

Author's Spotlight

Deborah Halverson

By Grace Nall

"A quirky goofball at heart"

"Be bold, be bold, lest thy heart's blood run cold," states award-winning author and editor Deborah Halverson as she recalls her favorite quote from an oral rendition of "Beauty and the Beast" in her ninth grade class. "I've used this to goose myself into action whenever I've taken on any task that pushes me out of my comfort zone."

Whether you're writing fiction or non-fiction, the best advice from Halverson is to know **YOU**. "What makes Writer **YOU** special, distinct, worth following no matter what genre you tackle?" states Halverson, whose latest book, *Writing Young Adult Fiction for Dummies*, offers valuable tidbits to writers who want to hook young readers' hearts.

"Do you tackle particular themes or topics?" adds Halverson. "Do you write with lots of action or lots of dialogue or in a traditional fashion?" Every writer was once young, a teen of sorts going through fads. Halverson calls herself a "writer of extreme stories."

"I know that regardless of what plot or genre I choose, I like to write stories about normal people in extreme circumstances," states Halverson. "How do normal people react when pushed out of their comfort zones? How do others react to them?"

In fact, Halverson's teen novel, *Big Mouth*, is about a fourteen-year-old boy facing very unusual circumstances while training as a competitive eater. "There's nothing more normal than eating a hotdog...but eating 54 of them in 12 minutes flat?" states Halverson. "That's extreme, and I'm fascinated by any person who chooses to do that."

"A writer is, first and foremost, her own brand," adds Halverson. "In today's publishing reality, that's absolutely essential to understand. Whatever 'products' you produce under that brand can be easily promoted when you regard them from that overarching point of view."

Perhaps it's that gut instinct or "dare to be brave" thinking that will motivate any writer to put "pen to paper." A cliché? How to make dull writing come alive? Halverson's editing smarts will "seek out cliché phrases and then rework them to fit (any) particular topic." Once the first draft is done, there's the editing process.

"I'm a quirky goofball at heart and try to say things in unexpected, memorable, entertaining ways," she goes on to say. "It makes the writing process fun for me—and it's probably why I like revision so much more than the initial drafting of anything, fiction or nonfiction."

Halverson's hallmark success in changing hats from "author to editor" and vice versa has been heralded in the publishing industry. She has followed her own advice by creating a rainbow of credits leading to her pot of gold as a passionate writer. Her background as a former editor at Harcourt Children's Books laid the foundation to inspire other writers. As founder of the writers' advice website, *DearEditor.com*, she answers questions about teen fiction and picture books, and edits adult fiction and nonfiction books as well. In addition, Halverson blogs about raising six-year-old triplet boys—more ideas for future teen novels! Visit Deborah Halverson at her websites:

www.DeborahHalverson.com, www.DearEditor.com, or www.deborahhalverson.com/blog/.



Halverson wears many hats