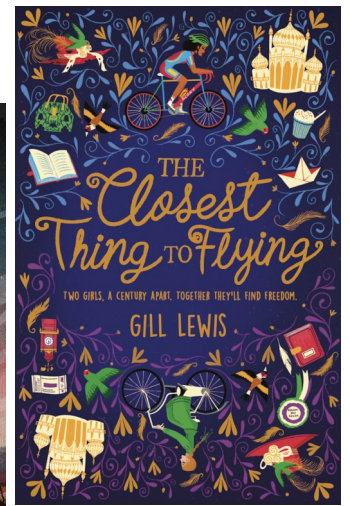
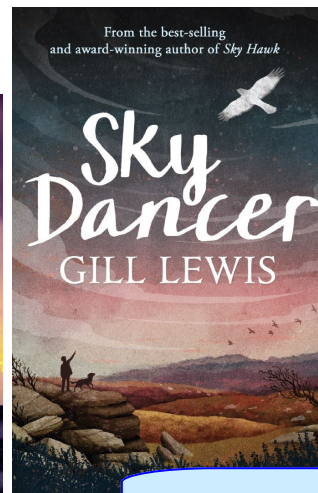


## AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

# Gill Lewis



### Why bother to read?

Where to start! I read for so many reasons. It's vital to who I am. I read to escape into other worlds. I read to travel back in time and see the past, so that I may understand the present. I read to travel into possible future worlds to reflect upon my actions in the here and now. I read to belly-laugh until my sides are hurting. I read to feel others' journeys through life, so that I may have empathy with them and understand my own journey too. I read to inform, to debate, to challenge my own perceptions and prejudices. I read because the world is big and wide, and full of curious things. Through books, I am able to travel further and faster, and fill my mind with stories and wonder.

### What was your favourite childhood book?

When I was a child I struggled to learn to read. However, the books that made me a reader were the *Tintin* stories, because they were engaging stories with great adventures and were accessible to me, as the stories were told through illustrations. I loved recognising the characters throughout the books, from the bumbling Professor Calculus to the ear-splitting Bianca Castafiore. I think my favourite *Tintin* story as a child was *Tintin in Tibet*, because it inspired a love of adventure within me and made me want to believe there are creatures such as yetis in world. Even back then in the 70s, it made me think about animals that currently face extinction and how they are affected by man.

### Which of your own books is your favourite?

It's very difficult to choose a favourite - a bit like asking which is my favourite child! *Sky Dancer* is important to me because it opened my eyes to the continued high levels of persecution of birds of prey in the UK. Hen Harriers, Golden Eagles and other raptors are relentlessly persecuted by people who are involved with driven grouse shooting, a sport that originated in Victorian times. People pay thousands of pounds to shoot grouse, killing birds of prey. The land is intensively managed and burned which reduces carbon capture, biodiversity, water and air quality and increase the risk of flooding downstream. *Sky Dancer* raises the question of exciting and alternative land use: rewilding. I hope the story engages with readers and helps them want to save our raptors too.

Gill Lewis is a multi-award winning children's author who writes stories about the natural world and our human relationship with it. Trained as a vet, she draws upon her experiences and travel to tell narratives about the threats facing our planet. She is passionate about engaging young people with the wild. She writes from a tree house in the company of squirrels.