

Becoming an Author: *The story of an eighteen-year old girl, her passion for writing, and her struggles.*

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3/8/2013

Growing up with an astrophysicist as a father and a biochemist as a mother, most people would think that Kira Budge would follow in their steps and study a topic in the science department. Maybe she would become a doctor or a biochemist, like her mother, working in a research lab. But Kira's dream is much simpler than that. She does not need to take a bunch of science classes, nor any higher-level math classes to achieve her goal. All she needs is a good knowledge of grammatical rules, the idea of story plotting, and a mind filled with creative ideas. Kira doesn't want to become a scientist or anything similar. She wants to become a writer and not just a writer that writes for fun—she wants to become published so she can share her work with the world.

Having lived in Los Alamos, New Mexico for most of her life, Kira Budge is the oldest of two siblings. Helping take care of two brothers throughout her high school career, she has developed a compassionate and caring personality that she extends to not only her family, but also to her four cats and friends. While she claims to be a true romantic at heart, she is not afraid to tell people her opinion on how she sees the world.

When asked about why she chose to become a writer, the blond-haired, blue-eyed writer recalls a moment where she was first asked to write creatively for a class: "I guess I started writing creatively around first grade, because it was like a school project. My mom kinda decided it would be fun to do." This project kicked off her passion for writing—she later adds, "I just liked it right away and pretty much since then, I've been writing." Even though she wrote continuously since then, it wasn't until later on in elementary school that she realized that writing was what she wanted to do. "But it wasn't until I finished my novel in sixth grade that I realized I wanted to really do it," she says, with a bright smile, "and that was just because it was a really good feeling, that you finished something and you told a story that other people can hear and learn from that kinda thing." Kira now mainly writes middle-grade to young adult fantasies and science fiction.

With the completion of her first novel (*The Ice Enchantress's Plot*), she decided that she wanted to begin sending her work out to agents and publishers. But it wasn't just the agents and publishers she gave her writings to. Beginning around middle school, she began to give her works to a close circle of friends. Enclosed in a school binder, she lent it to the first person who called 'dibs' on reading it. They would comment on it and then they would hand it back to her, so she could give it to the next person on the list. This not only allowed her friends to experience the stories that she creates; it allowed her to get comments and

constructive criticism that she could use to improve her writing. She would take them to heart and incorporate those in her story that she believes are relevant.

Sharing with her friends was just a small step for something big. She was aiming for a bigger picture—a bigger dream that would allow her to reach out to more people. She did not want her writing to only please herself. She didn't want to be the only one to experience something that she finds is truly amazing. "The original thing for writing is that I write for myself, because it helps me to work through issues and kind of understand things better, but then once I'm done with that, I want to be able to give that to the world as well so they can kind of learn from what I've learned," she tells me over Skype, her eyes alight with the passion that has driven her to write. She has always believed in sharing her truths. Creating worlds and characters that have conflicts with his-or-herself is in her opinion, one of the best ways to share these truths.

In order for people to learn from these truths, she needs to get published. That has been a very difficult process for the eighteen-year-old writer, who keeps getting rejected. These rejections are not the only hardships she has experienced. Beginning in freshman year of high school, Kira was suddenly hit with bouts of sickness that no one could explain. At one point, she had a severe case of the swine flu, only to have it relapse soon after she got better. Halfway through freshman year, she began to get better only to have problems hit again. After numerous testing and visiting numerous doctors, she was finally diagnosed with fibromyalgia (a disorder that causes chronic pain). This meant that she had to adjust her lifestyle and come to terms that there are certain things she cannot do anymore.

Having to deal with an autistic brother and adjusting to the fact that she now has fibromyalgia was very difficult for her, but she persevered, determined not to let her personal problems rule her life. It is this perseverance that she keeps her trying to get published. Though she exceeds confidence and determination, she has a bit of a stubborn streak. Sometimes, this stubbornness can get in the way of accepting truths that she does not necessarily want to hear. Her stubbornness, especially when she doesn't want to budge away from a certain view, can make her come across as narrow-minded. On the other hand, her stubbornness can become quite useful.

So far she has been rejected 82 times. That is quite a large number when you consider her age. Though she has already completed seventeen novels at the mere age of eighteen, she has always been frustrated with her continual rejections. She knows that it's her age that agents and publishers have a problem with. "I've probably been rejected a lot more than other people because of how young I am—since I've been sending out since sixth grade," she says with a laugh. Despite her age, she is determined and her stubbornness is what's helping her to keep trying. In a slightly indignant tone, she says, "It just takes a lot of stubbornness, I think, to be like 'you keep rejecting me, but I'm going to keep trying anyway because this is something that is important to me.'"

When asked about the difficulty of getting published she mentions that “it is a business.” That is, unfortunately, true about almost everything these days. When an author considers publishing, not only do they have to write a story that is captivating and interesting, they literally have to advertise themselves to agents. This requires a lot of finesse and stubbornness. It also requires knowledge of how the book market works, such as what type of genre sells more than others, and how the author can advertise their books more effectively. Kira sheds a little more light on the subject: “...but then the author themselves works as an independent artist. So when you try to get published, it is like moving away from the artistic side and more into the business side. It is very hard, especially when you’re naturally on the artistic side.” She adds that rejection is inevitable.

That doesn’t stop her from trying. Writing has always been her passion and her dream. Writing to her isn’t just writing words on a blank page. It is the ability to create a world filled with characters that are basically an extension of herself, and to convey a story that she hopes her readers can relate and learn from. She states, “I just want some people to know that I’m trying to give some kind of truth to the world and that whatever they can find in it, whatever means something to them, that’s what I want them to be able to take out of that. Something that will affect them in a good way.”