

NEXT BIG THING

Geraldine Meade

THE AUTHOR EXPLAINS HER MOVE INTO TEEN FICTION



★ **Describe yourself in three words.**

Happy, outgoing, enlightened.

★ **When and how did you start writing?**

In college, I began writing very cringe-worthy love poems, usually after breaking up with someone, or when they broke up with me. I began to write seriously in 1999, following an MA in Children's Literature. I originally wrote picture book stories for children but I was always thinking and writing down ideas for books for all ages. That's how *Flick* started; I wrote a chapter or two and then wasn't sure where the story was going so I left it there. After a year a friend saw those chapters and suggested I finish the story, so I took his advice.

★ **Tell us a bit about *Flick*.**

Flick tells the story of 16-year-old Felicity Costello, aka *Flick*, who struggles to conform to what everyone around her thinks is 'normal'. Through trying to hide the fact that she is gay, *Flick's* life begins to spiral out of control. But instead of succumbing to darkness, *Flick* finally finds the courage to realise that you can't help who you fall in love with.

★ **What has the reaction to it been like?**

To be honest I'm extremely surprised by the brilliant reactions and reviews I've gotten. I'm overwhelmed really. I'm delighted that so many people, of all ages,

are reading it. I think part of the reason is because it also deals with issues like suicide and depression, and allows people to talk about them. I know from discussions I've had since the book was published that being gay is still difficult to admit for a lot of people. I'm very proud of the fact that Graham Norton read it and said, "*Flick* is the sort of book I wish I could have read in my teens. It never talks down to the reader but still manages to shine a light on some of the darkest and most confusing moments of becoming an adult." I hope *Flick* makes people feel that they are not alone in their struggle, whatever that struggle is, and there is help and hope out there for everyone.

★ **Who/what was the inspiration behind the book?**

I never set out to write a teen book, or a book with so many issues. I was happy writing picture book stories. But then I got a very simple idea to write a story with a character called Joey. The story began with Joey dreaming about a girl, and then I thought, imagine if Joey was actually a girl herself? I left the book there for a very long time because I'm not gay and I didn't know where the story could go. Finally I thought, she's in love like anyone else, it doesn't matter that it's a girl in love with another girl, love is love. Joey eventually turned

into Felicity, aka *Flick*, and the book took on a life of its own. I never really knew where it was going but each chapter naturally led into the next. It really wrote itself.

★ **Who is your idol?**


I don't really have any idols but I'm very impressed with Ralph Waldo Emerson, he was an American lecturer, essayist and poet who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. And Paramahansa Yogananda, was an Indian yogi and guru who introduced many westerners to the teachings of meditation and Kriya yoga.

★ **How do you juggle being a successful author with raising six children?**

Ha, the children come first...maybe that's why it has taken so long to write the first book (nearly three years!) although I'm hoping to have the sequel finished in the next few months. I think I'm faster at writing because I know now what I have to do to achieve my goals and succeed. I've also learned a lot about the editing process. But mainly it's easy to juggle because I

really love doing both. The kids are really great and so funny. It's busy but I'm pretty organised and we've a good routine. Last year I got a childminder, Shauna, she's brilliant. She comes two or three afternoons for two hours most weeks and I go straight upstairs to write. It's hectic but I wouldn't have it any other way.

★ **Have you any other books in the pipeline?**

I'm working on a sequel to *Flick*, which will be finished in the next few months. After that I want to work on a story for nine to 12-year-olds, which I started ages ago and I need to edit a picture book story that I've written. I've pages and pages of ideas and am constantly thinking of new stuff... I guess I'll always be writing. 

★ ***Flick***, €8.99/NL
£7.99 is available
in all bookstores
and through the
publisher's website
www.littleisleland.ie

