



A Q&A INTERVIEW WITH CERRIE BURNELL

Article Author:

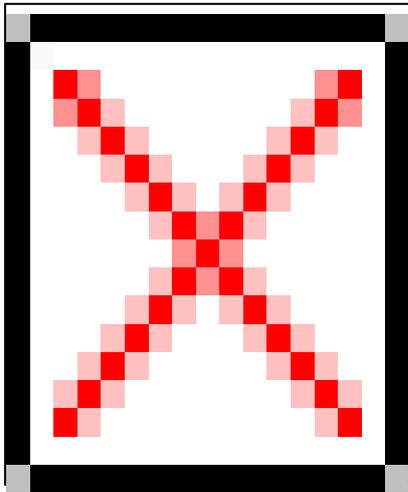
[Cerrie Burnell](#) [1]

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Byline:

The stories behind **The Ice Bear Miracle**.

[The Ice Bear Miracle](#) [3] tells the story of two young people, whose lives are forever entwined with that of the fierce polar bears that share the far north of Canada with humans. Cerrie Burnell tells us about her book and its inspiration.



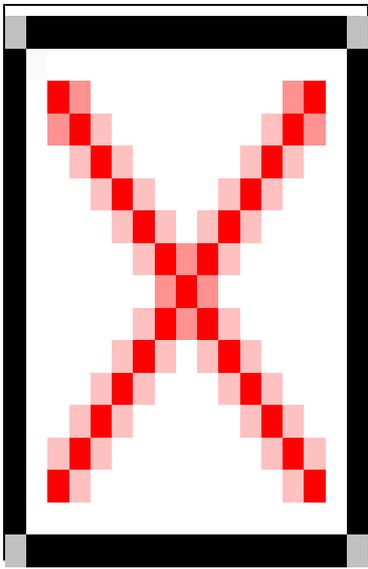
The setting for *The Ice Bear Miracle*

is so unusual ? where did the idea come from, and what research did you have to do?

The setting for [The Ice Bear Miracle](#) [3] is entirely fictional, but its loosely based upon real places. I've always been enchanted by fairytale- esque visions of *the North*, stories of moonlit adventures in the arctic both real and imagined. I wanted to bring a notion of this to my work, that sense of the great unknown. Marv's island is ice locked, enabling a polar bear migration to pass through it. There are real communities in Canada and Scandinavia who live like this. After reading an article in the **Guardian** a few years ago about a young woman living in Churchill, a Canadian town on the tundra, who survived a bear attack, and continued to live there, I was enthralled. The research unfurled from there really, and it was a complete delight to learn about the harsh and astonishing reality of life with bears.

Is it inspired by any existing folk tales?

The folklore of the Isle of Bears and the Nevkian myth which surrounds Tuesday was more influenced by the Selkie folktales. I loved the idea of someone having an affinity with the sea, or shedding their sealskin to walk on land, but swapped it for ice. So the Nevkians are a people who live for winter and have an unbreakable bond with bears.



There's a mix of the very magical and ordinary life in the story ? how hard is it to get the balance between them right?

I think its really special to have a blend of something very believable and something that feels more otherworldly, or timeless. Marv's world is believable, practical and wintered. Its about how a community comes together to live side by side with ice bears and how they embrace the cold. Tuesday's world is more spellbinding and mysterious. Because the settings are so different, it was easy to create two very different lives, which eventually cross over.

How important to you were stories like this when you were growing up ? ie, stories of magic, children striking out on their own and family?

Stories were everything to me growing up. I was always adrift with ideas of whichever imaginary world we were reading about. I wanted to be Alice, to skip through wonderland. And always as a child there was something so deeply empowering about children creating their own adventures.

What is your favourite scene in *The Ice Bear Miracle* and why?

My favourite scene in [The Ice Bear Miracle](#) [3] is actually just before the end of the book. I don't want to give too much away? but it's fairly pivotal to the story and involves Marv, Kobi, Tuesday and of course her beloved bear Promise.

Are you working on a new story at the moment?

Yes, I'm very much working on something new. All I can say at the moment is that it's a sort of ode to fairytales but re-twisted for a contemporary audience.

Cerrie Burnell is an actress, singer, playwright, children's author, and television presenter.

[The Ice Bear Miracle](#) [3] is published by Oxford, 978-0192767561, £6.99pbk

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Source URL (retrieved on Apr '20): <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/240/childrens-books/articles/a-qa-interview-with-cerrie-burnell>

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