

“Run!” Mad Dog shouts! “Run, Hattie – RUN!”



Hattori Hachi, The Revenge of the Praying Mantis – A new book for teenagers this autumn. Teacher’s Post secures an exclusive interview with the author, JANE PROWSE

“I’ve had a long career in TV and theatre, writing and directing drama, working alongside many talented youngsters. I’ve always thought how hard it must be growing up in today’s world of supermodels, rock stars and MTV, with its excess of skinny girls all flashing all their body parts.

“Last summer I went to see my friend Brenda Gardner at Piccadilly Press, looking for books that would make good TV or films. Brenda sighed, telling me what a sad lack of inspirational books there are, especially with female leads. She said the majority of girls’ books are pink and fluffy and are about ballet dancers, ponies or romance.

“Brenda asked if I had any action adventure ideas of my own – and as it happened, I did. I’d been developing a female character for TV called Hattori Hachi, a 15 year old reluctant ninja heroine.

A book is born

“The more Brenda and I talked, the more we realised that Hattori would work perfectly for a book, and my first novel ‘Hattori Hachi – The Revenge of the Praying Mantis’ was born.

“Hattori’s character was inspired by research I’d done into Ninjutsu – the Japanese art of invisibility, disguise and deception. Ninjutsu is the

thousand-year-old prequel to James Bond, with enough spies, assassins and double-dealings to keep you going for a lifetime. But Ninjutsu has something more – it involves smart thinking, Zen philosophy, a respect for nature, discipline, hard work.

“As I wrote, I realised that as well as an action hero, Hattori could be a positive role model for teenagers – someone with a hard task and training ahead of them, a teen heroine with wit and humour, compassion and wisdom. Someone who knows they must take on a whole army of evil underground terrorists – but without causing unnecessary death, destruction and mayhem. Ninjutsu was the perfect vehicle – with some kick-ass action and terrifying villains into the bargain.

“The book has only just been published and I’ve been to give one talk so far, at my old school – South Wilts Grammar in Salisbury, Wilts, where I met with a group of years 7 and 8 girls. I talked to them about the novel, and also about my career in the TV industry. I could tell from the intelligent, probing questions they asked that they were hungry for information and advice about what it takes to work in the creative industries, and I was more than happy to share my experience with them and be a positive role model.

“I’ve had great feedback on the book too – and it seems that boys are just as interested in Hattori’s challenges as girls, as well as many of the adults who’ve read the book. I hope

my creation of Hattori will be a positive role model for readers for years to come, and bring to life the ancient Ninjutsu philosophy that “A ninja’s ultimate tool is the mind...”.

The second Hattori book has already been commissioned – with a third to follow, and author Jane Prowse would love to hear from teachers and pupils with reviews of this book, as well as any burning issues they think authors should be writing about.

Email info@hattorihachi.com to get in touch.

Teachers wishing to arrange for a school visit from the author should contact Brenda Gardner at Piccadilly, her email is: pressb.gardner@piccadillypress.co.uk. Subject to availability, Jane is happy to visit schools and youth clubs to read from the book and to talk about TV directing and writing for books, theatre and television.

Postcard from Jenny- “Now that is a scary thought!”



Dear Rachel,

Here I am lying on the beach in sunny Turkey worrying about next week. I can’t believe how quick it has gone since finishing University 3 months ago, between work, partying and catching up with people back at home the time has just flown by! 3 months is a long time to forget the important knowledge we learnt last year. Hopefully it will all return to me when we are back learning how to inspire the future generations.

It was bad enough when I was younger and forgetting things I learnt over the 6 weeks holiday! It is weird to think that when I

was a child I thought the 6 weeks went very slowly, but 3 months at the age of 19 feels like only a month has passed! Before we know it another 3 years will fly by and we will be starting our NQT year, now that is a scary thought! Well I am looking forward to seeing you back at University and starting our second year. Love, Jen

Editor’s note: Jenny is a regular contributor to Teacher’s Post and spent some time working in Royal Mail Education during summer vacations. She is now at University training to be a teacher.