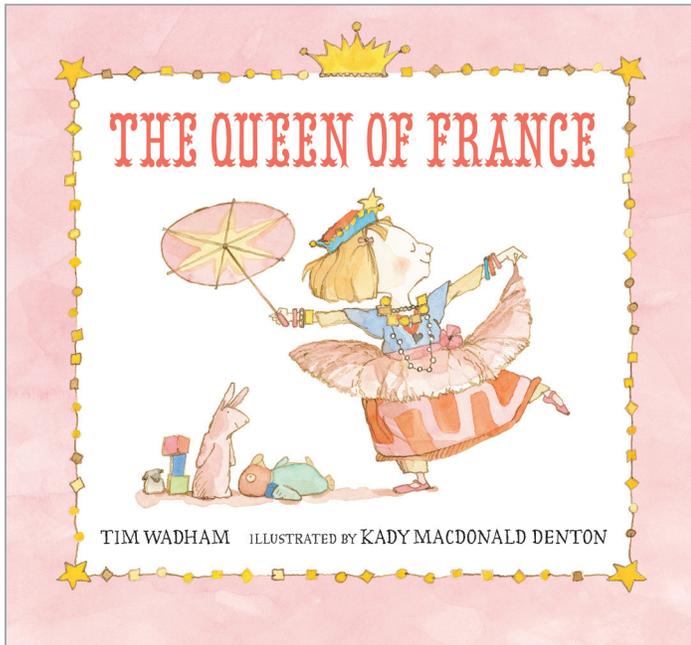


Q&A with **TIM WADHAM** author of **THE QUEEN OF FRANCE**



ISBN 978-0-7636-4102-3 • \$16.99 (\$19.00 CAN) • 32 pages • Ages 4–8

*In the dedication to *The Queen of France* you mention your daughter, “the real Rose.” Did your daughter inspire the story? What does she think of the fictional Rose?*

The Queen of France is based closely on an interchange between my wife and my daughter, who was about three or four at the time. When my wife told me about the incident, we laughed hysterically about our daughter going back and forth between the two personas, each asking about the other. My first thought was that I had to capture this story on paper.

I may be the author, but the end product is very much a family affair. I write; my wife edits and rewrites. And our daughter is my story consultant, she and I have been reading and making up stories together since she was an infant, so it has been a natural process to discuss ideas, plot details, and settings with her as I develop story lines. She chose the name Rose for the main character in this book because for some time it had been her favorite name. She used to wish that Rose was her given name. Now she’s happy enough just to have her alter ego use it.



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*The Queen of France is your debut picture book, but you’ve worked with books for many years as a librarian. Is there anything about the process of publishing a picture book that was surprising to you? Did your experience as a librarian help you in writing *The Queen of France*?*

I was prepared for how long the process takes, so it didn’t surprise me that I had to wait more than two years to see the published book. But it was interesting to see how the editing process continued up until the last possible moment. Years of experience as a librarian reviewing materials and conducting story times kept me always on the watch for good books that read well aloud. I know that every word matters, especially in a short picture-book text. Candlewick has a reputation for producing good read-aloud picture books, and the text for *The Queen of France* had to pass that test.

What has been a particularly satisfying moment so far as a picture-book author? How about as a librarian?

Certainly one of the most satisfying moments was getting the e-mail from Candlewick saying that they wanted to publish my book. After almost twenty years of writing and submitting manuscripts, it felt wonderful to finally get that response. But it’s also hard to top the eager anticipation that came with each step in the process as it moved from text to book—reviewing the initial page layouts, getting the first glimpses of Kady MacDonald Denton’s fabulous sketches, admiring the completed color art, receiving the galley proofs, then finally seeing a finished book, complete with sparkles on the jacket. The whole ride has been a thrilling experience. It is almost magical how fully and completely the spirit of our daughter is captured in the illustrations. We hope others fall in love with her as we have.

As a librarian, my most satisfying moments have been finding ways to share good books with kids—whether it be through a live-theater or puppet-show adaptation or simply reading a book aloud—and watching the kids get inspired and interested and reading more. ★

