



About the Creators



Sally Lloyd-Jones is the author of the New York Times best-selling book *How to Be a Dragon . . . by Me, the Big Sister*, illustrated by Sue Heap, and its sequels, *How to Get Married . . . by Me, the Bride* and *How to Get a Job . . . by Me, the Boss*. On her work as a children's author, she says, "I get to have the best job in the world—writing stories. And I get to work for the best bosses in the world—children. I am very grateful." Born in Kampala, Uganda, and raised in East and West Africa, she moved from the U.K. to the U.S. in 1999 "for just a year." She's still here. Sally Lloyd-Jones lives in New York City.



Anita Jeram is best known for her illustrations for the picture book *Guess How Much I Love You*, by Sam McBratney, which was short-listed for the 1994 Kurt Mascher Award and is now one of the world's best-selling picture books. A native of Portsmouth, England, Anita studied art at Manchester Polytechnic and published her first book for children while she was still a student. Today, she lives in Northern Ireland with her family and a menagerie of pets.



Q&A with author Sally Lloyd-Jones

How did you come to write *Skip to the Loos*?

Being a first, potty humor is not much of a stretch for me. But one day it struck me about the rhyme "Skip to My Lou" that I didn't really understand this "my loo" business: Was loo a song? A person? A place? I started thinking it would be so much better and would make much more sense, if it was spelled too. Then I imagined everyone skipping and I was off.

Did you use any real-life inspiration for the book?

I was around tiny tots who didn't want their potty. And so in some ways that was playing into it. I wanted to see if I could make it more fun and funny for them. Because after all, who doesn't need the loo?

The text has such a wonderful rhythm, and of course the title brings to mind the song "Skip to My Lou." Did you listen to any music while you were writing the book?

I do write to music quite often. But not on this one. With rhyme I like to write as I walk because it helps me to get the rhythm right. And of course I am in good company in that regard, because Wordsworth did exactly the same thing. (Although I am not so certain he wrote about the loo, he limited himself to daffodils.)

What is your favorite part of *Skip to the Loos*? Do you have a favorite character?

I have to say that they're all my favorites, because I don't want to leave anyone out. But, if you promise not to tell the rest of the characters, then yes, I am partial to Balthazar Elephant—and I do definitely have a soft spot for Wilby Waa. But truthfully my absolute favorite part? That Anita Jeram did the pictures. I'm the luckiest author alive.

If you could skip to the loo, would you?

I really don't know what you mean. I always skip. Why? Don't you? Why would you walk when you can skip?



Q&A with illustrator Anita Jeram

Tell us a little about your artistic process.

For this text, my initial drawings were quite big, in crayon and pencil. I had to scale everything down when I realized how many characters needed to fit on the pages. Getting a monkey, a dinosaur, and a chicken on a page together was a challenge!

What parts of the book were the most fun to illustrate?

I enjoyed putting all the characters together on the potty party spreads. The little bugs were fun, too.

What did you use for inspiration for your artwork in *Skip to the Loos*?

The babies in my family are all grown up now, so this was all from imagination and memory. I like the big old decorative china patterns you can sometimes see in antique shops.

One of the characters I couldn't work out was Wilby Waa. Until my daughter drew a picture of a cockatiel in an eggshell. Brilliant!

I love her.

There are many cuddly animals and fantastical creatures in *Skip to the Loos*. If you could be any animal from the story, which one would you be?

I'd be the piglet with red roller skates. I loved my red roller skates when I was little.

We heard that you've had many wonderful pets! Do you have any funny potty-training stories that involve them? What are the differences between potty-training toddlers and pets?

Potty-training toddlers and toilet training puppies is not too different. I wish I could potty train my three pet tortoises. They are the messiest creatures I've ever known.

Anything else you'd like to add about *Skip to the Loos*?

I like the title of this book, but I couldn't help singing the song in my head whenever I was drawing. Drive me a little bit potty!

