



# A Q&A INTERVIEW WITH AMY WILSON

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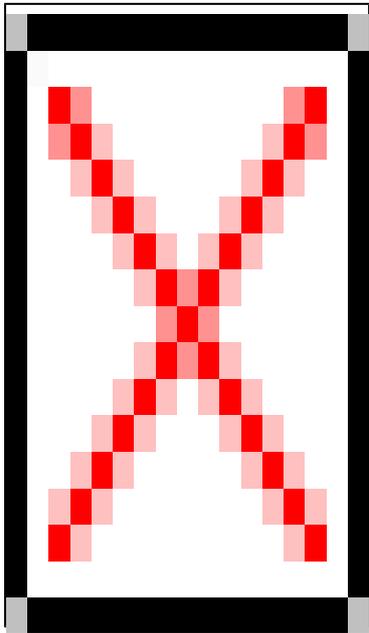
[Amy Wilson](#) [1]

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Byline:

An interview with the author of *A Girl Called Owl*

Amy Wilson's debut novel [A Girl Called Owl](#) [3] is a magical adventure with themes of self-discovery and friendship. She answered our questions about her book.



**Please sum up *A Girl Called Owl* for someone who hasn't read it.**

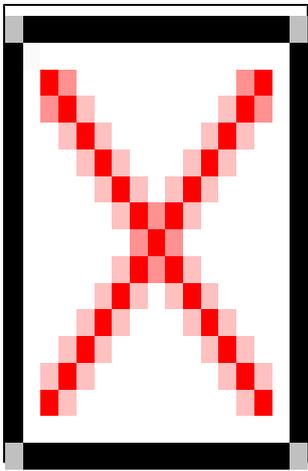
It's the story of a girl called Owl, who discovers a whole new, magical side to the world when she searches for her father and finds he's an elemental creature? Jack Frost. The fairy tales her mother told as she was growing up were all true, and as her own supernatural powers grow, she has to find a way to balance this new side of herself with her life as a normal girl, and friends who need her as much as ever.

**What was the inspiration for the story?**

I had a picture of an owl, and I started wondering what it would be like to be called Owl, and then why a mother would call her daughter Owl. I knew from the outset that there would be a fantasy element, and that it would be connected with her fay father; that part of her journey would be finding him, and learning how to deal with that part of herself that is fay. The natural world is a great inspiration to me, as is the beauty of winter, and so it felt right to bring those things together.

**How important to you were stories of magic when you were growing up?**

I always gravitated towards them, and when I discovered [Diana Wynne Jones](#) [4]? [The Magicians of Caprona](#) [5] I was swept away. I retreated



into books whenever things were challenging, at school or at home, and magic was total escapism, it was being taken to whole new worlds, where children were empowered to achieve wonderful things. I still can't get enough of it!

**The fairy world you describe is dark, definitely a dangerous place. What were your influences here?**

I think the natural world is beautiful partly because it is unpredictable, wild, and sometimes dangerous. I have these characters who represent seasons, or particular weather types, and so I wanted to be as true to those natural elements as possible, and I think there is darkness inherent in that ? what would it feel like, to be Jack Frost? Powerful, and wonderful, but also I'd imagine lonely, isolating, to always be on the outside of humanity and its warmth.

**You describe Owl's home and school life with the same precision and sensitivity as you do the magical world, how challenging was the juxtaposition?**

Owl discovers her own supernatural abilities at the same time as dealing with a best friend, Mallory, who is going through difficult times at home. In a sense they are both going through a great time of change, of discovering that the world isn't quite what they thought it would be, and that perhaps neither are their parents. It's just that Owl's journey has a magical element, and that is uniquely challenging but also quite a lot of fun, ultimately for both herself and Mallory!

**You are a graduate of the *Bath Spa MA in Creative Writing*, what was the best thing you learned from the course, and how did you apply it to *A Girl Called Owl*?**

So many things, but the best was probably just to keep on writing until you have a first draft! I like to write chronologically, and so when I get to a challenging bit I can be stuck there for some time. With Owl there were definitely times when I had to force myself to keep moving, even if I wasn't quite happy with a chapter or a section, and to know that I could come back to it afterwards. That confidence, to know that you can edit, and make something better, was also something that the course helped hugely with.

**What's your favourite thing about owls?**

It's very difficult to pinpoint one thing! For me the legend of the owl and its perceived wisdom is all tied up with its nature as a nightbird, a hunter, a beautiful, powerful and somehow rather solitary sight. And I love their call. And they have swivelly heads!

**Are you working on a new book?**

I'm working on my second novel for Macmillan Children's Books. It's not about Owl, but it has similar themes of self-discovery and friendship, and a magical adventure ? I'm editing at the moment, and I can't wait to see it develop further.

[A Girl Called Owl](#) [3] is published by Macmillan, 978-1-5098-3246-0, £6.99 pbk

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