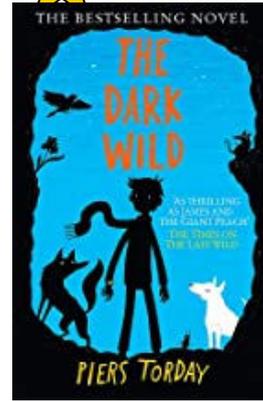


Piers Torday



AUTHOR
SPOTLIGHT



What was your favourite childhood book?

I had many favourites, but I have a very vivid memory of devouring *Boy* by Roald Dahl, followed in short order by *Going Solo*. I thought I would find autobiography boring, but I was ill in bed with time on my hands and I raced through both. The idea that the mind behind *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or *The BFG* was a real person, who had his adenoids removed or crashed a plane in the desert, was thrilling. I began to understand that story telling was not just about making things up...

Which of your own books is your favourite?

There May Be a Castle. I know more people will always read and enjoy *The Last Wild* above any other book I write, and that is a deep source of pride, because I care deeply about those stories too, but this is my most personal book. I wrote it to cope with the grief of losing my father, and just from a writing point of view, it emerged on the page more or less exactly as I imagined it which is much rarer and harder than you think.

Why bother to read?

I think reading is the only real way we can escape the existential realities of our own bodies, time and space. (And by escape, I don't necessarily mean flee, more pause, step back from and reflect.) When we watch a movie, look at a painting or listen to music, those are often powerful and absorbing enough to allow us a minute or two's freedom from our own lives, but we all watch the same film or painting, or hear the same music. When we read a book, our internal imagining of the words on the page is entirely individual. It may have commonality with others, but we step into a fictional mind world completely of our own imagining. It is a perfect, total and private liberty of the soul.

With a background in writing for theatre and television, **Piers Torday** is the author of the award-winning trilogy, *The Last Wild*, and most recently, the critically acclaimed duo, *The Lost Magician* and *The Frozen Sea*. His next book is a prequel to *The Last Wild*, called *The Wild Before* and publishes in March 2021. Since the lockdowns, Piers has been reading *The Last Wild* stories every single afternoon on Instagram. You can watch them on Piers' YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/piersforday>



Photo: James Betts