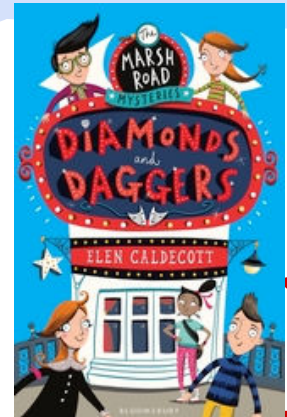
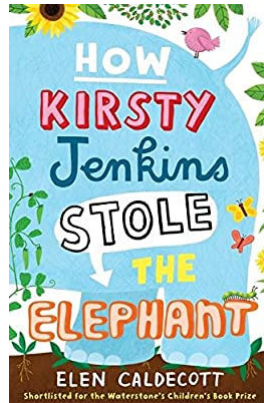
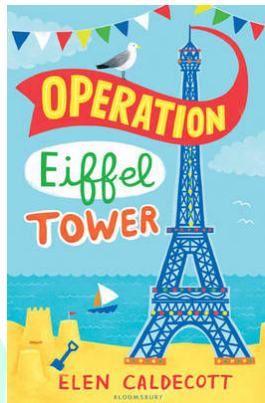


# Elen Caldecott



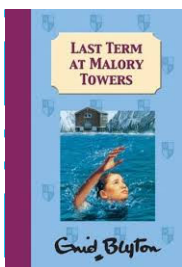
AUTHOR  
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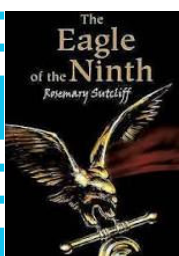
Why bother to read?

It is just magic. I mean that. You 'spell' words, but you also cast a 'spell'. It isn't a coincidence that we use the same word for those two things. Words and stories are an enchantment that make it possible to time-travel, to voyage around the world, to meet anyone who ever lived ... to be anything at all! Stories are absolutely magical.

What was your favourite childhood book?



Just one?? Impossible. Books were so important to me when I was young. They were like extra friends. I loved stories that picked me up and swept me away to far-off times and places. So, to pick two (Arghh! This is painful!) I loved *The Eagle of the Ninth* by Rosemary Sutcliff and the *Malory Towers* series by Enid Blyton.



Which of your own books is your favourite?

Another impossible question, but I'll do my best. There are a couple of books that took me a really long time to write. I think those are my favourite, because I lived with them in my head and my heart for longest. *The Short Knife* is a story set at the end of the Roman Empire—it took me four years to write. I also have a soft spot for *Operation Eiffel Tower*. I started writing this one when I was ten years old, but not publishing it until I was in my 30s. So, a really long time!

Elen Caldecott graduated with an MA in Writing for Young People from Bath Spa University and was highly commended in the PFD Prize for Most Promising Writer for Young People. Before becoming a writer, she was an archaeologist, a nurse, a theatre usher and a museum security guard.

Elen's debut novel, *How Kirsty Jenkins Stole the Elephant*, was shortlisted for the Waterstone's Children's Prize and longlisted for the 2010 Carnegie Award.

