

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: Sue Cheung

Sue Cheung is an award-winning British-Chinese author/illustrator. Born in England, to parents who ran a restaurant, she spent her early years hooked on comics and doodling. At 16 she won a scholarship to the London College of Fashion through a magazine competition, then later became an advertising Art Director. Sue now writes and illustrates books from her home in Dorset.

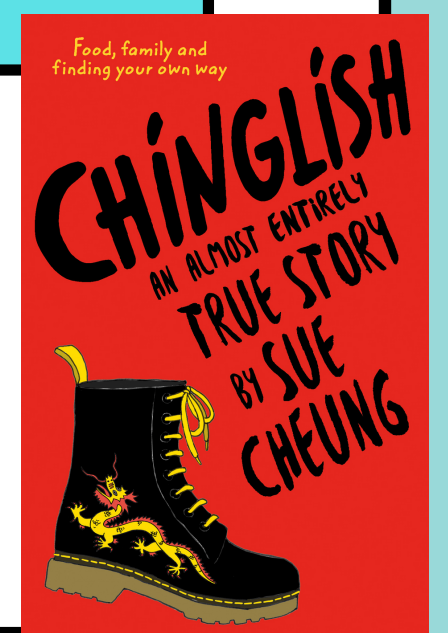


WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD BOOK AND WHY?

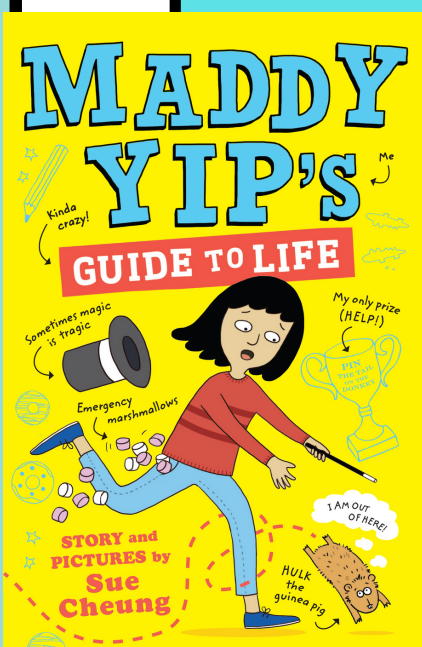
Without a doubt *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 ¾* by Sue Townsend. At last! A character that seemed real, that I could totally relate to. Adrian was a hapless teenage outcast with parent problems, trying to fit in but failing miserably – just like me! Suddenly I didn't feel so alone. Not only that, but it was set in familiar working class surroundings and written in such a refreshingly honest way. I love tragicomedy and this book had both sadness and belly laughs in spades! Adrian Mole has definitely been an influence on the way I write today.

WHICH OF YOUR OWN BOOKS IS YOUR FAVOURITE AND WHY?

It's got to be *Chinglish*, a memoir about my teenage years growing up in a Chinese takeaway. I was completely new to writing a novel at the time (having only written picture books before), so it was a massive learning curve. It also became a sort of therapy for me because there were so many issues from my childhood that needed to be relived and resolved and through writing. The most rewarding part though was the sheer amount of people who got in touch to say how they shared the same experiences and how much my story has helped them. Nothing beats the feeling of being able to lift others.



WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO READ?



I've never been a huge or fast reader but when I do read, I choose my books carefully and digest every single word. I'll read any genre to suit my mood, for instance, fantasy when I want to be whisked away to magical worlds, biography for fascinating insights into someone's life, graphic novels to take in the intricate artwork or humour when I want to be amused. Reading expands the mind, boosts empathy, creates connections (recommending and swapping books with friends is always a buzz) and makes your world infinite – all this and you don't even need to leave your sofa, what a gift!