

Light My Fire

BY JACKIE AZÚA KRAMER

THE TIME BEFORE a spark is lit with an idea and a writer begins to write, is to say the least, a unique process. The question of where does inspiration come from has been addressed since time immemorial. Or do we attribute great works to 99 percent perspiration and 1 percent inspiration. Phew . . . it's gettin' hot in here!

As a picture book writer myself, I have some 'go to' inspirational favorites; I love to explore museums. I wander exhibit halls and I enter a different world with its own rules and boundaries on color, light, shape and texture. My brain slips sideways and flickers of creative light, ignite. There are many ways to light one's individual fire, which may lead to that fantastic and 'fresh out of the oven' idea. But dare I say it, what if after you've fueled your imagination . . . nary a word.

What then? You will never write again. Cut to black. The End. All histrionics aside, we've all been there, or at least I've been. Stuck in the proverbial writer's block quicksand. Storybird reverses visual storytelling by starting with the image and "unlocking" the story inside. Storybird now stoked the embers of my imagination.

For picture book or graphic novel creators, Storybird is ideal. Imagine being able to choose curated artwork from illustrators from around the world to create your own original

book. You simply choose 'Write' and then pick some of the suggested tags or subjects, like 'Cats' and illustrations of cats appear. Maybe you're feeling a monster story coming on . . . type in 'Monster' and images of all kinds of scary dudes are there to inspire you. Drag your art and write your text into blank pages to create your book. It's that easy!

You don't write illustrated stories—chapter books or novel writing is more your speed . . . no worries. Think of Storybird as a writer's prompt, instead of words, pictures. You write poetry, there's no end to visual stimulation for the

poet in you. If you have a WIP, Storybird connects you with a community that's more than willing to let you know what works.

And the fun doesn't end there. When you join Storybird you're not only part of a global community of writers and artists of all ages, but a community of readers, too. You now have an audience that includes teachers, students, parents, children, librarians, and fans, yes, FANS! You can have hundreds of dedicated followers to connect with and build a fan base that loves your zombie series or romantic stories or your funny, rhyming books.

Storybird inspired my writing process that directly led to a book deal and my agent. If not for any other reason, with Storybird, you'll be supporting illustrators. And in my world, well . . . they simply 'light up' my words!

Jackie Azúa Kramer travelled to faraway places inspired by all her senses. She finally settled happily with her husband and two children in Huntington, New York. Her forthcoming picture book, The Green Umbrella published by NorthSouth Books (English & German) debuts spring 2016. Jackie's digital titles: Oinkers Aweigh; Eva the Diva; Look, Look, Look; Miles Smiles may be found on www.uTales.com. How Lilly Ate the Rainbow self-published on www.Fastpencil.com continues to delight readers on healthy eating. Follow Jackie on Twitter @JackieKramer422.



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