

## Interview with a Children's Book Writer... Åsa Lind



Fotograf: Göran Segeholm

*Born in 1958, Åsa Lind is a Swedish children's book writer known worldwide for the hit series **The Sand Wolf**, for which she received the "Nils Holgersson" Prize from the Swedish Library Association in 2003 and was nominated for the August Prize, awarded by the Swedish Publishers' Association. The author tells how, leaving the beach with her 3-4 years old daughter, she does not want to get in the car, because inside there is a... sand wolf. Only after the mother cleans the back seat of the car and the imaginary wolf leaves, the mother and daughter can hit the road home. (But the wolf ran after the car!) This is how the idea of the character appeared in the books: **The Sand Wolf, More of Sandwolf, The Sand Wolf and The Whole Show.***

*Åsa Lind writes fiction, non-fiction, picture books, and among the best known are: **Ellika Tomson's First Book, Grandma's Scarf, The Secret, Dodo and Diamond Clean the Hallway, Tiger, Tiger, Tiger** (illustrated by Joanna Hellgren).*

*1. How long did it take you until you wrote your first book? What triggered that moment?*

I had been writing stories and sagas for a radio for some years when a publishing house asked me if I'd like to write a book. Of course I gave it a try – writing a book was wish or a dream I have had for a long, long time. My first book was published when I was 36 years, so it took me about twenty years of nearly writing before I wrote a book!

*2. How do you get your ideas, inspiration?*



Fotograf: Ewa Stackelberg

Oh, from everywhere! From conversations with friends, from everything what is going on in the world, from overhearing people talking on the bus, from the nature, from reading, from science,

from playing with words – well, ideas and stories can hide everywhere. Part of my job is try to figure out what ideas are the best ones for me to develop, to work with.

3. *Which is the essential ingredient for a story to be good?*

It is hard to say. I think a good story needs a number of ingredients to make it work, such as a good plot, well chosen characters, the right setting etc. But if I must pick one ingredient it would be trust. The writer must trust in her or his story and way of telling it.

4. *What is one of the things you have learned from writing books?*

To never give up!

5. *What are you going to write next?*



Well, I think it will be something about trees hiding a secret world, and a girl finding a way into that other place. I'm also working on a text to a picture book about birthdays, and a child who claims that one year is not enough.

6. *What do you like to do when you are not writing?*

Spend time with my family, read books – pile of books! – go for long walks, meet friends, visit museums, go to theater, paint and draw...well, and travel to places near and far away if possible.

7. *What was / is the use of reading for you?*

Reading has been a big and important part of my life for now almost 60 years, and I dare say every single day of those years. Books are my friends and my helpers. They make me think, they take me to places beyond my imagination. I simple can't imagine a life without reading! Truly, a lot of my life long friends are characters from books.

8. *What childhood books would you like to read again?*

I still re-read many of my childhood favorite books from time to time, such as the books of Tove Jansson and JRR Tolkien.

9. *What is the most beautiful part of being a writer?*



There are many! Such as getting a really good idea and start writing a new story, and finishing a story. Or the feeling when I've manage to write a perfect sentence after hours of struggling with the words. But especially dear to me is meeting young readers – that I love!

*10. A tip for young writers.*

To think of writing as you think of playing football or the guitar: The more you practice the better you will become. So, anyone who reads a lot and writes a lot will for sure become better and better!

\*Photos from: <https://press.norstedtsforlagsgrupp.se/>