

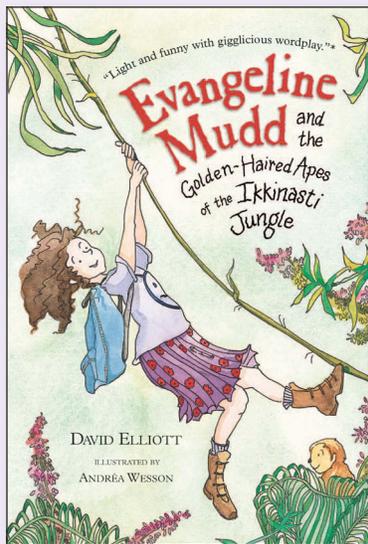
QA with David Elliott

NEW
FOR
SPRING
2008!



Evangeline Mudd's Great Mink Rescue
PB ISBN: 978-0-7636-3420-9
\$5.99 (\$6.50 CAN)
Ages 7-10

Evangeline Mudd's Great Mink Rescue
HC ISBN: 978-0-7636-2295-4
\$15.99 (\$17.50 CAN)
Ages 7-10



Evangeline Mudd And The Golden-Haired
Apes Of The Ikkinasti Jungle
PB ISBN: 978-0-7636-2614-3
\$5.99 (\$6.50 CAN)
Ages 7-10
HC ISBN: 978-0-7636-1876-6
\$15.99 (\$17.50 CAN)
Ages 7-10



CANDLEWICK PRESS
www.candlewick.com

Learning to swing from the rafters, eating peanut-butter sandwiches with her feet . . . Evangeline Mudd has had an unusual childhood.

David Elliott's spirited heroine has primatologist parents who have taken their child-rearing cues from the golden-haired ape, whose lifestyle they deeply admire. These comical, offbeat tales by David Elliott and illustrated by *Andréa Wesson* introduce a winning heroine—and ecological themes—as they whisk readers off on wild adventures.

Q: When did you decide to write for children?

DE: Well, there never was a point when I said, "OK. I'll be a kids' author." But every time I started a book, my protagonist was nine or ten years old.

Q: How does it feel to write for children?

DE: I love kids. I love their raw intelligence, their unfiltered, almost savage honesty, their Roman sense of justice. Kids still believe that bad guys get done in. I also love how almost pathologically conspiratorial children are. As a writer, who could ask for a better audience? I worry about American children, though.

Q: What worries you about American children?

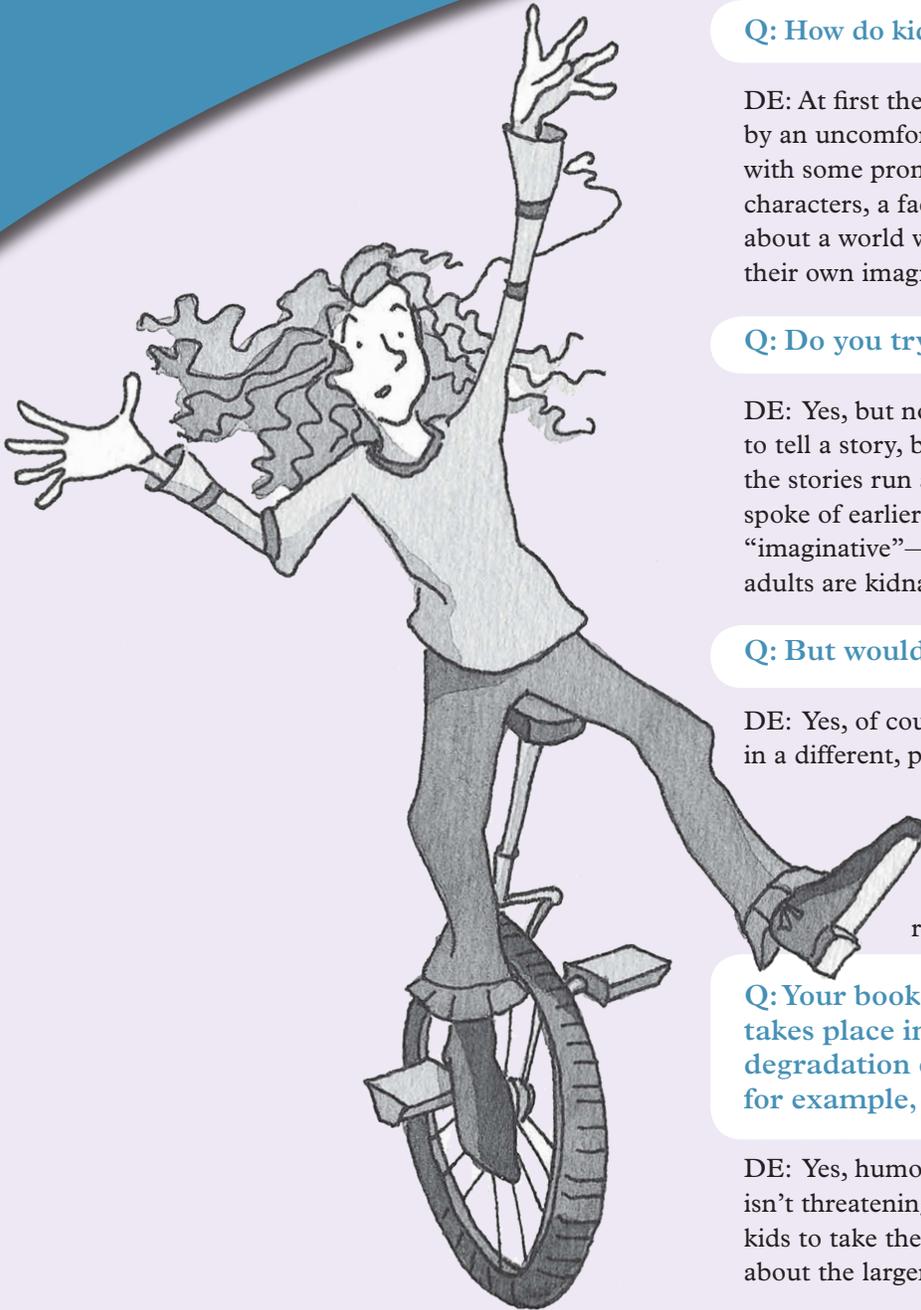
DE: Healthy children live in that landscape where external, objective reality intersects with the internal, subjective world of the imagination. It's no secret that the corporate world is keen to colonize.

Q: How so?

DE: Well, one obvious way is by using the considerable resources at its command to replace images that might spring spontaneously from a child's psyche with corporate logos and characters. Here's an example: I sometimes conduct writing workshops with kids. I've learned that if we're working on creating a character, I have to begin with a set of rules: No characters from TV shows or video games. No cartoon characters. No athletes or pop stars.

(over)

QA with David Elliott



Q: How do kids tend to react in those writing workshops?

DE: At first there is a roar of complaint. This is usually followed by an uncomfortable, almost stunned silence. Eventually, though, with some prompting, most kids begin to come up with their own characters, a fact that speaks to their resilience. Hooray! I worry about a world where children have difficulty making contact with their own imaginations.

Q: Do you try to address that in your books?

DE: Yes, but not consciously. Like most writers, I'm just trying to tell a story, but for reasons I don't completely understand, the stories run as fast as they can into that landscape I spoke of earlier. Unusual—I suppose we could call them “imaginative”—things begin to happen: Boys turn into bugs, or adults are kidnapped by apes.

Q: But wouldn't you say that all books are imaginative?

DE: Yes, of course. But realistic fiction engages the imagination in a different, perhaps we could call it a more adult, way, I think. On the other hand, books that encourage children to believe that anything is possible help to relieve the incredible pressures of growing up and also help children to build the psychological reserves they need to face later difficulties.

Q: Your books are also funny, and the comedy often takes place in the context of larger social issues — the degradation of the environment in the first *Evangeline*, for example, and animal rights in the second.

DE: Yes, humor allows me to bring up these issues in a way that isn't threatening. In general, I don't think it's a bad thing to ask kids to take the focus off themselves for a moment and think about the larger world.