

Hi!

I wrote *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher* and *The Family Fletcher Takes Rock Island!*
Hope you like them!

A School Visit Information

As a kid, having an author come to my school was without a doubt one of the coolest things that ever happened (and not only because we got out of social studies that period). As an adult, an author, and a parent, I still love author visits. I love them because they bridge two seemingly distant worlds. For some kids they bridge the world of static, on-the-shelf books and their own messy, alive lives. Or for others, they bridge the thrilling, imaginary world in books and their own predictable school day. Whether kids are bookworms or reluctant readers, aspiring novelists or would-be tech geeks, there is excitement in finding out what happens when a person starts with those two magical words “What if...?”

Kids love to meet a real author* and to hear about the work and effort that goes into making a book. And while they’re hearing war stories and boggling their minds at how long it takes to get a book published, they’re also listening to and participating in conversations on active and passive verbs, on first person versus third-person point-of-view, and on why first drafts are usually terrible. In short, they are learning.

I write for kids and young adults, and my presentations are appropriate for all school ages, but best suited for kids in grades 3-8. A standard school visit includes three 45-60 minute sessions that can be a mix of presentations to large groups, presentations to smaller groups, and hands-on workshops.

**Honesty compels me to admit: my own kids are not remotely thrilled to see a real author. Especially when the real author is nagging them to deal with the cat litter.*

We had such a great visit with Dana! She really had an impact on the kids. Days later, they were reminding me of things she had said about writing - especially the idea that the "rules" we learn about writing are breakable!

-Eva, 4th grade teacher, Cambridge



Thank you for agreeing to come and visit the book club. The kids really did love your book and now they love you, too....You are funny and you really get kids.

-Parent, Brooklyn New School

Presentations

Assemblies:

Designed for students in elementary and middle school, my presentations all share a core idea: to demystify the process of writing well and help kids find joy in writing and reading. While my presentations will of course tie into my own work, I also strive to include examples and anecdotes from all kinds of books, from current bestsellers to classics to other author-friends' works-in-progress! (With their permission, of course)!

In large groups or school assemblies, I speak about the writing process, about the steps it takes to go from an idea to a novel, about the importance of revision and the ways partners (be they teachers, parents, classmates or editors), make us better writers. This presentation can be tailored somewhat to a specific schools' needs but will always cover:

- How good writing is good writing, whether an essay, a business report, or a book
- How an idea becomes a novel
- The importance of revision
- Why most writers don't go it alone (and neither should students)
- Rejection and its role in eventual success

Breakout Groups:

For smaller groups (no more than five classes or 100 kids), I will get into the nitty gritty of writing, with a focus that is tailored to the school's needs. Generally these group sessions should follow the larger assembly so that kids have already been introduced to me. Below are some sample break-out presentations:

- **How Long Does This Take, Anyway?:** A presentation on how a book gets made, from a rough draft to a book that readers can hold in their hands. Includes a behind-the-scenes look at marked-up manuscripts, editor's letters, copy edits, and more. (Best for grades K and up — tailored to the appropriate age)
- **Using Words Well:** A discussion of why and how words matter. Touches on active verbs, vivid imagery, simile, metaphor, and more, all in a silly and interactive way. (Best for grades 4 and up)

- ✦ **Stop Laughing! This is Serious!** How humor in stories can help tell important things. A look at some silly books that have serious messages, and a discussion of why authors might choose to mix it up. (Best for grades 3 and up)
- ✦ **Judging a Book By Its Cover:** By looking at a diverse selection of grade-appropriate books, we will talk about what the cover tells us, and compare that with the flap copy and first few pages. I'll also talk about who makes cover decisions and how the process works. (Best for grades 4 and up)
- ✦ **The Magical Secret to All Good Writing (Hint: It's Revision):** This presentation, for older students, talks about the importance of revision for all writing. We talk about the difference between revision, editing, and proofreading, and the right time for each. We'll look at how to tackle revisions, and some ways to make this tough job easier. (Best for grades 5 and up)



Ever since you came I have been more interested in writing. I felt so inspired. I hope you make more books. You are amazing. Your books are so funny. I especially like the part where the boys are getting their picture taken at the end of the year. You are a true writer.

-Third grade student, Greensboro, NC

Workshops/Writer-in-Residence

My workshops get the students into the trenches with hands-on writing exercises that are tailored for the age group and needs of the class. These can be one-time events or, for local schools, opportunities to work together over a period of a time on a long-term project. These workshops *can* be amended to work with larger or smaller groups, work best with a single class, or 25 students.

Below are some examples of possible workshops, though these can be tailored to fit the curriculum of a given school.

- ✦ **The Super-Secret Magic Key to Writing Success (Hint: It's Revision):** In this hands-on workshop I will walk students through the importance of revision, and how it has worked in my own writing. Students will be asked to help revise a short story I provide, then will do a quick timed writing exercise, and we will work together on revising their work. (Best for grades 4 and up)
- ✦ **What a Character! How to Make Good Guys, Bad Guys, and Everyone Else:** In this workshop we'll brainstorm book characters that feel real to us, and talk about why that is. Then we'll come up with some adjectives to describe good heroes, villains, and

more, and use character worksheets to come up with our own characters. (Best for grades 2 and up)

- **Using Words Well, the Workshop:** Building off the ideas in the presentation above, this workshop goes further and invites students to play around with words. With examples from my own work and others, we'll discuss the importance of vivid language and active verbs, then try our hands at some timed writing exercises. (Best for grades 4 and up)

For more information and availability on writer-in-residence programs, please contact me at [dana at danaalisonlevy.com](mailto:dana@danaalisonlevy.com)

FAQs

- **What do you charge?** My standard rate is \$850 for a local school visit and \$1100 plus expenses for visits that involve travel. This includes three 45-60 minute presentations, plus lunch with the kids (which can be a reward to a small group of kids, or the whole grade, or whatever the school prefers). I do not charge travel for anywhere within an hour's drive of my home in northeastern Massachusetts. I am always happy to do a free Skype visit with a class that's read my book, and will do my best to negotiate with Title 1 schools whenever possible. Contact me for more information.
- **What do we need to do beforehand?** Read my books! No really, even if you only read a few chapters, even if you do it as a read-aloud in class, try to get the kids to read. It is far more fun for them and for me. Also, have older students do a scavenger hunt (that I will send to you beforehand) on my website. It will be entertaining for them and help get them excited for the visit. Other ideas might be to have kids write letters to their favorite character, draw an alternate cover, or write book reviews. For some ideas about what makes a great school visit, check out these links: <http://www.fromthemixedupfiles.com/2010/11/the-care-and-feeding-of-your-visiting-author-tips-for-a-successful-classroom-visit/> and <http://nerdybookclub.wordpress.com/2014/08/05/ten-tips-for-a-perfect-author-visit-by-michael-shoulders/>
- **What equipment do you need?** For a large auditorium I will need a microphone, and for all presentations I will need a screen and a way to connect my computer to it. Like the cautious sort that wears a belt and suspenders, I will try and have all possible cords and cables with me, but if it's possible for the school to be prepared for a Mac Airbook that's even better. For workshops, kids should have notebook paper and pencils.
- **What about ordering books?** Ah yes. Books. First of all, I understand that not every kid can afford a new book, and it is never okay to make those kids feel bad. I will always bring bookmarks, stickers, or other swag that all kids can take home with them.

And of course I will sign books, bookmarks, and whatever else is offered.* But I do want to offer a chance for kids to get autographed books, and there are two ways to do this:

- ✿ You can work directly with either your local independent bookstore or Barnes & Noble. Either type of store should be well versed in either coming to the school and selling books the day of or setting up a system for the kids to buy in advance.
- ✿ OR, the school can work directly with Random House to buy the books. You would call customer service at 1-800-733-3000 and let the customer rep know I am coming to the school. Doing this you should receive a 40% discount and can return whatever you don't sell. If going this route please plan on ordering at least one month before the visit, and please keep preordered books onsite until my visit. Nothing is more tragic than the kid who left her book at home and can't get it signed. (Okay, that was hyperbole. Lots of things are more tragic than that, like discovering someone has put away an empty ice cream container in the freezer. That's like...Shakespearian tragic).

**Restrictions do apply. I will not sign anything alive and/or slimy.*

- ✿ **What else do you need?** I will need at least 15 minutes between presentations to gulp water, go to the bathroom, and sneak candy before the next class. Also, I will need lunch, but I'd love to eat with the students — either a select group (selected by lottery or prize) or a class, or whatever suits.

Author Bio:

Dana Alison Levy was raised by pirates but escaped at a young age and went on to earn a degree in aeronautics and puppetry. Actually, that's not true—she just likes to make things up. That's why she always wanted to write books. She was born and raised in New England and studied English literature before going to graduate school for business. While there is value in all learning, had she known she would end up writing for a living, she might not have struggled through all those statistics and finance classes.

Praise for Family Fletcher Books

- ✿ Junior Library Guild Selections
- ✿ An NPR, Boston Globe, Bank Street, and ABC Best Book of 2014
- ✿ ALA Notable Book for Children, 2015
- ✿ A Top Five Finalist for the 2014 New England Book Award
- ✿ Nominated for several state book awards

Selected Reviews



★ **LEVY, Dana Alison.** *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher.* 272p. Delacorte. Jul. 2014. spiral \$15.99. ISBN 9780385376525; lib. ed. \$18.99. ISBN 9780385376549; ebk. ISBN 9780385376532.

Gr 3-6 – With four brothers, a dog, a cat, school projects, soccer matches, and a grumpy neighbor, the Fletchers are your typical American family...with two dads, and siblings who are adopted kids from various ethnic backgrounds. While 12-year-old Sam ponders whether trying out for the school play will interfere with his identity as a soccer player, 10-year-old Jax negotiates changing friendships and a veteran project that involves talking to the unfriendly Vietnam vet next door. Meanwhile, Eli, also age 10, finds that his new, academically oriented school isn't everything he expected it would be, and six-year-old Frog attempts to convince his family that his kindergarten best friend is *not* imaginary. Turtles and kittens are requested, camping trips are taken, and holiday celebrations (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Chanukah, and Christmas) involve minor kitchen fires, missing turkeys, and other mishaps. Through it all, Dad and Papa complain about the mischief as often as they join in themselves. Although the tone is never preachy, the brothers nevertheless learn over the course of the year that identities can expand, friendships can evolve, and making mistakes is okay. With its semi-episodic structure, laugh-out-loud humor, and mix of zaniness and love, Levy's debut offers something truly significant: a middle-grade family story featuring gay parents and interracial families that is never *about* either issue. Fans of Beverly Cleary's *Quimbys*, Judy Blume's *Hatchers*, and, more recently, Jeanne Birdsall's *Penderwicks* will fervently hope that more Fletcher misadventures are yet to come. –*Jill Ratzan, I. L. Peretz Community Jewish School, Somerset, NJ*

KIRKUS



Four lively adopted boys, two dads and a grouchy new neighbor star in this modern family comedy.

Trying new things, dealing with difficult choices, and the joys and frustrations of life in a large family are all pieces of this humorous tale. Changing points of view in each chapter track each boy's particular issues as the third-person narrative chronicles the school year. Readers who get past the slow beginning will end up fully engaged with these characters and wanting more. Soccer-playing sixth-grader Sam stars in the school musical. Fourth-grader Jax can't find a way to connect with their unfriendly neighbor for an interview for a school report—and he's losing his best friend. Eli has chosen to spend his fourth-grade year at a school for academically gifted children that supports his talents but offers few physical outlets or social rewards. And who can believe in the existence of 6-year-old Frog's new friend when he's accompanied to kindergarten by an invisible cheetah? This book is notable for its matter-of-fact depiction of an atypical family, the same-sex couple and their ethnically diverse children—two white, one African-American, one adopted from India. The boys are very different from one another but closely tied with warm family bonds. Their banter is realistic, and the disorder of their everyday lives, convincing.

The Fletcher family rules! (*Fiction. 8-12*)

Dana Alison Levy Author Visits
www.danaalisonlevy.com

BOOKS

All-of-a-Kind Family

'The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher,' by Dana Alison Levy

AUG. 6, 2014

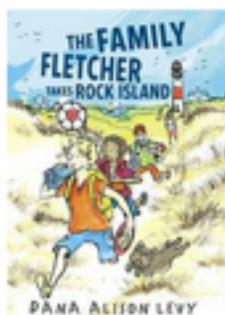
Children's Books

By BRIANNA ALBANESE

The Fletchers are an unusual family. You might consider them unusual because they are all male — the family consists of four adopted boys and two fathers — but what really makes them stand out is how inclusive, loving and fun they are. In her first novel, "The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher," Dana Alison Levy conjures up an enlightening tale for middle-grade readers, taking the traditional family-story structure and bringing it up to date by introducing same-sex parents and multiracial children.

(find the rest of the New York Times review here: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/06/books/the-misadventures-of-the-family-fletcher-by-dana-alison-levy.html?ref=books&_r=2)

KIRKUS
REVIEWS



THE FAMILY FLETCHER TAKES ROCK ISLAND

From the Family Fletcher series, volume 2

by Dana Alison Levy

Age Range: 8 - 12

Pub Date: May 10th, 2016

ISBN: 978-0-553-52130-6

Publisher: Delacorte

Even on historic Rock Island, "Where Time Stands Still," things change.

When the four Fletcher boys and their two fathers arrive at their traditional August vacation cottage on a New England coastal island, they discover their beloved lighthouse next door fenced off and new Latino neighbors, the Galindos, who have two daughters, teenage Val and her younger sister, Alex. The cheerful disorder of a large family takes center stage in this companion to *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher* (2014). Issues of adoption and same-sex parents recede into near invisibility as the boys face other challenges. The energetic third-person narrative makes use of alternating points of view to chronicle each boy's personal story. Blond, white Sam, 13, finds friends in the local theater and discovers Shakespeare; African-American Jax, now 11, pals around with Alex and experiences real bigotry for the first time; his white near-twin Eli has his 11th birthday and conquers his fear of kayaking; and 6-year-old Indian-American Frog struggles to teach their two cats to swim. Together with the Galindo girls, the four boys solve the mystery of the closed lighthouse and its unpleasant buyer-to-be. There is constant action and delightful humor, but there are also realistic present-day problems and happy solutions.

An old-fashioned summer adventure set in a very modern world, this lively family tale will leave readers impatient for more. (Fiction. 8-12)