

Mary Pope Osborne



Photo © Paul Coughlin.

“I’m one of those very lucky people who absolutely loves what they do for a living. There is no career better suited to my eccentricities, strengths, and passions than that of a children’s book author.”

—Mary Pope Osborne

Mary Pope Osborne is the author of the popular Magic Tree House series. She works with her husband Will and her sister Natalie on the nonfiction companion series, the Magic Tree House Research Guides.

A Message from the Author

“I grew up in the military. By the time I was 15, I had lived in Oklahoma, Austria, Florida, and four different army posts in Virginia and North Carolina. Moving was never traumatic for me, but staying in one place was. When my dad finally retired to a small town in North Carolina, I nearly went crazy with boredom. I craved the adventure and changing scenery of our military life. Miraculously, one day I found these things, literally only a block away—at the local community theater. From then on, I spent nearly every waking hour after school there.

After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the early 1970s, I lived an intensely varied life. For a while I camped in a cave on the island of Crete. Then I joined up with a small band of European young people heading to ‘The East.’ We traveled through 11 Asian countries and nearly lost our lives, first in an earthquake in northern Afghanistan and then in a riot in Kabul. My trip came to an abrupt halt in Katmandu when I got blood poisoning. During the two weeks I spent in a missionary hospital there, I read all of the Tolkien trilogy. To this day, my journey to ‘The East’ is tangled up in my mind with Frodo’s adventures.

After I returned home and recovered from my illness, I promptly headed back into the real world. I worked as a window dresser, as a medical assistant, and as a Russian travel consultant. One night I attended the opening of a musical about Jesse James. From the balcony, I fell in love with Will Osborne, the actor/musician playing Jesse. I loved his boots and his white cowboy hat; I loved how he sang and strummed the guitar. A year later, in New York City, we were married.

Thereafter, when I wasn’t on the road with Will, I worked as a waitress, taught acting classes in a nursing home, was a bartender, and had a job as an assistant editor for a children’s magazine.

Then one day, out of the blue, I began writing a story about an 11-year-old girl in the South. The girl was a lot like me, and many of the incidents in the story were similar to happenings in my childhood. The first draft was crudely written, but it must have communicated something to an editor, because shortly after I finished, it became a young adult novel called *Run, Run Fast as You Can*. Finally, I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up.

Now more than 25 years and over 80 books later, I feel I’m one of the most fortunate people on Earth. I’ve been an elegant spider detective who plays the jazz clarinet, and a small girl traveling on the back of a moonhorse. I’ve journeyed through Greek mythology, Norse mythology, medieval stories, and American tall tales. Without even leaving my home, I’ve traveled around the globe, learning about the religions of the world.

“The Magic Tree House has opened the floodgates and let thousands of children into my life.”

Most amazingly, in the last 15 years, I’ve taken journeys through time and space in the Magic Tree House visiting the times of dinosaurs, knights, mummies, pirates, and ninjas, and traveling to the rain forest, the Ice Age, the moon, a coral reef, Pompeii, the Wild West, Africa, the Arctic, ancient Rome and Greece, and India. I’ve met Clara Barton, George Washington, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Merlin the Magician.

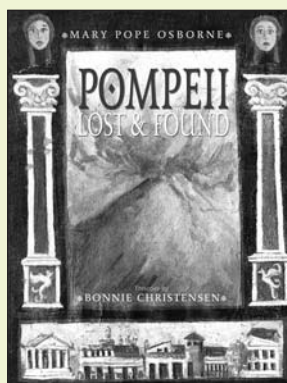
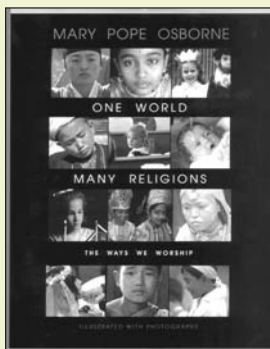
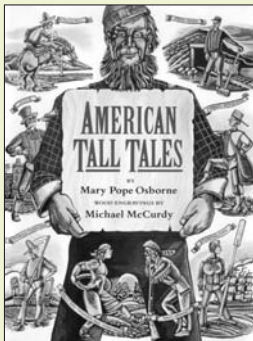
The Magic Tree House has opened the floodgates and let thousands of children into my life. I love the letters I get from them and I love reading the countless Magic Tree House stories that they’ve written. I feel as if these kids and I are all exploring the creative process together, using our imaginations plus our reading and writing skills to take us wherever we want to go. ‘This,’ I tell my small fellow authors, ‘is true magic.’”

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for *free* teachers guides, printer-friendly activity sheets, and other Magic Tree House resources.

www.randomhouse.com/teachers/magictth

Booklist



AMERICAN TALL TALES

Woodcuts by Michael McCurdy
Ages 6–9 • Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-679-80089-7 (0-679-80089-1)
GLB: 978-0-679-90089-4 (0-679-90089-6)
• A *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year
• A *Bulletin* Blue Ribbon Book
• An NCSS–CBC Notable Children’s Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies

NEW YORK’S BRAVEST

Illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher
Ages 5–8 • Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-82196-7 (0-375-82196-1)
GLB: 978-0-375-92196-4 (0-375-92196-6)
PB: 978-0-375-83841-5 (0-375-83841-4)
• A *Booklist* Children’s Editors’ Choice

ONE WORLD, MANY RELIGIONS

Ages 9–12 • Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-679-83930-9 (0-679-83930-5)
• An NCTE Orbis Pictus Honor Book

POMPEII

Frescoes by Bonnie Christensen
Ages 6–10 • Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-82889-8 (0-375-82889-3)
GLB: 978-0-375-92889-5 (0-375-92889-8)

THE MYSTERIES OF SPIDER KANE: Spider Kane and the Mystery at Jumbo Nightcrawlers and Spider Kane and the Mystery Under the May-Apple

Illustrated by Victoria Chess
Ages 9–12 • Yearling
PB: 978-0-440-42097-2 (0-440-42097-0)

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- ★ “Lovely reconstruction of life-and-death.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

NEW YORK’S BRAVEST

- ★ “This book will be welcomed by adults seeking an entrée to the topic [of 9/11] for younger children.”
—*School Library Journal*, Starred
- ★ “A stirring picture-book tribute.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

AMERICAN TALL TALES

- ★ “The author’s thoughtful introduction and notes round out this superlative offering.”
—*School Library Journal*, Starred

See next page for over 40 Magic Tree House books!

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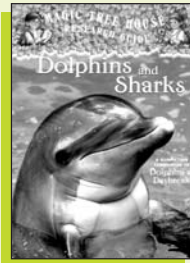
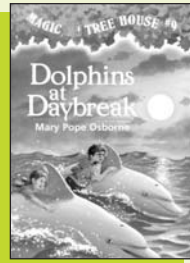
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