

## Questions and Answers

Gail Kimer, author of *Immigrant from the Stars*, answers questions about her book.

**Why did you write a book about space aliens?**

Science fiction fascinates me. I believe it's quite possible that other planets have intelligent life, and, if that's true, aliens could become Earth's immigrants. How cool would it be to say, "My best friend is from the stars!"

Also, I spend my spare time doing genealogical research, looking specifically for an elusive ancestor who doesn't seem to want to be found. My family jokes he was accidentally left behind by a spaceship when it made a rest stop on Earth.

**What are your sources of inspiration?**

Three things especially inspire me:

- **People**—That includes my siblings. I'm the oldest of seven and was nineteen when my baby sister was born. I can share something about each of them growing up. Of course, children also inspire me. Kids are fun to be around. They see the world in special ways and are great entertainers.
- **Humor**—I try to incorporate humor into everything I write. I love making people laugh and getting them to think "that just might be possible."
- **My first career**—During my tenure as a teacher, I sometimes became frustrated with books I was supposed to use to teach children reading because I thought the stories were boring. My goal with *Immigrant from the Stars* was to create a story that readers could not put down, would make them laugh, and would feel was believable.

**Who are your favorite children authors?**

Reading was my favorite thing to do as a child because I could go anywhere and be anyone. I loved fairy tales and *The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner.

As a teacher *The Witches* by Roald Dahl was one of my favorite books to read to my classes. I also loved *The Green Book* by Jill Paton Walsh in which an Earth family moved to another planet.

**Who is your favorite character in *Immigrant from the Stars*?**

Of course the main character, Iko. He flees Trinichia, his home planet, and moves to an entirely new world. He needs to make friends and fit into sixth grade while being disguised as an Earthling, who, in his opinion, are ugly. He misses being able to float like he did on Trinichia. In addition, he needs to keep his powers a secret, although he sometimes forgets and makes hilarious mistakes. He also needs to deal with a bully. While coping with all of this, he must avoid capture by the government agent from Trinichia who was sent to Earth to capture his family. That's a lot for a twelve-year-old kid to deal with.

-more-

But I also love Zeek, the weird kid, and Marty the bully. There's more to both of them than meets the eye, but I can't give away all their secrets here. Of course, there are many secrets to learn as you travel through the book.

**Do you have other books related to *Immigrant from the Stars* planned?**

I have two others in the planning stages. I've developed a rough outline for Book 2 and am flushing out the overall concept for Book 3. Although all of the main characters appear in both books, some experience major changes.

**How long did it take you to write *Immigrant from the Stars*?**

I began writing full time in 2011 after my retirement from the education field. I wrote several picture books and self-published some. *Immigrant from the Stars* began as a picture book about a little boy who was a vampire. The story line just kept going and changing. It's my favorite book because it was so much fun to write. I "see" characteristics of kids—no matter where I've met them—impacting Iko.

I'm currently working on a teacher's guide for *Immigrant from the Stars* because the book provides a great teaching story about immigration, perseverance, and our world as a global society.

**How long have you been a science fiction fan?**

Ever since I saw the first episode of *Lost in Space*, I was hooked. The impact of seeing the United States land on the moon when I was young helped me realize anything is possible.

**How long have you been writing?**

I began as a young child writing plays for my siblings to perform for our parents. I also wrote plays for my dolls who, by the way, were great actors.

My first published piece was in a magazine for teachers, and I've published articles in newspapers that relate to my work. My picture book, *Swoosh and Slide, Search and Glide*, received a five-star review from Readers' Favorite as did *Immigrant from the Stars*. Another picture book, *Chick-A-Bunga*, received a four-star rating.

I am a member of the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), Children's Book Insider (CBI), Redstar Media, and several critique groups. Learning is a life-long process, and I continue learning through my association with my writing groups.

**What work in education did you do?**

When I was in college, I worked in summer school as a teacher's aide, custodian, and cafeteria worker. During my tenure in education, I taught Head Start and second through eighth grade. I was a social studies specialist, resource teacher, assistant principal, and principal. I was also involved in writing curriculum documents as well as serving as my district's Metric Project Director. I can honestly say I find every grade level fascinating. I'm not sure I could pick a favorite, although I taught second grade for the longest period of time.

**What are your interests?**

Besides writing and genealogy, I love to travel. I've been to all fifty U.S. states and to ten countries with a trip planned to three more countries in 2019. My favorite person to spend time with other than my imaginary friends is my husband. Sometimes I'm not so sure he's not imaginary, too, or maybe ... he's a space alien!