

Today we are delighted to be joined by Edel Wignell author of 'The Athlete.' A entertaining poem with a strong focus on team unity and good sportsmanship.

Thankyou for joining us today Edel.

JB: What inspired your poem?

EW: At school I loved all games and sports, and I was lucky. Being a skinny, athletic kid, was an advantage – so much fun. At High School I played in the softball and hockey teams and competed in athletics. I still keep fit with stretching and flexibility exercises and a daily power-walk. I love seeing kids outdoors playing games and participating in sports.

JB: That is such an important message for children. Fresh air, sunshine and grass underfoot is so much better for children than hours in front of a computer game. Your poem sends a positive message of sportsmanship to children. Can you tell us a bit about your message within the poem?

EW: I always admired kids who were 'good sports'. I realize now that their parents didn't pressure them to win. My parents were happy for me to participate and never focused on the results.

JB: A wonderful manta Edel. It really is all about participating and just 'having a go.' What books did you enjoy reading as a child?

EW: My sisters and I enjoyed series. The *Billabong Books* by Mary Grant Bruce were birthday gifts from our mother and aunt.. We lived on a farm and slept in a sleep-out. I read a chapter each morning to my sisters before we got up. We shared our cousins' *Anne of Green Gables* and *Pollyanna* series, too. My grandmother (who lived 100 metres away) had an excellent library of books for adults. I read books by Charlotte Bronte, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy – many of the classics. At rural school (about 12 kids) we read books sent monthly in a box: the Gillies Bequest Library – books for Grades 1 to 8. Our teacher picked it up at the railway station. I read every book in the box.

JB: Thank you for sharing that with us. What a wonderfully exciting day it must have been when the teacher arrived from the train station with the box under her arm. What a wonderful morning routine you shared with your sisters. A lifetime gift.

Please tell us a bit about your writing process?

EW: My parents wanted me to be a secretary, so I learnt touch-typing at High School. This is a great advantage for a writer. I write fiction, non-fiction, poetry and scripts, and never write them with a biro. The words go straight from my brain through my fingers onto the screen – fast!

JB: Wow that would be fast. I do lots of scribbling notes, research and plotting before I begin typing. Even then my typing is not that speedy. You are very talented in being able to write across several genres.

Do you have a site our readers can visit?

EW: My website is: www.edelwignell.com.au

It introduces all my titles, and you can read some of my poems there. Most popular is the script segment where teachers may download a playscript for drama in their classrooms.

JB: Thank you for sharing with us Edel. It has been a pleasure chatting with you. I wish you all the very best in your endeavours and hope you choose to submit to Jelli-Beanz Publishing again one day. Readers can enjoy Edel's poem 'The Athlete' on page 53 of Hopscotch