

Meet Author Sands Hetherington



Please share your bio with us and anything else you would like readers to know.

I was born in New York City in 1939 and moved to Greensboro, NC, two years later. Except for schools and some months in California, I never left. I didn't finish tenth grade, but got into our state

university by the back door. I have two advanced degrees, two children and two Saint Bernards.

What are some jobs you've had in your life? Have they influenced/inspired your writing?

I have been a hod carrier, a newspaper mailroom worker, a mutual fund counselor, and a sporadic storyteller. If I ever write about the hod carrying, I will have to admit that it had an influence on the storytelling.

Can you share some writing experiences with us?

Gosh, I wish I could, but do you really want to hear about the old chaise and the green clipboard I use? And the Cross ballpoint pens?

Tell us briefly about your book and what you feel is the most important topic/sub-message you share.

Night Buddies and the Pineapple Cheesecake Scare is about a city kid named John who isn't ready to go to bed yet, and a bright-red crocodile named Crosley who shows up to rescue him and sneak him out on an adventure.

The part I like best is the reason Crosley is red. He is red because he is allergic to water. In a roundabout way, that is. If he gets wet he has to do the Black Bottom dance for hours and hours. Unless he takes his antidote pills. The pills stop the Black Bottoming, but (yeah, you got it!) they turn him red.

Like all authors, you have had your fair share of rejection letters. You obviously did not let the letters deter you. How did you keep your determination without getting discouraged?

I *did* get discouraged, but I guess I always thought I was good enough, and when the John-and-Crosley idea presented itself to me, I couldn't resist.

Please describe to us your relationship between you and your editor. What makes an author/editor relationship a success?

My editor is very competent and usually correct. (She isn't correct when we squabble over my freewheeling punctuation.) She keeps a lid on my flights of dialect and has made any number of detail textual improvements.

What inspired you to write?

It was in tenth grade. I handed in a sappy poetical piece in English class and this very cute student teacher gushed over it. Her name was Ellen and she was spoken for, but that did it for me right there.

Do you consider yourself a born writer?

No. I was put together step by step from spare parts.

Who is your favorite author and what is your favorite genre to read?

That's like asking me my favorite movie. There must be thirty-five movies in my top ten. My list of favorite writers is eclectic and includes a lot of the usual suspects, starting with Homer, skipping two millennia to Shakespeare, then Fielding, and then a whole bunch of 19th and 20th Century Brits and Americans.

But I'm old now and rarely even read fiction. I like ancient history these days, and the American Civil War.

Is there any particular book that, when you read it, you thought, "I wish I had written that!"?

Oh my, there must be hundreds. Any of them that I thought were very good. What admirer wouldn't wish that? My most vivid recollection in this regard is running into Holden Caulfield when I was sixteen.

Have you ever suffered from writer's block? If yes, how did you 'cure' it?

Not full-blown "writer's block" where you sit there and stare at the paper and nothing comes for days. But I've gotten into plenty of plot situations that I didn't know how to squirm out of, and I've come to places and just not known what to say next. When this happened to Dickens, he took late night walks around London. I do think walking helps.

Have you had any training to become a writer?

I have an M.A. in English and an M.F.A. in creative writing. That, and I've been around for a lot of years.

What type of books do you mostly write?

Children's fantasies featuring a young boy who isn't ready to go to bed yet, and a zany red crocodile who shows up and sneaks him out on wild adventures.

Does your family and friends inspire any of your books, characters, or plots?

Actually my six-year-old son came up with the whole idea. We always did bedtime stories, and one night John presented me with Crosley, a red crocodile he had cooked up for an after-lights-out companion. All I needed to do was figure out why Crosley was red, and then sneak the two of them out of the house on an adventure.

What do you like most about writing?

Mark Twain said it: *"I hate writing. I love having written."*

Tell us about your writing space.

It's an old chaise in my living room with a little table on one side. I prop my knees up and use an old green clipboard that I found thrown out on the ground when I was at college.

Is there anything you'd go back and do differently now that you have been published, in regards to your writing career?

Get there sooner.

Do you do first drafts on a computer or by hand?

Always by hand on my old green clipboard. With a black Cross pen.

What is your creative process like? What happens before sitting down to write?

I try to do what Hemingway suggested. He said stop for the day at a place it will be easy to start from the next day. Then the next day read over what's already there so everything will be of a piece.

Do you do a lot of research for your books?

Only to get the details right. Like I had to calculate how many seconds were in a several-hour adventure in order to describe a magic trick.

What voice do you find most to your liking: first person or third person?

I am much more comfortable with first person. To me it's just talking. Third person is more like work.

Do you participate in competitions? Have you received any awards?

No and not yet.

What advice would you give to a new writer?

Set up a schedule and stick to it religiously. Don't try to write all day or you probably won't last. Two or three hours may be plenty. (Have something else to do.) Also: READ.

A young boy and a zany red crocodile solve a mystery for the world's only pineapple cheesecake factory.



Do you have any book signings, tours or special events planned to promote your book that readers might be interested in attending? If so, when and where?

These are in the works. The book only came out June 1st.

Use this space to tell us more about who you are. Anything you want your readers to know. Include information on where to find your books, any blogs you may have, or how a reader can learn more about you and writing.

My book website is <http://www.dunebuggypress.com>

Night Buddies and the Pineapple Cheesecake Scare is available on Amazon.com. There are some generous reviews there. Also BN.com.

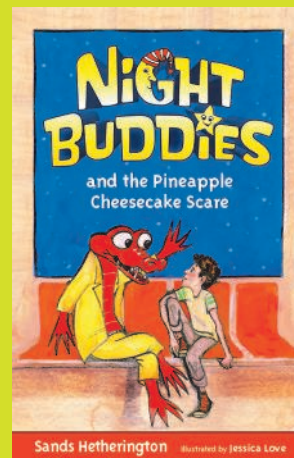
Blog Talk Radio's World of Ink Network The Stories for Children show with host VS Grenier and producer Irene Roth will be chatting with fun-loving children's author Sands Hetherington about his new children's series Night Buddies. Tune in at the BTR World of Ink Network at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/worldofinknetwork>.

You can find out more about my World of Ink Author/Book Tour at <http://tinyurl.com/6vgevvh>

Night Buddies, Imposters, and One Far-Out Flying Machine will appear this fall and is a much longer book.



Sands Hetherington's Book:



About the Book:

Night Buddies and the Pineapple Cheesecake Scare is the first in a series featuring John, a young city kid who isn't ready for bed yet, and Crosley, a bright-red crocodile who shows up in his room to rescue him and take him on an adventure.

Night Buddies is an astonishing and inventive adventure with unforgettable cast of characters that will make you laugh and win over your heart. The book has lots of thoughtful, multi-layered twists, giggles, and perils -- things kids can relate to and enjoy.

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Get a sneak peek of the book at

<http://tinyurl.com/7xxl8qw>