



## Great storytellers in their own words - Anne Fine

Anne Fine has been writing since 1971. She has won many awards for her books including the 1990 Carnegie Medal and Guardian Fiction Award 1990 for *Goggle Eyes*, the 1993 Carnegie Medal and Whitbread Children's Novel Award for *Flour Babies* and the 1996 Whitbread Children's Book Award for *The Tulip Touch*. In 2003, Anne was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. She was Children's Laureate from 2001 - 2003.

Anne Fine

"Anne Fine's books are compulsively readable"

**The Independent**

"... an author who knows how to make readers laugh" **Guardian**

### As a child

Anne Fine was born in Leicester. When she was three, her mother had triplet girls, so Anne was sent off to school early.

She can't ever remember not being able to read. When she reached the top of infant school, she had to wait a whole year until the junior school would take her. She spent her time reading the piles of books in the headteacher's office. "I loved that year," she says, "and since the practice for being a writer is reading, reading, reading, it was an excellent start. People who read a lot get to know, without even having to think about it much, exactly how writing works."

Anne's secondary school was rather a strict all-girls' school where she enjoyed the peace and quiet in the classrooms, the sense of order and fairness, and the "fascinating" school work.

### As an adult

Anne married at twenty, which seems very young to her now.

She had two daughters, and she and her philosopher husband, Kit, began a series of moves across Britain, America and Canada.

"Moving is hard work," says Anne "especially with young children. But the nice thing is that you can change as you go along, leave old bits of yourself behind and be different, without forever having old friends and family around to insist, 'You're not like that.'"

In the end, Anne came back to Britain, where her children went to secondary school and university. Anne has a big hairy dog called Lulu, lives in a stone house by a river, and enjoys walking and, of course, reading.

"Brilliant and mesmerising" - Phillip Pullman on Anne's writing

### As a writer

Anne writes in absolute silence (apart from her own curses and mutterings).

She never lets herself be hurried to finish anything too fast, and she thinks that's why so many of her books have won her prizes, here and abroad.

She starts off in pencil, and gradually moves on to typing up. When she starts anything, she knows exactly which age she is writing for, "Myself at five, myself at nine, myself at thirteen, myself at forty-four."

Her work is translated into over forty languages. She says, "Write a book you'd love to read, exactly as you'd love to read it. Then hope you're not too much of a weirdo!"

More details of just a few of Anne's books that you may well enjoy are given overleaf.

For your wish list - in paperback from 1<sup>st</sup> July ...

### Eating Things on Sticks

by Anne Fine

Harry is in trouble. He's burned down the family kitchen so now he has to spend a week of his summer hols with his uncle Tristram - who's heading off to stay with his new girlfriend, Morning Glory, on a tiny British island. Harry doesn't expect it to be a lot of fun - with just a wacky competition at the end of the week to look forward to. He certainly didn't expect to discover all the beards. Or the angel on the mountain. Or the helicopters circling overhead all week. And he definitely didn't think it would be so wet.

The ferry man did warn them, 'Glerhus Dill Sotblug!' But what on earth did it MEAN?

And will they end up Eating Things on Sticks ... ?

Shortlisted for the Roald Dahl Funny Prize 2009.

"Fine writes with a wonderful freshness and enthusiasm that's highly contagious. The dialogue crackles, and every page oozes with exuberance... This book is funny. This book is fun. This book put a stupid big grin on my face." Philip Ardagh, *The Guardian*



Anne Fine's novels for young people appeal to a wide range of readers and whilst many will want to begin exploring her books through one or two of the earlier titles in this list (eg *Eating Things on Sticks*), more confident readers will also enjoy reading books later in the list such as *Madame Doubtfire* and (for example) *The Book of the Banshee*, *The Tulip Touch* and *The Road of Bones*.

### Anne Fine's novels for young people include:

Crummy Mummy and Me (1988)  
A Pack of Liars (1988)  
Eating Things on Sticks (2008)  
The More the Merrier (2003)  
Frozen Billy (2004)

Step by Wicked Step (1995)  
Up on Cloud 9 (2002)  
On the Summerhouse Steps (2006)  
Goggle Eyes (1989)  
Flower Babies (1992)  
Madame Doubtfire (1987)

The Granny Project (1983)  
The Stone Menagerie (1980)  
The Book of the Banshee (1991)  
The Tulip Touch (1996)  
Round Behind the Icehouse (1981)  
The Road of Bones (2006)

# Anne Fine

## 'Fine is a storyteller of brilliance ...' The Times

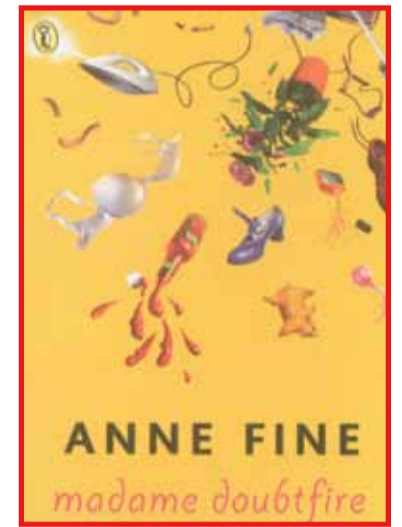
Author Festival 15<sup>th</sup> June '10

**From pencil and paper to book and (occasionally) so to film**

Outstanding authors sometimes receive offers for the 'film rights' to their book but very few such films actually get made. In 1993 Madame Doubtfire was, made into a very funny and very successful film (Mrs Doubtfire) starring Robin Williams.

Before any filming can take place, however, the story has to be turned into a film script and that process is controlled by specially commissioned scriptwriters. As a result many details are changed along the way and not every author is happy with the result.

Anne Fine has expressed the view that the film is rather over-sentimental but there is no doubt that, whether you have seen the film or not, you would greatly enjoy reading the original story.



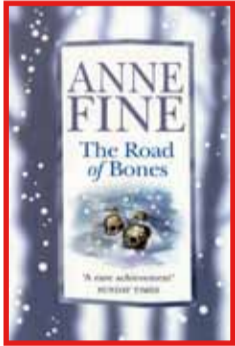
# Hurst

Hurstpierpoint College  
Senior School & Sixth Form

**On Hurst's Author Day, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June, you will hear Anne talk about her ideas, her writing, her books and also have the chance to ask her questions.**

**Afterwards, you will have the opportunity to buy one or more of her books (in paperback editions) and have them personally dedicated to you and signed by the author.**

### The Road of Bones 'Before I was even seven, I swear I could spell 'The Glorious Revolution'...



'Glorious Lie, more like,' is what Yuri's Grand-mother calls it. Everyone believes what they're told and everyone knows who

to cheer for, now that the Czar has gone.

But people still vanish sometimes. No one sees anything, or hears anything. And no one ever comes back. Yuri knows this. But he never dreams that he too could be considered an 'enemy of the state' simply for letting drop a few careless words.

Now he's taking his first steps on a road to despair. A road built on the bones of those who dared to oppose.

Shortlisted for the 2007 Carnegie Medal  
"without doubt one of the top novels of the year" **The Scotsman**

"This ambitious book is a rare achievement... This book is subtle, stimulating and morally complex, but it is also evocative and convincing: we feel keenly the chill of both soulless hegemony and its frozen wastes".  
**The Sunday Times**

### Round Behind the Ice-House 'I'm not the only one with secrets'



Tom wants to get back into the past when he and his twin sister, Cass, were still so close. What are the secrets she is keeping from him?

Tom has to face the fact that as he and Cass grow up they have to grow apart. He may be her brother, but he doesn't own her and he never can.

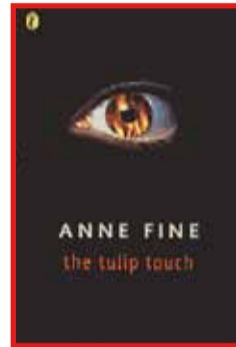
"Passionately honest".  
**The Sunday Times**

### The Tulip Touch 'No one is born evil. No one.'

Nobody wants to be around Tulip, but Natalie finds her exciting. At first she doesn't care that other people are so upset by Tulip's bizarre games. But as

the games become increasingly wild and sinister, Natalie realises that Tulip is going too far. Much too far.

Winner of the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year  
Highly commended for the Carnegie Medal

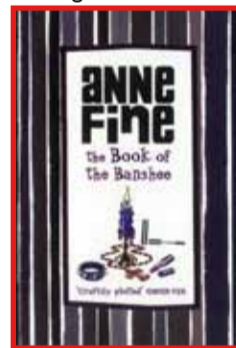


"The Tulip Touch grapples with the topical question of what turns children into criminals. It engrossingly chronicles a childhood friendship with a disadvantaged

girl who goes to the bad. This novel will make children aged between 11 and 14 think about the dangers of peer pressure and the collective responsibility of society for unhappy children. As always, Fine teaches her lessons by making her readers feel." **The Sunday Times**  
"It's a brilliant book." **Ian Hislop**

### The Book of the Banshee 'Dawn Attack!'

Will Flowers is living in a war zone, and the biggest explosions of all are coming from Estelle, his teenage sister.



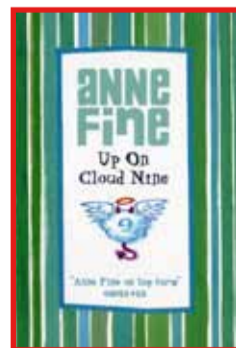
His parents make battle plans and his younger sister, Muffy, no longer speaks. Will soon has to choose whether to remain an

impartial observer or join the war in the hope for peace.

"Enjoyable, moving and craftily plotted"  
**Observer**

### Up on Cloud 9 'How stupid do you have to be to fall out of a top floor window?'

Or was Stolly trying something else - up on cloud nine, even then?



Stolly has always been so alive, so inspiring, taking risks, hiding nothing, notorious for being the school's most imaginative

liar (or fantasist, as he calls it). But now he's lying in a hospital bed and Ian, his best friend who's as close as a brother, is watching, waiting and remembering...

A characteristically funny, moving, life-affirming novel about a most remarkable character and the truly inspirational effect he has on everyone he meets.

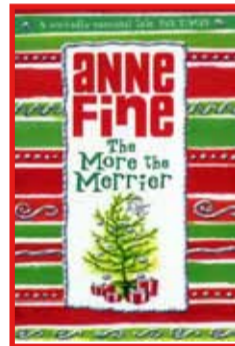
Shortlisted for the 2007 Carnegie Medal

"And as always with Anne Fine, the jokes are excellent. However hard-pressed her teacher and parent characters may be, they still have time for the type of black humour that can light up an otherwise dull day."

### The Independent

"Up on Cloud Nine by Anne Fine is a real treat for the many fans of the Children's laureate: a highly enjoyable novel that is characteristically funny, clever and moving... The stories and characters that emerge, especially Stolly's negligent parents, are sharply observed and hilarious, but at the same time deeply affecting." **The Financial Times**

### The more the Merrier Christmas comes but once a year. Luckily...



The Christmas holiday is, traditionally, a time when families gather together.

In Ralph's case this means ten or more relatives coming to stay, including assorted aunts and uncles, nutty Great-Aunt Ida (the Home tells them to be careful not to let her out) and his ghastly cousins: Titania in her silly, sick-making frilly fairy dresses and the twins Sylvester and Sylvia (it took until Easter last year before the family dog got over them).

Jammed into one small house for three days of merriment and family fun, with the tv on the blink and Mum on the verge of a breakdown, it soon becomes obvious that, in this house, more definitely does not mean merrier...

The book is copiously illustrated with delightful drawings by Kate Aldous.

Shortlisted for Red House Children's Book Award, 2004

Shortlisted for the Calderdale Children's Award, 2003

"From granny with her implacable views on children - 'If I had my own teeth, I'd bite you' - to cousin Titania who loves to perform 'I'm a Little Teapot', there's a grim cast in this hilarious but barbed story of how Christmas can go so wrong for so many people - just because they are all related." **The Guardian**  
"What better Christmas present could there be?" **The New York Times Book Review**

Meet the family again when Harry and Uncle Tristram go on holiday in their new 'adventure', **Eating Things on Sticks.**

### Anne Fine Factfile

**Colour of hair:** Grey with blonde streaks

**Colour of eyes:** Blue

**Birthdate:** 7<sup>th</sup> December

**Greatest virtue:** Cheerfulness

**Greatest vice:** Sloth

**Deepest wish:** To be able to sing

**Worst habit:** Chewing my nails

**Pets:** Huge hairy dog called Lulu

**Children:** Two grown-up daughters

**House:** I live in a stone house by a river in County Durham, and work upstairs, looking over my garden and a park.

### Anne Fine on Anne Fine

#### How did you become a writer?

The flip answer is that one January there was such a blizzard I couldn't get to the library and so sat down and began a book of my own. And never stopped writing. But more sensibly, the best advice I was ever given at school was, 'Find out what you like doing most in all the world, and then find someone who'll pay you to do it'. So, since books have always been my greatest pleasure, it's not surprising that I've ended up in a career that entails mostly reading and writing.

#### How do you write your books and how long do they take?

I'm a very slow worker. I write in soft pencil, so it's easy to rub out over and over till I feel it's at least halfway right. Even once it's typed up, there'll be layers of changes and additions and corrections. (It is work.) I hated going over things when I was at school. I'd just sit and let it pour out, and if I'd been asked to redraft it, it would have got staler, and worse. But now I enjoy nitpicking till it's absolutely the best I can do. Some books take over a year. Short books for young readers take just weeks or months.

#### What do you like most about being a writer?

The silence. Working alone. Not having the constant compromises in my work life that most people have. I write the books for me. (Me at 5, me at 14.) Then hope there are readers out there who like the same sorts of books I do.

#### Who are your favourite writers?

When I was very young, Enid Blyton. Then Anthony Buckridge and Richmal Crompton (the William books) and Henry Treece. Later, it was P G Wodehouse and Rider Haggard. Now it's George Eliot, Flaubert, Austen, Thackeray, Tolstoy... I could go on and on.

I also read a good deal of biography, autobiography, psychology, crime and poetry.

... Oh, and the newspapers.