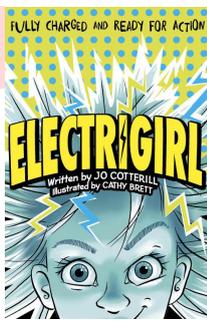
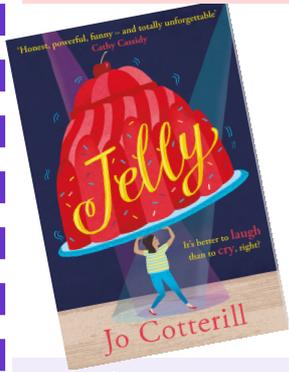


AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT



Jo Cotterill

Why bother to read?

I read to escape time. Time is a very demanding boss: our lives are ruled by clocks. Reading makes me forget the time, and that in itself is a form of freedom. I'm also a big re-reader. I love going back to a good book and experiencing it all over again, much as my children love to watch the same films over and over. As I've got older though, I've got much fussier about the sorts of books I'll stick at! If it hasn't grabbed me in the first few chapters, I'm putting it down and not picking it up again! There's another book I want to try anyway...

What was your favourite childhood book?

My favourite childhood book was *The Ordinary Princess* by M M Kaye. It's a fairytale told in a very modern style with an extremely feminist princess who is cursed with the 'gift' of 'ordinariness' by a grumpy fairy who was held up in traffic on the way to the christening. Amethyst, shortened to Amy, loves climbing trees and being free, so when she discovers her parents are planning to marry her off, she sensibly absconds, builds herself a shelter in the forest. She eventually goes to work as a kitchen maid in the neighbouring kingdom's palace. I loved the story (and still do) because Amy was very much mistress of her own destiny, and there's a very sweet romance thrown in too.

Which of your own books is your favourite?

Authors hate being asked to choose their favourites! I'd prefer to rephrase it as 'the book I'm most proud of' and that's *Looking at the Stars*, published by PRH and OUP (in an educational format) which is a story about refugees, hope, the power of the imagination, and the importance of asking questions and standing up for what you believe in. It's for 11+ and it took 8 years to reach the shelves. It was the first time I'd written a book that said so much about my own personal views of humanity and what's important.

Jo Cotterill is a multi-award-winning author with over forty books for children. Her novel *A Library Of Lemons* has sold into eleven countries, and her superhero novel/comic strip series *Electrigoirl* has encouraged many reluctant readers into the joy of reading.

Jo's latest novel, *Jelly*, is about body image and finding the courage to be yourself. When she's not writing or visiting schools, Jo loves to paint and make things.