

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

Sophie Zalayet



Sophie Zalayet was born in Wales and grew up in the industrial town of Port Talbot. After a year of Foundation Art studies at Swansea Institute, she completed a degree in Professional Media at University of Gloucestershire, specialising in graphic design. Her career began in Denmark where she worked as a designer for LEGO, followed by work in the children's toy and fashion industry in New York. In 2014, Sophie and her young family moved back to Wales and settled in Cardiff. Along with pursuing a new direction as an author and illustrator, she is now a freelance artworker and works alongside her husband at his Toy Invention company in Cardiff.

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Summary:

Doug loves two things ... fun afternoons at the fair and eating a bellyful of sweets! When mum promises both, he thinks it's his lucky day! Or is it... Come on a bright,

bold, and big-hearted adventure with Doug and his new friend, as he learns a very important lesson! Fun, light-hearted story endorsed by Keep Wales Tidy organisation.

Tell us a little about *Look Out! Look Out! There is a Litter Bug about!*, where did the inspiration come from, and what do you hope readers will take from the story...

The inspiration came to me during a visit to the park with my young daughter, who was only three at the time. We witnessed a young girl drop her chocolate wrapper on the ground, but neither the girl nor her father retrieved it. My daughter's incredulous reaction prompted me to remark with humour - "they had better be careful or the litterbug will get them!" - It was a play on words that opened a world of curiosity for my daughter! She was fascinated by the idea of a bug bringing justice to town and cleaning up the environment!

I hope readers will take away the message that it's essential to clean up after themselves and be considerate of others. It's a simple yet crucial step towards taking care of our environment and ensuring its health for everyone.

What experiences of libraries have influenced you during your lifetime?

Upon reflection, I realise that libraries have had a significant impact on me! Growing up, my local library was nestled at the foot of a mountain, next to a beautiful park. I remember climbing the staircase to the first floor where the great 1960s oak-furnished hall stood baked in the afternoon sun and all you could hear was the creaking of the librarian's stamp. In a way, libraries are the original recipe for mindfulness! Calming, warming, inclusive and a space where you can slow down...

It was when I became a mother that I returned to the library and indulged in what it does best - books, books, books! The children's reading corner was bursting with colourful, inviting covers, pop-up books, picture books

and above all, loveable characters! Routine subjects came to life as you were invited on a journey to learn how to share, how to make friends, be kind, resilient... I realised then I wanted to be part of that world.

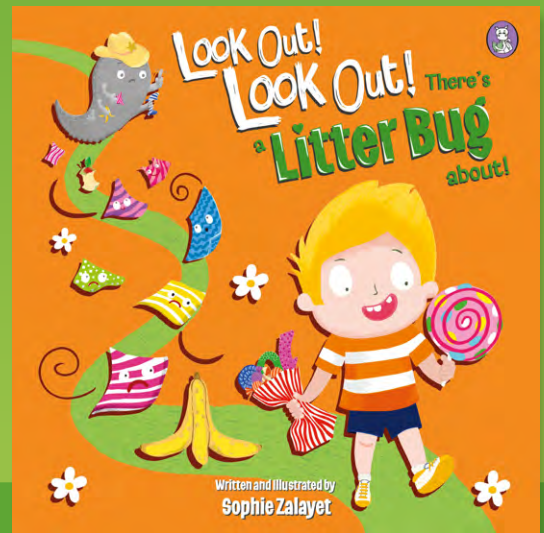
What suggestions do you have to encourage children and young people to read more for pleasure?

I think the biggest factor in nurturing a person's love of reading is having time!

When children are small, encouraging a love of reading can be rewarding for both child and adult. Having the time to relax together and read, helps to form a lovely bond in a quiet and relaxed environment. Along with bedtime, after play, is another great time to explore a book. There's nothing more enjoyable than sitting together, with snacks at hand and a story to discover!

Subjects that inspire children are great starting points to instil the love of reading. Whether you are motivated by football, fables, fact or fantasy, there's a book out there for you!

As children grow older and busier, they may find it challenging to read books and instead turn to technology. For some, it might even feel like a chore! A fun activity that parents or teachers can do with young people is to encourage them to read a book first and then watch the film adaptation. This exercise not only helps them to appreciate great literature but also allows them to be visually inspired by great movie directors and cinematography! This is something I still do as an adult.



... more Q&As
on the website libraries.wales

