

# Q&A with Alice Feeney

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**Can you tell us about what inspired Aimee's story in *I Know Who You Are*?**

We all have secrets, including some we don't even like to tell ourselves. I fell in love with Aimee's secret, so I had to write her story. I met a lot of actresses while working at the BBC (for some it was their job, others just their personality), and in a former life I worked as a TV extra. I've always been fascinated by people who lie for a living, so the character of Aimee the actress was one I have wanted to write for a long time.

*I Know Who You Are* came to life when an old and new idea collided inside my head, and I love it when that happens. A story about a child who left home had been simmering for a while, and when it slotted together with a more recent obsession – about a woman with a secret she had never told – I knew I had a book.

**Why do you think psychological thrillers continue to be so popular?**

I think authors have been writing psychological thrillers for a very long time, they just didn't used to be called that. I'd argue that Agatha Christie wrote a few, Shakespeare too.

As a reader, I'm rather fond of dark stories, unreliable narrators, and a good twist. Real life is full of those, so the popularity of the genre may well have something to do with our desire to make sense of a world that sometimes doesn't make any.

When I write a thriller, it feels a bit like inviting a reader to get on a roller coaster with me and my characters. They might feel scared at times, possibly a little queasy, there will hopefully be some thrills along the way, as well as a few unexpected twists and turns. If a reader is kind enough to accept the invitation, I just hope they enjoy the ride.

### **Where do you like to write?**

I write in my garden shed with my dog, and it has to be quiet. He is a giant black Labrador who is scared of feathers, but he snores like a bear so occasionally needs turning. I do not understand people who write in cafes, I think they might be an alien species.

The shed is cosy and warm (once the heater is on) with a desk, a comfy sofa and a few of my favourite things. It might not sound like much, but it's where I am most happy. Being an author really is the best job, and when I step into the shed each morning, it's like disappearing inside another world.

### **Authors can work in so many different ways. What is the process of planning and writing a novel like for you?**

I'm a planner. I think about a story for a very long time before I commit to writing it, and I plot everything out on a giant board before I write a word. I use different coloured cards for different characters and timelines, and I always know the end before I begin.

There is no right or wrong way to write, but for me, starting a novel without a plan would be like going on a big walk with the dog without a map – I'd spend the entire time worrying about getting lost instead of enjoying the journey.

### **What advice can you give to aspiring authors?**

It took me a long time to become a published author, and I have ten years of rejection letters to prove it. Reading some of them felt worse than heartbreak, but now I'm glad, because I have the best agent in the world and I get to work with the best publishers in the business. It was worth the wait and I feel incredibly lucky.

These are the best pieces of advice I received along the way if you want to be an author:

1. Read.
2. Write. (Ideally a book that you would want to read).
3. Never give up.

### **What is next for you? Any preview you can give readers?**

I'm over the moon that Ellen DeGeneres and Warner Bros. are making a TV series of *Sometimes I Lie* starring Sarah Michelle Gellar. It is a dream I didn't dare dream come true, and I can't wait to see the characters come to life on screen.

I recently finished my third thriller, and I'm delighted to share that it will be published next spring. It's another dark and twisted tale, and I hope people might enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

I feel very lucky to be a full-time writer, and I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who helped make that dream a reality, especially my readers. Writers are nothing without readers, and I have the best, forever thank you!