



A Q&A INTERVIEW WITH RHIAN IVORY ABOUT HER BOOK THE BOY WHO DREW THE FUTURE

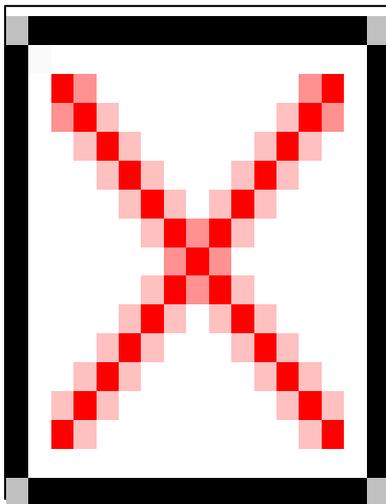
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The author discusses her haunting new novel.



History and fiction are inextricably linked in [The Boy Who Drew the Future](#) [3]

. Was this something you particularly wanted to explore?

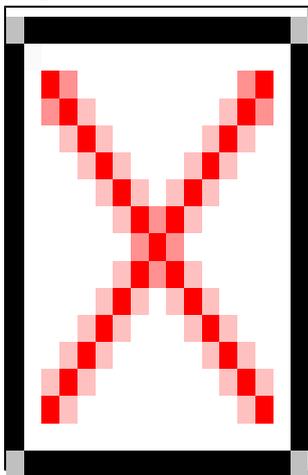
It is something I've always wanted to explore in a novel but as I'm a huge historical fiction fan I was more than a little nervous. The novel was originally just Noah's story but I kept seeing a ghost trailing along the river path behind Noah and wanted to know who he was and what had happened to him. Once I'd written Blaze's first chapter I knew that I wanted to explore how the village would have reacted to a witch in 1865 and of course Sible Hedingham was the perfect place to set the novel. However I didn't know when I picked Sible Hedingham that it was the last place in the UK to swim a witch, I only discovered this when I started to research the area. History has so many stories to tell us and this period in history is such an interesting one because the world was changing so rapidly, yet if you look at the way in which the world views Noah in the present day and Blaze in the 1860s not a lot has changed.

Tell us more about the village of Sible Hedingham

I went on to google maps looking for an unusual village or town in which to set the novel. Sible Hedingham jumped out at me, so in it went. Once I was happy with the novel I needed to find the names of roads that Noah and Beth might walk down and street names for where they might live, so I started to research Sible Hedingham and that was when I stumbled across the Sible Hedingham Witch Case. I read a lot of court reports, newspaper articles and other sources of information and found out that Sible Hedingham was the last place to swim a witch in the UK, unusually this witch was a man. The man was deaf and dumb and known only as Dummy who....drew pictures to earn money. I'd never heard of Sible Hedingham or Dummy and hadn't known anything about the history of the place so I was quite spooked when I uncovered this information. The writer in me was delighted of course!

Why do you think witches continue to fascinate?

Magic. No matter how old you are there's something hugely appealing about believing in magic and the secret world



of witches and wizards has long fascinated me. I think anyone who feels different or views themselves as slightly 'other' identifies with witches and the way in which they've been persecuted throughout history. They scare people for a whole host of reasons but the biggest reason is not knowing whether these powers, this magic, these abilities are real or not. I don't think it is something you can or should easily dismiss. I love the power of imagination and hope and I think witches offer this to a lot of people, whether in real life or in literature. All the witches I've met have been women full of hope with a huge respect for nature and only want to heal and help. I haven't met a bad one, yet.

The Boy Who Drew the Future is a supernatural story and also a romance ? which elements of the story did you enjoy writing the most and why?

I'm a romantic at heart, I have a strong urge towards hope and the happy ever after but don't think this is something that comes easily for most people. Noah and Beth have to work hard to try and make their relationship a success and of course they're faced with more complications than the average teenager because of who Noah is and what he can do.

I can't remember a time when I wasn't fascinated with the supernatural and knew that this would be a large part of the story for me. I can't quite accept the fact that once you die that is it. Game over. The End. So I like to believe that there's something else, another path to take, another life to live and this is something I'm sure I'll return to in future books. When I was researching **The Boy who Drew the Future** I visited the beer tunnels at Calke Abbey and something happened to me down there that confirmed my beliefs and all the questions I have about the afterlife.

How much did you enjoy writing the historical sections of the novel?

I adored writing Blaze's chapters. I did a lot of research once I'd written his sections in rough and went back through it to make sure that I'd got as much right as I could about the 1860s. I love reading historical fiction and I'd definitely like to write more of it. His voice came so easily, I simply heard his voice one morning as he trailed along the river path after Noah, Dog trotting along at his side and knew this character had something to say about the way he was treated because of who he was and what he could do.

You've taught creative writing, what would you say is the best piece of advice for anyone wanting to write for children?

Be prepared to write many drafts of the same story until you get it right. The first draft will NOT be the right one, trust me. I think I'd written about 17 different drafts of [The Boy who Drew the Future](#) [3] by the time the book was bought. As the great E.B. White said: 'The best writing is rewriting?.'

[The Boy who Drew the Future](#) [3] is published by [Firefly Press](#) [4], £7.99.

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