

The Petit Proust Questionnaire

from Owlkids Books

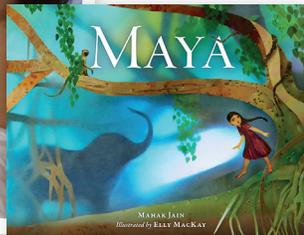
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Meet illustrator Elly MacKay

ELLY MACKAY received her bachelor of fine art from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She creates her illustrations by inking yupo paper and cutting it into layers that she sets up in a miniature theater, somewhat like a Victorian Paper Theater. She plays with the lights and filters to create atmosphere and then photographs the scenes. In addition to illustrating her own picture books and those of other authors, Elly

recently illustrated new covers for the Anne of Green Gables series. She lives in Owen Sound, Ontario. Visit her website at ellymackay.com and find her on Twitter as @theaterclouds.



978-1-77147-100-8
\$18.95 CDN / \$16.95 US

Maya is about a girl who—with the help of her mother's telling of the legend of the banyan tree—discovers the power of stories to help overcome fear and grief. Rich art and language provide a palpable sense of place, making Maya's world come alive on the page.

When you were a kid, what was your favorite thing to do?

Making things, out of anything.

What did you most dislike doing when you were a child?

Using the phone.

As a child, where did you dream of living?

I used to draw all sorts of imaginary homes. I still dream of building one, though now I am fine with them just being a dream. I think I enjoy imagining all of the possibilities more than I would actually use the items in my imagined homes... though the indoor swing might still need to become a reality.

What did you think you were good at when you were a kid?

Math and drawing roses and pigs. I think I went through a koala phase too, where I would give out drawings of them to all of my friends.

When you were a kid in school, what did you look for in a friend?

Someone that I enjoyed being around, who made me feel good about myself and was a bit quirky. I have had the same best friend my whole life. She is all of these things and a lot like a sister.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

An artist, an architect, a set designer, an engineer, or a tightrope walker.

Continued on next page ►



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What was your favorite book as a child?

Millicent by Jeannie Baker. My dad brought it back from Australia for me when I was around six. Then when I was 23, I got to go to Australia and realized I was standing in the same park where the book was set. It was such an exciting moment!

What is your favorite pastime now?

I am pretty much the same person I was as a kid. I love making things, being with my family, and spending time outside.

What do you find an absolute chore?

Cleaning up all of the little itty-bitty bits of paper in my studio.

If you could live anywhere, where would you go?

I love where I live, though I think I would enjoy living in Spain or France for a year. My kids are learning French, so perhaps one day we will.

What is the one talent you wish you had?

Playing an instrument.

What makes a good friend?

Knowing each other's faults and loving each other anyway.

If you weren't an author or illustrator, what job would you have?

Making something else... perhaps houses or sculptures, or building sets for movies.

What children's books have caught your attention lately?

Some of the books on our stack right now are:

Miss Moon by Janet Hill; *Oscar Lives Next Door* by Bonnie Farmer and Marie Lafrance; *Song for a Summer Night* by Robert Heidbreder and Qin Leng; and my favorite of 2015: *The Wonderful Fluffy Little Squishy* by Beatrice Alemagna.

If you had to have a motto, what would it be?

To live wholeheartedly.

