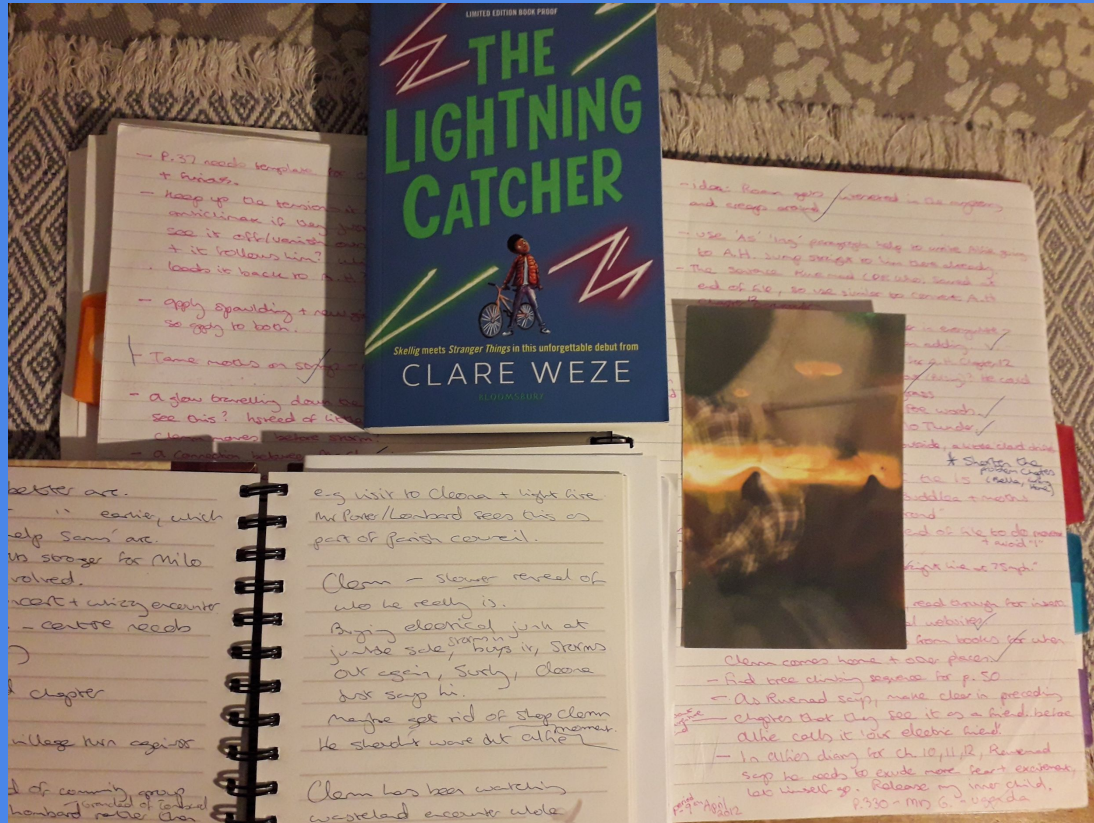
"Mine is all about the A3, trying to see the bigger picture - some early planning notes for #TheHouseOnTheEdge"



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Clare Weze shows us notepads and how even photographic accidents can be inspiration...

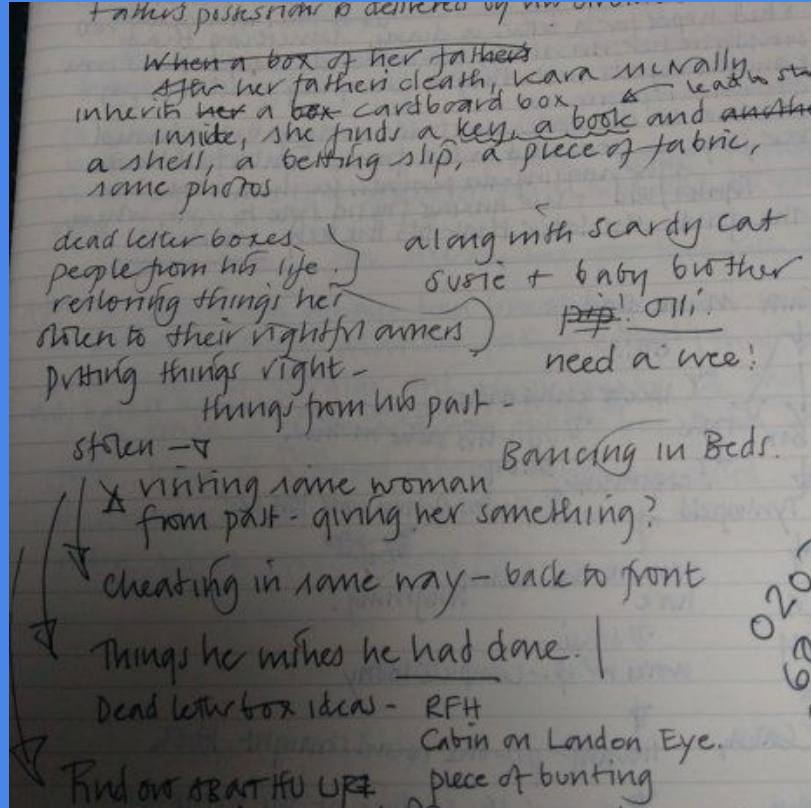


“Lots of notebooks and even more laptop files made THE LIGHTNING CATCHER (plus a photographic accident/experiment by one of my sons)”

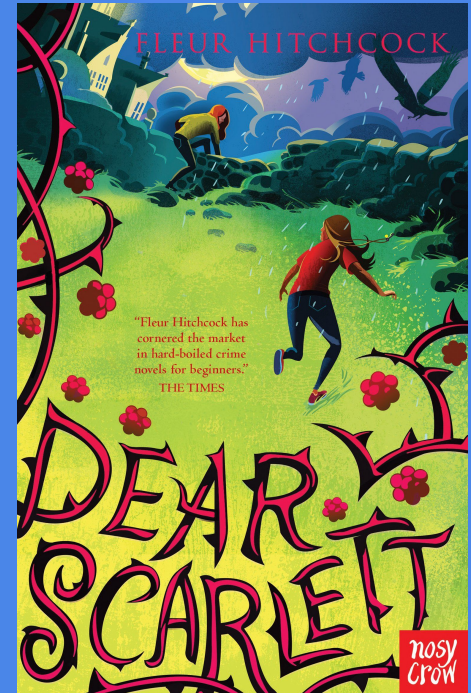
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Fleur Hitchcock shows her scribbled notes that formed ideas for her book 'Dear Scarlett'



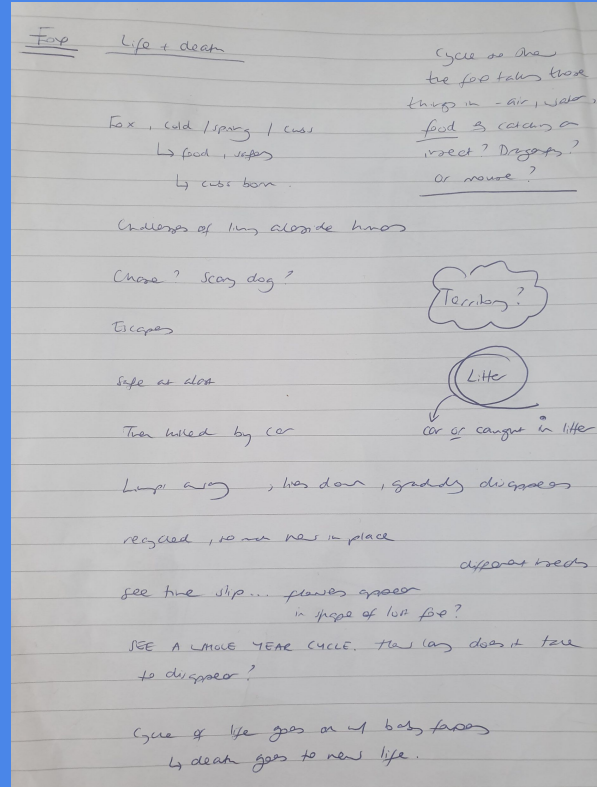
"Here's the first scribbles for Dear Scarlett - the book changed so much from here. This was a kernel of an idea - a long, long way from the final thing."



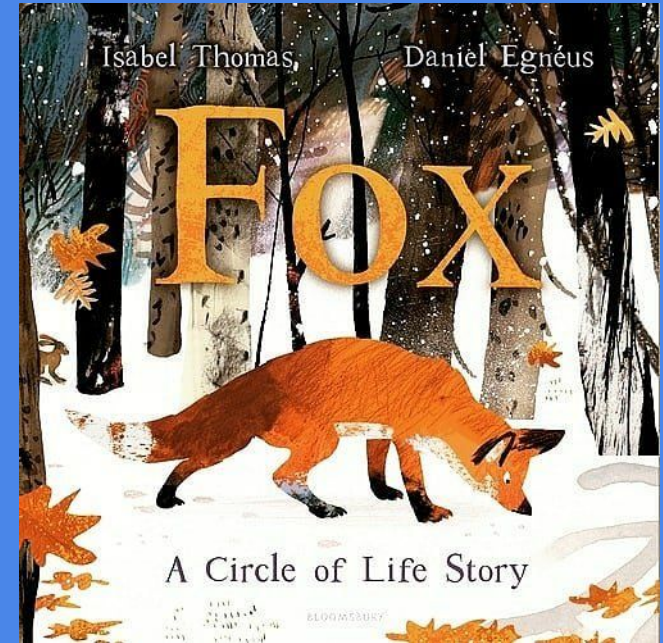
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Isabel Thomas shows her notes for 'Fox'



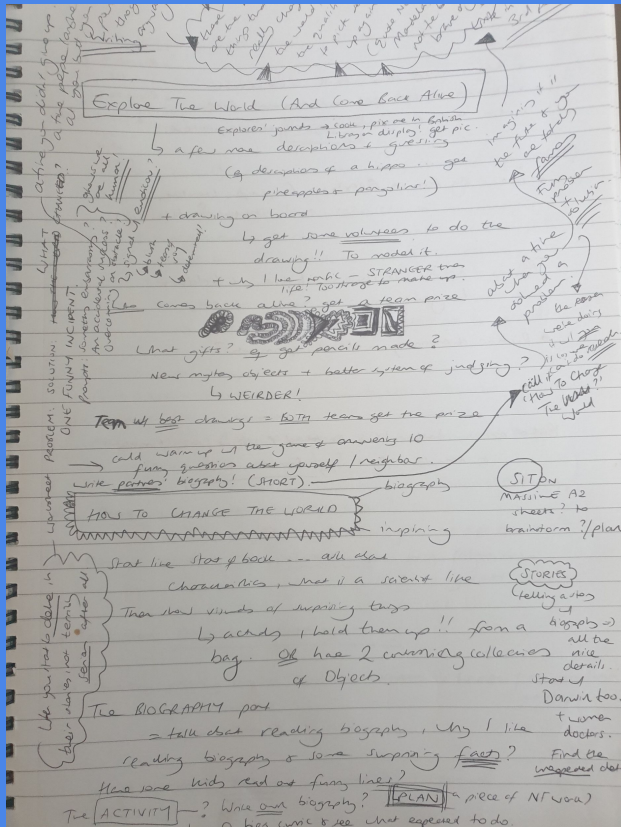
"My very first brainstorm for Fox: A Circle of Life Story. The scary dog did not make it into the final story!"



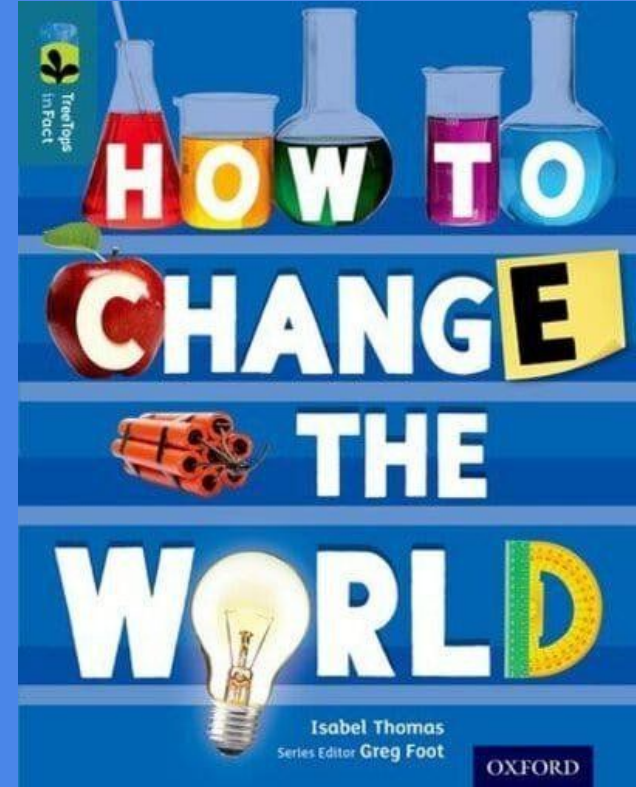
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Isabel Thomas shows her notes for 'How to Change the World'. Award-winning notes?



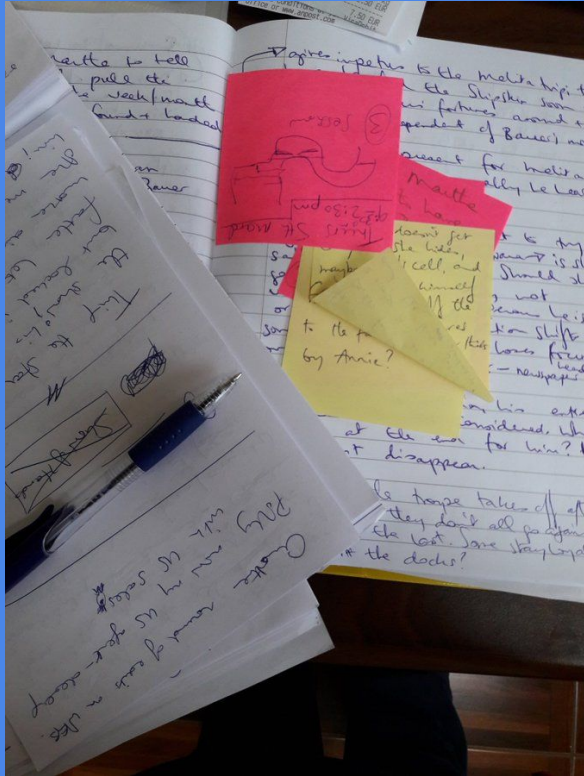
“My first brainstorm for How To Change the World which went from this scrappy piece of paper to winning a prize from [@royalsociety](https://twitter.com/royalsociety) !!!”



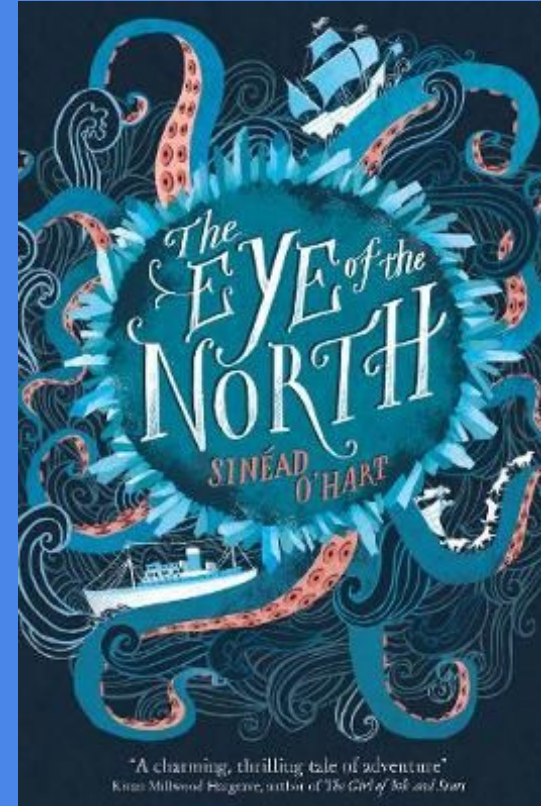
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Sinead O'Hart shows us her jottings.



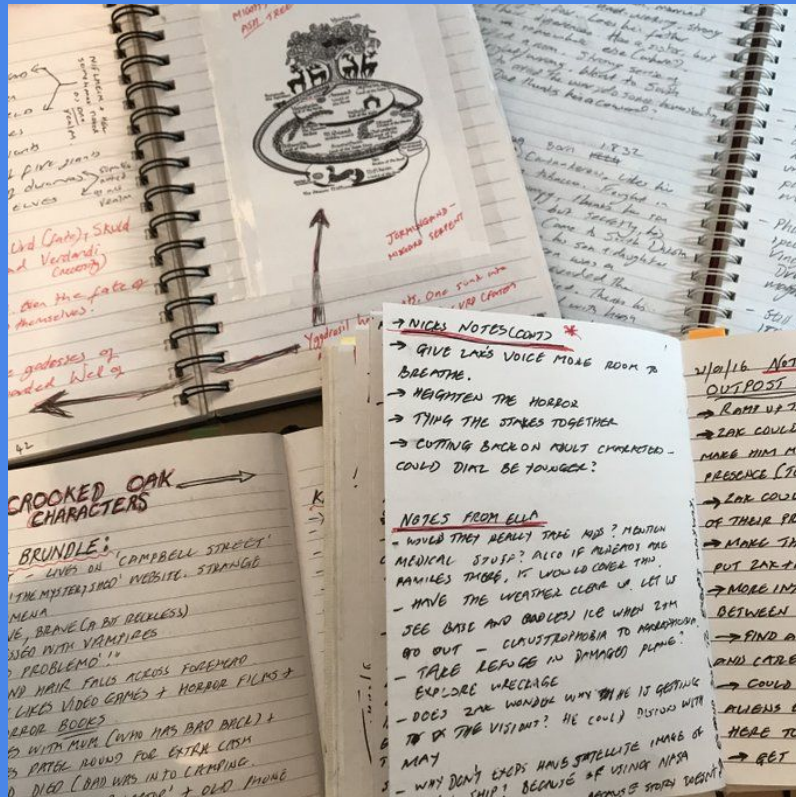
"Here's a picture of some of my chaotic notes. I do so much planning/plotting/brainstorming by hand before I ever write a word. And every book I've written has had to be rewritten - often many times! Published books take *loads* of work, but it's always worth it."



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Dan Smith shows his notebooks and jottings too...



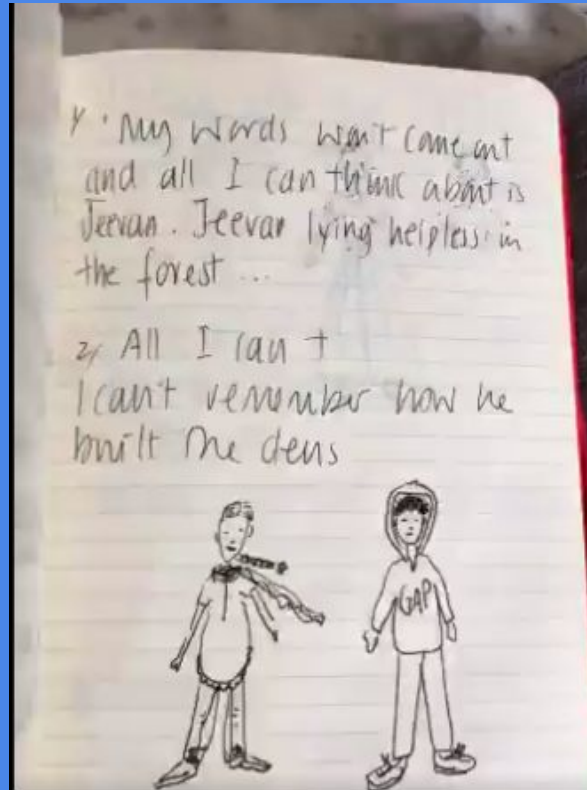
"I always have lots of messy research notes, editorial notes, planning notes, notes and notes and notes. Nothing is ever right first time!"



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Jasbinder Bilan, Costa Children's author of the year, flicks through her notebook...



<https://twitter.com/i/status/1364179078664900608>



"Lots of notes in early stages, so many versions, a whole year editing and changing from past to present tense - and then ta daaaa!!!!"



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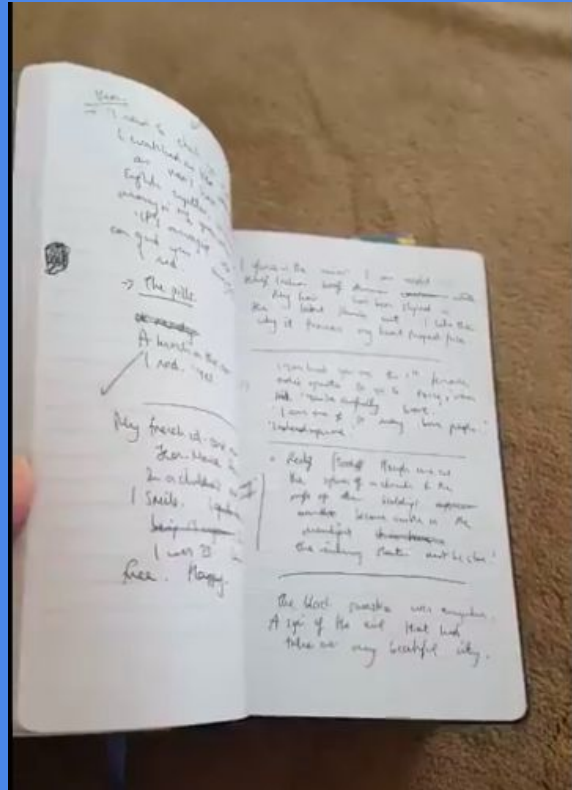
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Sufiya Ahmed flicks through her notebook.
See video link below.

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1364268598018080773>



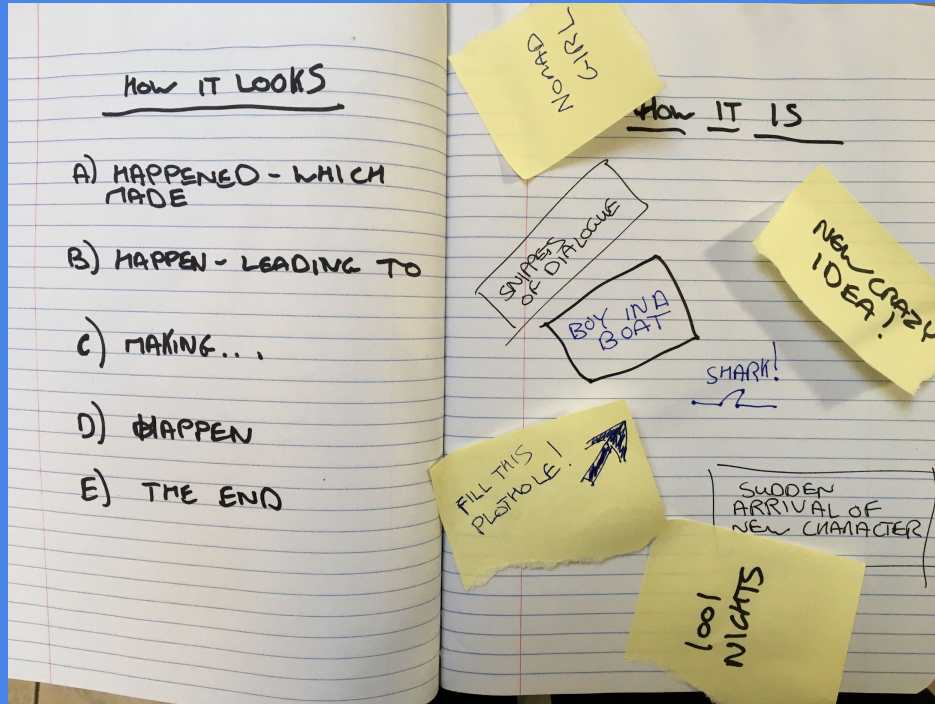
"First draft is just lots of notes
and ideas. Then countless
redrafts before being handed to
an editor (for more editing)"



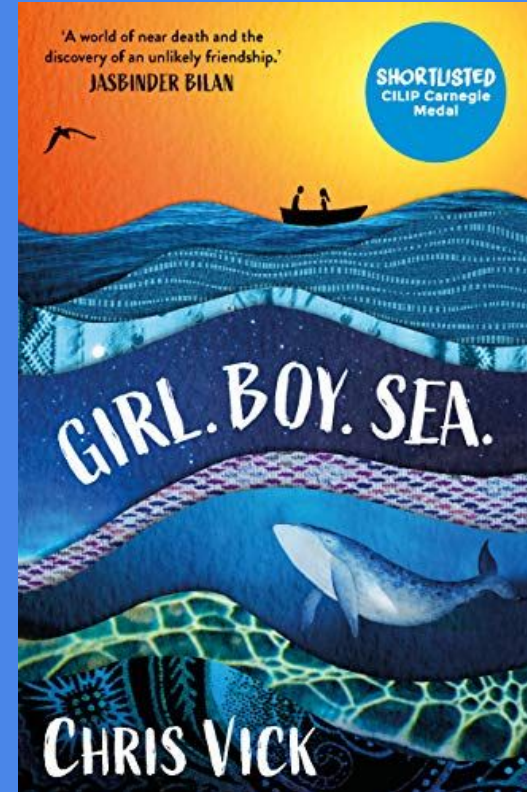
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Chris Vick unpicks his process...



“Finished product
and imagined
process V actual
process:”



Y3. OBH.

- BE ~~SEA~~ ROOM.
- ~~THE~~ GIVE NAME.
- CHINESE RESTAURANT IN PERAL.

PEOPLE: - ~~PIER~~ LOOY. - Mary.
→ ~~BE~~ OFFER - ^{Drop} Maths Tech Sect.
→ ~~ANOTHER~~.
→ ~~Explos~~ - Fango.

- Making the Deline on our Throon.
- OFFER the Maths course with a student past

→ Fango the artistic expression.

- ① THE DRAGON DRINKER IS SO BORING BECAUSE SHE HAS
THREE DRINKING BROTHERS FOR 400 YEARS. SHE
KNOWS THAT THE MAJOR GROWING OF THE DRAGON DRINK
HER NAME AND TASTING.
- ② WHO MAKES HER MORE EXCITED THAN DRAGON DRINK?
- ③ HER NAME IS ~~WANDERER~~ IT'S ACTUALLY HER SURNAME.
PERHAP WANDERER WAS MY FAVORITE CHARACTER
FROM HISTORY. PERHAP WHO HER FATHER. ~~HE~~
HE DON'T FIND OUT HER REAL NAME UNTIL
~~SHE~~ THE END OF THE STORY. IT IS A MENUS
GIRL NAME - ~~DEMONIA~~ - AND SHE HATES IT.
THAT'S WHY SHE THINKS THAT EXERCISE ~~SHOULD~~ CALL
HER WANDERER. SHE HATES GRAY SKIN.
- ④ A ONE-STAR IS A GREAT PROVE TO ENJOY DRAGON
BECAUSE IT IS WARM AND LIGHT. THE PROBLEM IS
THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN SEE WHAT YOU ARE DRINK.
THAT CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS.
- ⑤ WHO DOES WHAT IS COME ON AND CAUSES
PROBLEMS?
- ⑥ I FEEL QUITE NERVOUS AT FIRST AS I WAS
PLANNING TO GO TO MATHS. I WAS ALL JUMP
TO GET RID OF HER THAT SHE WOULD GO AWAY.
SHE WAS MEANT TO FILL ALL MY PLANS.
EVERYTHING I COME NEAR TO HER WAY OF THINGS



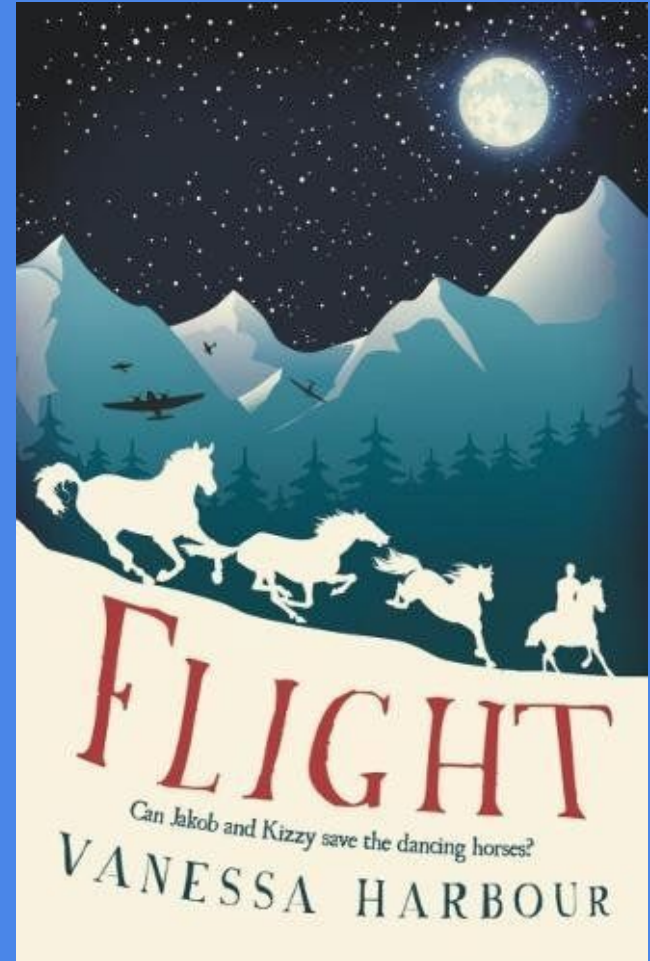
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"My writing process is like embroidery. I get the outline down first and then I fill in the colour to bring it to life."

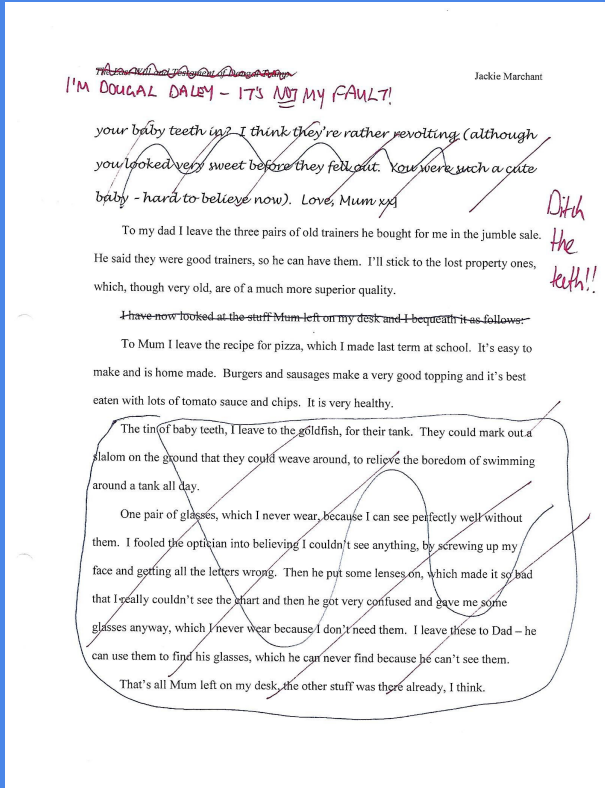
Vanessa Harbour, author of 'Flight'



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Jackie Marchant shows her scribbled notes on her typed manuscript.



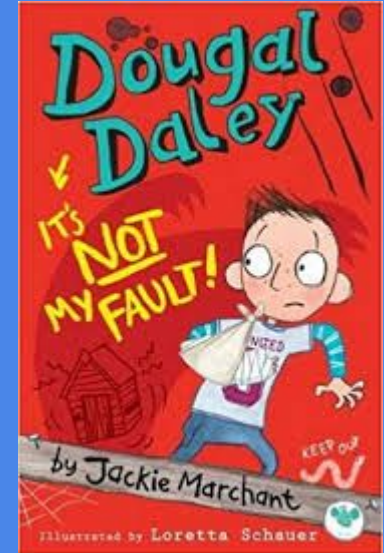
Dad can also have my football boots. If he hadn't become a window cleaner, he says he might well have been a professional footballer. Mum says it's lucky he chose windows.



I DON'T WANT YOUR BOOTS. THEY STINK AND ARE COVERED IN MUD BECAUSE YOU NEVER CLEAN THEM.
- DAD

PS - STOP ANNOYING YOUR SISTER.

The posh statue of a footballer, which Uncle William gave me, I give to Tom, the coach of my team, Ocklesford Rovers. Tom can use it as the Man of the Match trophy. It will replace the one that got

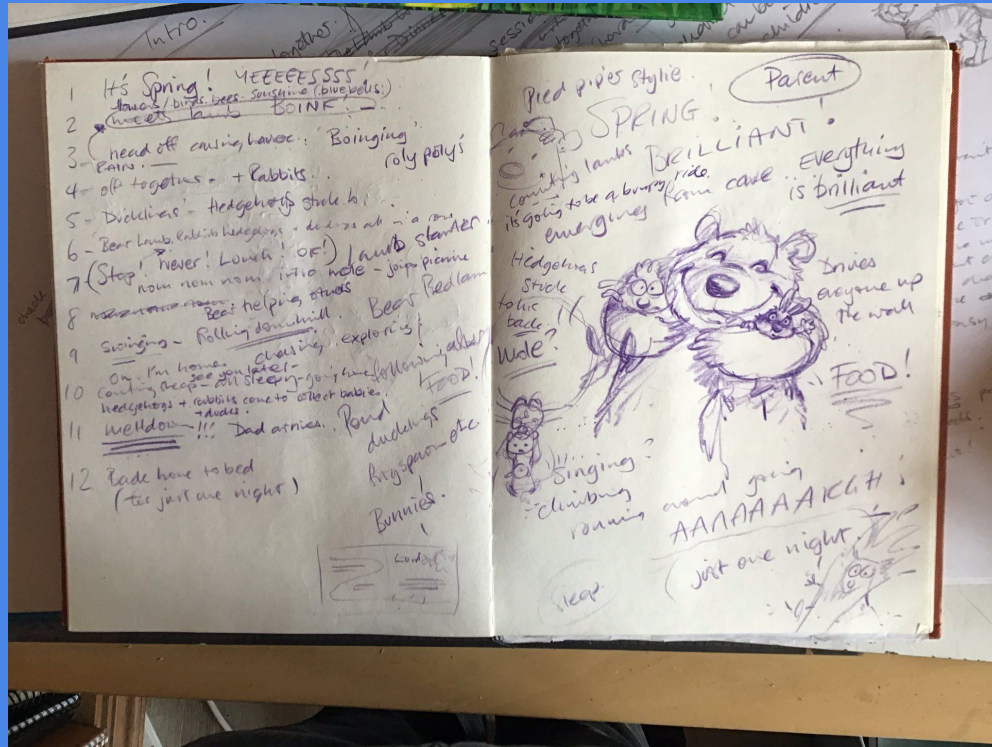


"Most of my 'writing' is re-writing. Here's an example - and the edited version didn't even make it into the book!"

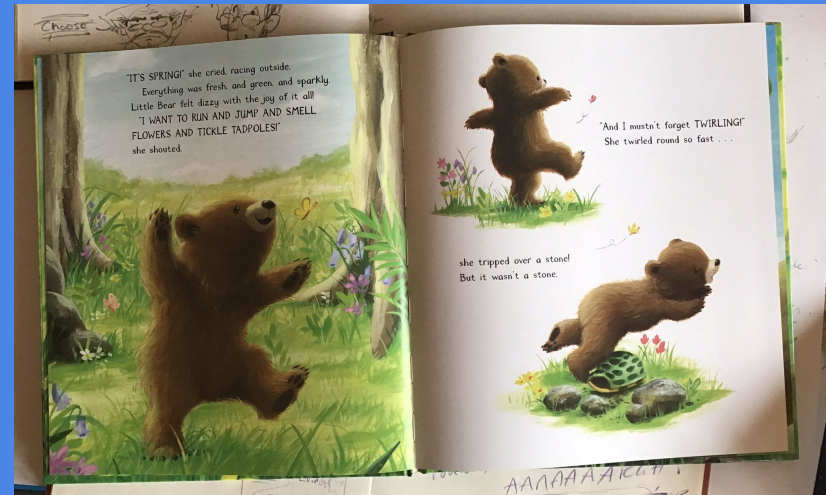
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Steve Smallman shows his sketching development...



"This is how
A Friend for Bear started in my
sketchbook:
This is how it finished :"



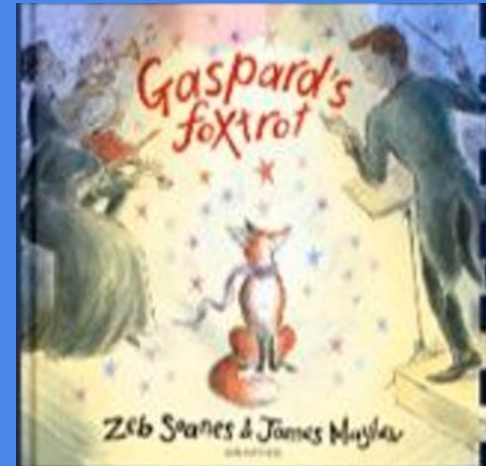
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James Mayhew shows us his desk...



"My desk right now...
You don't want to see
the rest of my studio.
[#messyartist](#)"



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Corrina Campbell shows how illustrations even change until publication...



"PICTURE ON THE RIGHT
- how it started
PICTURE ON THE LEFT -
how it finished"

A lot of practise, a long
time and buckets full of
determination."

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Jane Porter didn't give up...

"I rewrote #PinkLion TEN times: here's all the dummy books - and the finished one... There's more about the whole process here: <http://janeporter.co.uk/illustrations/>"



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Writer Aidan Onn uses real maps and puts them together to understand where his story is set!



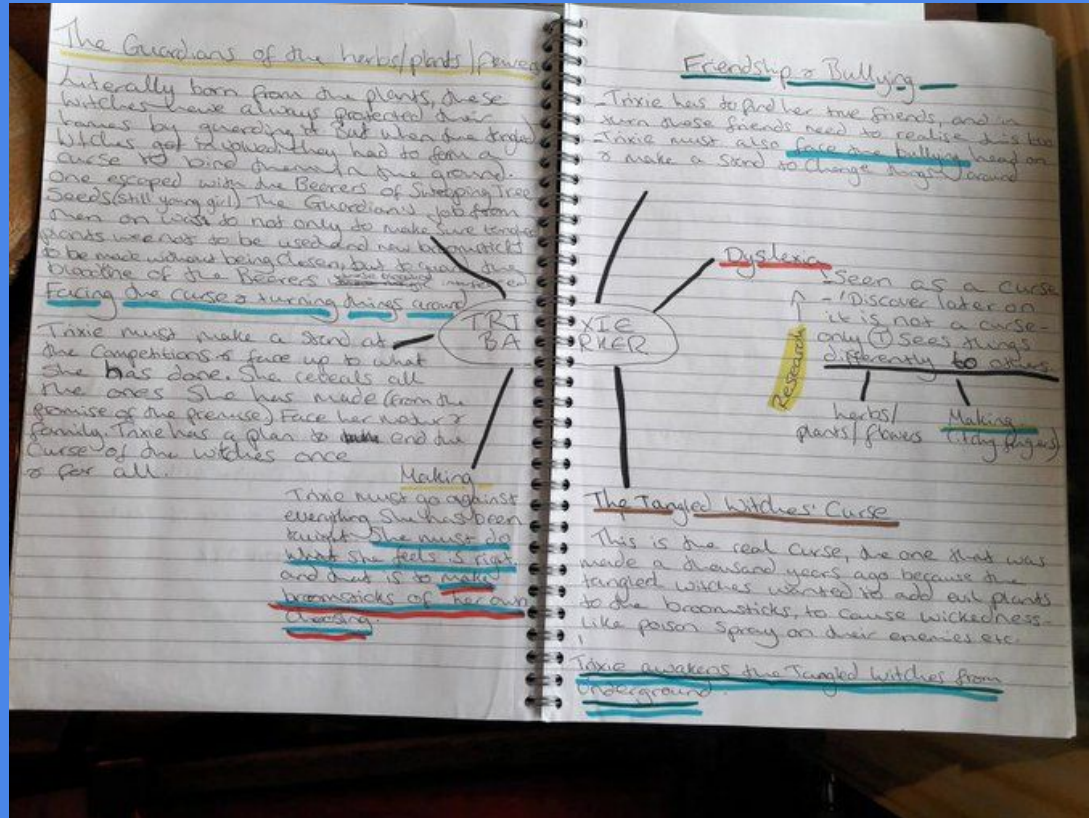
"Some exhaustive geographical research going on here as I painstakingly (and very messily) plot out the shoreline of Loch Ness for my middle-grade adventure: Beastie in the Loch."



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Writer Charlett Goretzka uses notebooks



"Current work in progress. Usually have one notebook for each novel I write."

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Moral of the story:

Don't give up!

Writing takes time until it becomes a polished gem.