

Dear Tutor,

This is the story of how I decided to become a writer. Believe it or not, I have not always found creative writing easy. But when I did finally get the courage to write, I knew it was what I wanted to do forever.

I was born in September 1992 in Ipswich, Suffolk. My Mum split from my biological dad when I was two, and married my step dad when I was four, and I was their bridesmaid. I spend most of my childhood in a nice little bungalow. My parents had intentionally chosen a bungalow because I have mild cerebral palsy and at the time found it difficult to walk.

My parents went on to have two more children, my two younger brothers. I feel I had a happy childhood, and given the chance I would definitely go back. I had lots of fun times. I loved music from a young age and was always singing. But I also had some difficult times because I'm autistic. I got diagnosed at the age of four, which is relatively early, especially for a female.

When I started school I was in the special needs class, but I was eventually moved into the mainstream part of the school. I sometimes found school difficult, and believe it or not one of the things I found most difficult was creative writing. While all my classmates finished their creative writing tasks within the time, I was still sitting there well into break time staring at a blank page!

As I got into secondary school, I had a few friendships, but those friendships didn't last long. The other kids in my class sensed I was different and would bully me relentlessly. I ended up losing the few friends I did have, presumably because they didn't want to be seen with me.

One day the bullying got too much and I lost it. I ended up being expelled from the school, which was actually a blessing in disguise, because the following year I started attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the PRU, mainly because I got the chance to explore my love of singing during music class. I even got to take part in putting on a couple of performances. But even though I was at a different school, life wasn't completely without its problems. I still wasn't a very confident writer, so I struggled in English class. I also had a few issues with another student, but it was all resolved in the end.

I managed to get decent GCSEs, not brilliant grades but good enough to get me into college. I chose to study Art and Design, because I've always enjoyed being creative, even if I wasn't brilliant at it. I really enjoyed college. I got my First Diploma, but halfway into my National Diploma, I had an identity crisis of sorts. I spent a lot of time on the internet, and I started accessing adult forums, even though I was a vulnerable person and didn't really understand. I got obsessed with these forums, and my parents tried to protect me from them, but I would have none of it. I ended up getting admitted to hospital after I had a total meltdown over not being able to access to sites. I lost my place at college, and eventually moved away to a care home in St Neots, Cambridgeshire, as this was what was decided was best for me.

During my time in St Neots I attempted to go to college three more times, but I never stuck it out for one reason or another. I can't remember what happened the first time. The second time I left because I was being bullied by the other girls in my group, and the third time I had to leave because I was finding it hard walking to and from college every day because of my CP. I felt like I was a little bit lost. I didn't know what to do with my life.

Then I remembered some people I knew of online who had self-published their own books. I decided to develop my writing skills, and then in 2014 I wrote my first novella, which was loosely based on my own experiences. Since then I have written the sequel to that story, another novella which was eventually condensed with the first one into one book, and

my life story. My life story was a little short however and I'm planning on re-writing it at some point.

Time passed and I eventually improved enough to move back home to Ipswich, first with a housemate and then on my own, with support staff. This is where I'm living now. I decided to hone in on my writing skills even further and take some creative writing courses. I knew that writing was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, plus I loved studying. There's something really satisfying about working hard on an assignment and passing, and achieving a qualification. Writing as a career also suits me well because I have various mental health problems, and with writing I can do that when it suits me. If I'm having a bad day, I'm not going to lose my job because I don't turn up for work. Also, self-publishing suits me well because there are no deadlines.

As you can see I've been through quite a lot in my life, but now I think I'm starting to get on the right track.

I look forward to studying with you!

Asten