

A CONVERSATION WITH
MEG CABOT
AUTHOR OF *ALLIE FINKLE'S RULES FOR GIRLS*



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Q: What made you decide to write *Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls*?

A: I am constantly being asked by the little sisters of my readers when I'm going to write a book that's ok for them to read (appropriate for readers under 12). It was so sad seeing them looking up at me at book signings, telling me their moms wouldn't let them read my books! I knew it was time to write something they could enjoy along with their moms and big sisters! So that's why I decided to write *Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls*.

Q: What can you tell us about your new character, Allie Finkle? How is Allie similar and/or different from you when you were growing up?

A: Allie is exactly like me when I was growing up. Just like me, Allie has two pesky little brothers and a big smelly dog that she loves, and just like me, Allie longs for a kitten all her own—not to mention a best friend. And just like me, Allie tries really hard to get along with her friends and stay out of trouble—but it's *so* hard when you're in the fourth grade. There are so many rules to remember — about friendship, about family, about school, about fashion, about fun—only no one will tell you what they are! It's like they're unwritten. So Allie decides to start writing them down, so she won't forget. And that's what *Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls* is about.

Q: Are any of the characters in this new series based on people you know?

A: Hmmm, I don't want to get into trouble and say yes, but I will say that many of the characters in this book have a lot in common with certain people I knew (and lived with!) growing up. Like Allie, I had a group of best friends I played with all through fourth and fifth grade — and we're still in touch today! Like Allie, I had a pretty teacher I loved named Mrs. Hunter. Like Allie, my parents made me move from a lovely modern house in the suburbs into an ancient creaky house in town, where I went to an old-fashioned school two blocks away and came home for lunch every day — and I got a kitten from one of our neighbor's showcats in exchange for being a good sport about the move! So...I guess you could say it's not based *too* much on real events or people!

Q: How is writing for the tween audience different from writing your novels for teens and adults?

A: People ask me this all the time, and really, there isn't much of a difference to me. It's all about getting into a character's head, and whether that character is nine, sixteen, or thirty, it's the same amount of work—hard work! Fortunately, I remember being nine as well as if it were yesterday and have many nine-year-old friends with whom to consult! So I think the chances of capturing a genuinely nine-year-old voice are high.

Q: When you were Allie's age, what kind of books did you like to read?

A: I liked adventure and animal stories, fantasy and sci-fi, but also historical stories, diary stories, anything featuring a funny heroine—really, I wasn't particular. I'd read just about whatever anyone put into my hands!

Q: What do you hope tweens will take away from reading *Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls*?

A: As with all my books, I hope readers will see that Allie has the same problems they do, and that they're not alone out there. Allie is just like they are — her rules aren't just for her, but for everyone (although perhaps the "never eat anything red" rule can be ignored by everyone but her!).

Q: What's in store for Allie in future books?

A: Allie's going to be making a lot of new friends—and maybe a few new "frenemies"—but hopefully she'll figure out a way to make them friends, too. And maybe, just maybe, she'll get that kitten she's always wanted!

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