

Melinda Szymanik



Born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1963

Melinda grew up in South Auckland, attending Mangere Central Primary, St Joseph's Primary (Otahuhu) and McAuley Girls High School. After school she went to The University of Auckland and completed a Masters in Science, studying wallabies on Rangitoto Island. Despite a keen interest in animals Melinda then went on to work in several different administrative positions in Mangere and Auckland Hospitals and Auckland University while also studying part-time for a diploma in Business Studies and a degree in English, both from Massey. Attending a weekend writing course by Dame Fiona Kidman and later doing the Creative Writing for Children paper at Massey led to Melinda's first writing success with several short stories accepted for publication in New Zealand's School Journal.

Now living in Mt Eden, Auckland, when she is not busy with her three school age children and the business she runs with her husband, Melinda writes. Her short stories have appeared in the School Journal and the Australian School Magazine. Her short story 'Rush' appears in the collection of sporty stories, *Dare and Double Dare* (2007) and another 'The Gift' has been included in the anthology *Short* (2008). Her first picture book *Clever Moo* was published in 2006, and a second, *The Were-Nana* in 2008. Her first novel for children, *Jack the Viking* – a dramatic story about a modern teenage boy stuck in the time of the Vikings – is also being published in 2008. Melinda has twice been shortlisted for the Joy Cowley Award (2003 and 2006).

Inspired by television, magazines, world events, movies, history, children and the complex process of 'growing-up', Melinda is currently working on two young adult novels and a picture book ,with three or four other ideas queuing up behind.

Melinda is also very interested in the business of writing, blogging regularly on the subject at www.melindaszzymanik.blogspot.com, and writing articles for the children's writers' organization, Kiwiwrite4kidz.

Books available from Scholastic:

Clever Moo
Short (Black Dog Books)
The Were-Nana (available soon)
Jack the Viking (available soon)