

Author Interview: 20 Questions with Mary McKenna Siddals

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The 20 Question Interview with our very own Turkeybird is our feature interview that will be happening with all of the book authors, illustrators and poets we love! Today the Turkeybird is interviewing an author we've been reading quite a bit recently, **Mary McKenna Siddals**. Her new book *Compost Stew* was recently released and we were able to post our review just a couple of days ago. Needless to say, we loved it and think Mary is pretty neat too! So, without further hesitation on our part, the Turkeybird's 20 Question interview with Mary McKenna Siddals...

1. What's the best part about compost? My mom said it's not trash, but I think I'll keep calling it that.

You and your mom are both right! Composting is nature's way of recycling, so what starts out as trash is turned into treasure – a dark and crumbly, rich and sweet, delicious treat for the Earth. Compost is so enriching to the soil that some gardeners even call it “black gold”!

2. Rocks or flowers? I'm a rock guy.

I think I might be a flower girl. Rocks last longer, but flowers are beautiful while they last... and you know what you can do when their blooming days are through? (Just add to the pot...)

3. Do you have a favorite bug? Mine's a ladybug.

Ladybugs are a favorite of mine, too. Whenever I find one on my windowsill, I lift it gently onto my finger, make a wish, and help it to fly away back outdoors again.

4. We have a garden with tomatoes. What would you plant?

I don't have a garden right now, but if I did, I'd plant it with tomatoes, too.

5. Why?

I love tomatoes, and you can grow them just about anywhere. I've grown them in flowerpots on my patio, in a narrow strip of dirt alongside my fence, and one year I even planted them directly into bags of soil lying flat on the sidewalk beside my house.

6. What's your favorite color? Today mine is green.

It's hard to pick just one favorite color. I especially love mossy green and rusty red...

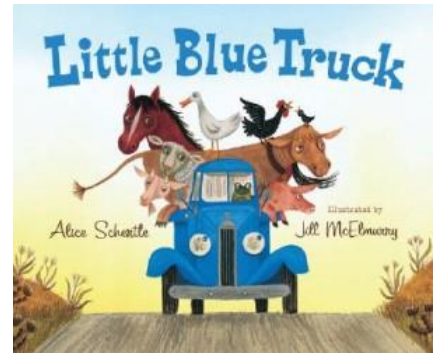
7. Why?

...but I also like aspen yellow and sky blue. I enjoy seeing all the different colors that nature displays throughout the year, so I might change my mind about my favorite, depending on what season it is, and where I am.



8. What is your favorite picture book to read out loud? (I love when my mom reads the Elephant and Piggie books, they're so good!)

I love reading all picture books out loud, but most especially ones that are written in playful rhyme. One recent favorite is *Little Blue Truck* by Alice Schertle. All the animal voices and noises are just so much fun to read out loud! (My favorite Elephant and Piggie read-aloud is *I Love My New Toy!*)



9. Spring or Winter? I like the Spring because it means I can play at the park more!

Definitely Spring because it means longer days, warmer weather, and fresh colors bursting out everywhere!

10. Are picture books your favorite thing to write?

Picture books are indeed my favorite thing to write... AND to read! I check out stacks of them at my library every week. You're never too old to enjoy picture books!

11. I once saw a worm as long as my arm! What about you?

Wow! That's one gigantic worm! Did you know that worms eat their way through the compost heap? I wonder how much trash a worm that size could eat...

12. Do you have any pets?

Not right now, but I do have a cute little grand-doggy who comes to visit.

13. It's almost summertime, yay! What's your favorite thing to do outside? (I love going to the park!)

Yay, summertime! I can hardly wait! I especially like hiking through the forest.

14. Crayons or Markers?

Both!

15. Why?

I love the rich colors you get when drawing with markers, but there are some special projects that you can do only with crayons, like wax resist painting, or batik Easter eggs. Hmm... I think I'll make some of those now!



16. What are you writing right now?

Right now, I'm polishing up an alphabet book of animal babies. Did you know that a young turkey is called a poult?

17. I love scrambled eggs and pancakes. What's your favorite food?

Yum, I love scrambled eggs, too... but make mine CHOCOLATE pancakes! Chocolate is my favorite food, so I love being able to sneak it into my breakfast with my special chocolate pancake recipe.

18. My dad says it gets cold in Canada. Is that true?

Yes, it can get VERY cold here in winter, down to 40 degrees below zero. When it gets that cold, I stay inside, snuggle up with books, and read. We get a LOT of snow here, too. This year, it was piled up over 10 feet high on my front lawn. (That's me, waving in front of that mountain of snow!) In fact, the snow still isn't gone yet, although it has shrunk down into smaller patches. Winter can last a long time here!



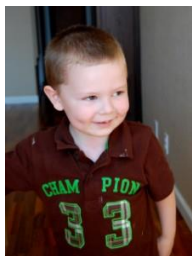
19. Do you like it there?

Despite the long winters, I really do love living here. My backyard is filled with birds and squirrels, and my city is surrounded by beautiful forests. I love being so close to nature, and enjoy seeing the many wild animals who sometimes wander through my neighborhood, including foxes, deer, moose, and even bears!

20. If you were four what would you read next?

So many great books out there, it's hard to choose! But if you like the Elephant and Piggie books, I think you might also like the Fly Guy books (my favorite of those is *Fly Guy Meets Fly Girl*), the *Traction Man* books (one of Traction Man's adventures even takes him to a compost heap!), and the *Harry and the Dinosaurs* books. A few other favorites I think you might enjoy are *Bark, George* (by Jules Feiffer), *Buster Goes to Cowboy Camp* (by Denise Fleming), *Me Hungry!* (by Jeremy Tankard) and *A Visitor for Bear* (by Bonnie Becker). Can you tell I like LOTS of books?

My thanks to the Turkeybird for such a fun interview... and your questions really made me think! Keep enjoying books and exploring the wonders of the world all around you, one gigantic worm at a time...



The Turkeybird Speaks: "Thank you so much for answering all of my questions Ms. Siddals! I *really* liked your chocolate pancakes answer and my mom said we will have to try it out one day *very very* soon. We have pancakes a lot because my sister and I think they are the best thing for breakfast and even for dinner sometimes. I *LOVE* chocolate too! I can't wait to try it! Maybe tomorrow! Do you think you could get me that recipe, I'll try to slip it into my mom's recipe while she's not looking!

"My dad said he was right about all the snow in Canada, but my mom still wants to move there some day. I think I'm more of a shorts and t-shirt guy so I don't know yet.

"And thank you for all the new books to look at! We are still reading *Compost Stew* a lot and when I'm done I'll talk my mom into going to the library for these new books!

"It was so nice to have you answer all my questions and I love your book! Let me know when your animal baby book comes out, I want to see that turkey! He better look great!"