

Hi Donna.

Thank you for inviting me to participate in your blog. There's a hopscotch showdown at Blue Hill Primary School. Clarity Johnson is the school's record holder but Prunella Hinchbottom is determined to beat Clarity's record and plans a showdown to prove it. Who will win? Hopscotch Showdown is a fast-paced adrenaline rush story – guaranteed to get your juices flowing!

J/B:

It is fast paced and very exciting. What inspired the story?

R.V:

I love children's books and enjoy reading YA books as well. Also, I like watching westerns. Who doesn't enjoy a good old fashion Western Mexican stand-off? This was the inspiration behind my story.

J/B:

Your main characters Clarity and Prunella are wonderful female characters, do you have a favourite?

R.V

I don't have a favourite. I think both girls in the story show strong individual characteristics that make them both unique and fun. Clarity shows courage to go up against Prunella, the most competitive girl at school, and Prunella shows sheer determination to prove that she can beat Clarity or tries to. All Mexican stand-off movies portray two interesting characters immersed in an impossible situation with no easy way out. The only difference in my showdown is that the two girls are enjoying a harmless game of hopscotch to outdo the other and prove something. The characters foster good sportsmanship and healthy competition in a safe environment – the schoolyard playground – without dangerous weapons, of course.

J/B:

What authors' did you enjoy reading as a child and has this played a role in your writing today?

R.V:

I grew up reading The Chronicles Of Narnia by C.S. Lewis. The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe is my favourite. I like to write stories that keep the reader captivated from start to finish – stories that keep you on the edge of your seat wondering what is going to happen

next. Just like in Narnia, I like to write a story that builds suspense through anticipation creating tension and anxiety for the reader.

J/B:

Narnia is also a favourite of mine!  
Please tell us a bit about your writing process.

R.V:

I like to write stories that have build suspense. It's really important to create a believable story and let it unfold naturally. Like in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, (one of my all time favourite spaghetti western movies), I wanted to recreate a western Mexican stand-off in the readers mind. With the two girls standing on opposite sides, facing each other, staring intently, the reader begins to picture a western style duel in their minds. I like to use similes in my stories because it adds an element of fun and enhances the atmosphere of the story.

J/B:

Robert, it has been fantastic chatting with you today. Do you have a website or blog that our readers can visit?

R.V:

Unfortunately, I do not have a website as such. It is something that I'm going to be looking into in the near future. Wow, thank you Donna for featuring me on your blog. It's been a lot of fun chatting with you. I'm sure *Hopscotch* will inspire the imaginations of children of all ages.

J/B:

Robert's Bio -

Robert loves to read and is a self-confessed hoarder of books, especially children's books. He enjoys writing stories and sharing his passion with children of all ages. Robert is a BIG kid at heart! He is a huge fan of Disney and loves animation and spending time with his children.

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