

# “You don’t need PERMISSION to write”

Georgia Byng talks about seeing her novel, *Molly Moon’s Incredible Book Of Hypnotism*, on the big screen, and why the arts run in her family

## How did you get into writing?

I tried forging a career as an actress, but in acting, you’ve got to wait for someone to give you a part. I found that frustrating, so I started penning books. You don’t need permission to write.

## Why did you decide to write children’s books?

Oddly, writing for adults never crossed my mind. I feel I can speak with wisdom for children – I have three of my own – in a way I can’t for adults.

**Where do you find inspiration for your books?** I take things from reality and elevate them with my imagination. I once found a paper dart which someone had written on, “Please help, aliens have eaten my brain!”. Now, in one of my new books, there’s a character that writes messages on paper darts. Inspiration is everywhere.

## Your breakout book was *Molly Moon*.

**How did that story come about?** I’d spent 10 years writing books and rejection was hard. When I was 34 I told my daughter, then 10, I couldn’t do it any more. She said: “Mum, you always tell me I should never give up!” The following year I wrote *Molly Moon*.

## *Molly Moon* has been adapted into a film. How much input did you have in the process?

I co-wrote the screenplay and served as artistic producer, but I’d never been near a film set before. I was there from

casting to the editing suite – it was like an amazing film school.

## The film stars women such as Anne-Marie Duff. Were you happy with the casting?

Yes, although it was a tense process! We were a small project and big names hold out for big films. We ended up casting late, so those we wanted knew whether or not they’d be available.

## Did you find giving control of your words to someone else

difficult? You can’t be precious, or expect the film to be like the book. I decided to relinquish control. The film is like the book’s non-identical twin. I’m really happy with it.

## You come from a family of high-profile publishers – does an aptitude for words run in your blood?

My brother Jamie is managing director of Canongate Books [he also founded Letters Live], and Archie [Bland, half-brother] is a journalist at *The Guardian*. As kids, we were surrounded by books and encouraged to write, draw and paint. My mother nurtured a love for the arts in us.

**What’s next?** I’ve just published *The Girl With No Nose* but my main focus is a trilogy for young adults. *Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism* is in cinemas now »



*Molly Moon And The Monster Music and Molly Moon's Incredible Book Of Hypnotism*



“The FILM is like the book’s non-identical TWIN. I’m really HAPPY with it”



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