

Author Interview: Eliza Andrews

POSTED 23 JUNE 2017 NIAMH



I am delighted to be joined on my website this week by contemporary lesbian fiction author, Eliza Andrews!

She is the bestselling author of [To Have Loved & Lost](#), and describes her work as somewhere between “contemporary fiction” and “romance.” She also writes young adult fiction as [R. A. Marshall](#) and these stories are more of a mixture of science fiction and fantasy.

So, Eliza, let’s start at the very beginning, what is your favourite childhood book?

I can only pick one? I’m sure that if I thought about it, I could come up with dozens, but the one that made me want to write was [Robert A. Heinlein’s *Tunnel in the Sky*](#). (See what a sci-fi nerd I am?)

I’m a bit of a sci-fi nut too, but I’ve not heard of this one.

It's a sort of obscure book, so briefly: A group of young inter-planetary rangers gets sent to a wild, inhospitable planet for their final exam, but something goes wrong and instead of being retrieved in only a week, they are left out there to survive on their own for MONTHS.

It sounds like something I would be quite interested in reading...

I liked this book so much that I read it two or three times, and I didn't want it to end, so I started writing my own sequel, just so I could keep reading the story. I was about ten when I wrote my "sequel," but I probably wrote maybe fifteen or twenty pages before I got tired of it and gave up. Not bad for a fifth grader.

HAHA! Not bad at all! So, do you always write from your imagination, or do you ever write about your own life?

I find that whatever I'm going through at the moment definitely bleeds into what I'm writing. Have you ever seen the movie *Shakespeare in Love*?

Yes, but all I remember is Judy Dench winning an Oscar for eight minutes of screen time...

It has a young William Shakespeare running around after a girl, and throughout the movie there are these little jokes for Shakespeare nerds, where other characters say things to him like, "never a lender nor a borrower be" and so forth that are all lines from Shakespeare's most famous plays. Sometimes my writing makes me laugh, because it's just like *Shakespeare in Love* — it's like my subconscious mind is sucking up the things around me, processing them, and then spitting them back out as fiction. I've fictionalized people I've met, situations I've been in, and sometimes entire conversations.

Oh, I've done that too! Sometimes I worry that a character or situation might be recognised! But I try to make sure I mix things up enough. Yikes!

So, what about *To Have Loved & Lost*, is that one based on your own experiences?

In a certain way, yes. *To Have Loved & Lost* is about two women who've both lost their partners in tragic accidents. So even though it's a romance, it's also a lot about grief and how we process grief in both healthy and unhealthy ways. And it did reflect my own life. Not in the sense that I'd lost

a partner or someone I was close to — I have been fortunate that most of the death I've experienced in my life hasn't been of the tragic variety. But I was grieving in other ways; it's complicated and personal, but basically I was grieving the loss of my own love life, along with the loss of other things in my life, and my own grief process definitely came through in — and was aided by — writing [THL&L](#).

Writing can be quite cathartic, it certainly helps me!

Yes, writing is always cathartic to me. I'm pretty sure it's the way I self-medicate! Some people drink, some people eat, some people exercise. I write.

HAHA! So writing-wise, what projects are you working on at the present?

Right now, I'm trying hard to finish my novel *Anika takes the long way home up soul mountain*. It's a follow-up to my previous novel, [To Have Loved & Lost](#), which came out at the beginning of November 2016.

A sequel?

Anika is more of a spin-off than a sequel; it follows one of the side characters from [THL&L](#) into the future, about fifteen years after the end of the events in [THL&L](#) (two years after the Epilogue). I should've finished *Anika*'s story back in February or March, but then my life took an unexpected turn, so Life has sort of derailed Writing for the past few months. It's ironic, because *Anika* is a story about someone's mid-life crisis, so I find it fitting that my own life would become stressful and weird at the same time as writing a story about someone else's crisis.

Well, I wish you all the best with getting your story finished, Eliza, and I will certainly let everyone know as soon as it's out!

If you would like to know more about Eliza, you can find her books over on [Amazon](#), or go ahead and like her page on [Facebook](#) and if you head over to her [Website](#) you can sign up to her mailing list to hear all about her latest releases!

