

Each month we will focus on an inspiring author based in or writing about Wales! You'll have an introduction to their latest book, what inspires them to write, and any advice they have for young writers!

# Get to know

## Nicola Davies



Nicola Davies is the author of more than 80 books for children and young people, including poetry, non fiction, picture books and novels. Her work has been published in more than 10 different languages and won awards in the UK, US, Europe and Asia. In addition to many books about the natural world Nicola has written about disability, grief, human migration and children's rights. Nicola's recent YA novel *The Song that Sings Us* has been nominated for the Yoto Carnegie Award and her poetry collection *Choose Love* (with Petr Horacek) is helping to raise funds for the refugee charity of the same name and has been shortlisted for the CLIPPA Poetry Award 2023.



Cover: Jackie Morris

### Summary:

*Skrimsli* is the second fantasy adventure from author Nicola Davies set in a world where animals and humans can sometimes share their thoughts. It traces the early life of Skrimslis, the tiger sea captain who stole readers' hearts in *The Song that Sings Us*. He and his friends, Owl and Kal, must escape the clutches of the tyrannical circus owner Kobret Majak, and his twin assassin-acrobats, then stop a war and save the ancient forest, where the Tiger, and the Owl are sacred guardians. This is a story full of excitement and danger, that explores themes of friendship, loyalty, identity and love, in the context of some of humanity's toughest problems.

### What inspires you?

Many things: trying to get the world to realise that nature is the most important thing and our greatest ally in the fight against climate change; trying to help people to see themselves and others clearly, to be accepting, and kind; trying to encourage young people to be adventurous and brave and not to focus on conventional ideas of success. But also the business of telling a story, the way the first thread unravels into the mist and all I can do is follow it.

### How did you know you wanted to be a writer and when?

I always wrote stories in my head and imagined being the person who writes them down. But that seemed a remote and impossible thing to be. I didn't know any real humans who were writers so I didn't think I could be one. Maybe if I had had an author visit to my school it would have been different. So it wasn't until I was in my 20's that I really began to think it was something I COULD be and began to work, slowly towards it.

### In what way have libraries influenced you during your lifetime?

When I was little we went to the library EVERY week. I can't begin to describe the excitement of bringing home a pile of NEW BOOKS to explore. In those days books were stamped and the rubbery slap and bang that the stamp made in the front of the book is still one of my favourite noises. I was lucky enough to go to several schools that had libraries. They were my escape. I loved the fact that I could read anything even books that were 'too old' for me, or in another language. I read *The 39 Steps* when I was 9 and *The Lost Domain* in French when I hadn't even done my GCSE. I took home books about all kinds of crafts and had endless fantasies about things I would make in clay or with enamelling or silver; I was always making things when I was a kid and these books just fed a deep desire to create and create. Libraries gave me the food my brain and my soul needed.



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