



This month, we've been talking to . . .

## Desna Wallace

Desna Wallace is a school librarian from Christchurch who is passionate about children's books. After Desna left school she spent a number of years travelling overseas before coming back to New Zealand to raise her family. Desna has had a number of plays, poems and stories published in the School Journal, but *My New Zealand Story: Canterbury Quake* is her first novel.

We asked Desna some questions about herself and her writing, and here's what she said ...

*Where were you born? Where do you live now?*

I was born in Christchurch but lived overseas for a number of years before returning to Christchurch. It is the best place to be.

*Where did you go to school?*

I went to Hillmorton High.

*Did you have a nickname?*

Yes but not one I would share. Have to have some secrets!

*What were you like in school?*

I was a bit giggly and sometimes got called the teacher's pet.

*What is the naughtiest thing you did?*

A few of us dropped our school bags over the balcony but we got caught and had to write out lines.

*What was your favourite book growing up?*

Too many to single out one but I still have a very tatty copy of *The Littlest Angel* which I love.

*Who is your favourite children's author?*

Without a doubt it has to be Michael Morpurgo. He is awesome. And I got to meet him and actually talk with him. Brilliant!

*What is your favourite food/colour/movie?*

Love green and blue. Love the movie *ET* and it still makes me cry.

*Who inspired you to write?*

Every book I read is inspiration. One teacher at school read out to the whole class a story I wrote

and I felt so proud and just wanted to write more.

*How did you get started? How old were you?*

I was intermediate school when I began to write poems. At high school I wrote heaps of poems but they were all a bit soppy.

*Why did you want to be a writer?*

It is something that just eats away at me, saying, write, write, write. That little voice can be a bit bossy sometimes telling me to hurry up and write.

*How do you think up ideas?*

Reading always helps to inspire ideas. Overheard conversations are great for ideas too, but you have to change things or you might end up in trouble.

*Do you have a special place where you write?*

I write anywhere and everywhere.

*Have you had a funny or embarrassing moment as an author?*

Lots of embarrassing things happen but if I told you I would be even more embarrassed and that would make me go all red. Not a pretty sight.

*What would you have chosen to be if you were not an author?*

A pop star, but I can't sing, I'm a little old and very short, so that probably wouldn't have worked out.

*Which famous person from the past would you like to talk to?*

I would love to have met Spike Milligan. He wrote such funny stories, including *Bad Jelly the Witch*.

What do you do when you are not writing?  
I work in a school library and love it. I love the children and I love the books.

What is the best thing about being an author?  
Meeting children. I have done a few school visits and meeting children is great.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?

Most of the children who read my work are taller than me! But I'm absolutely fine with that.

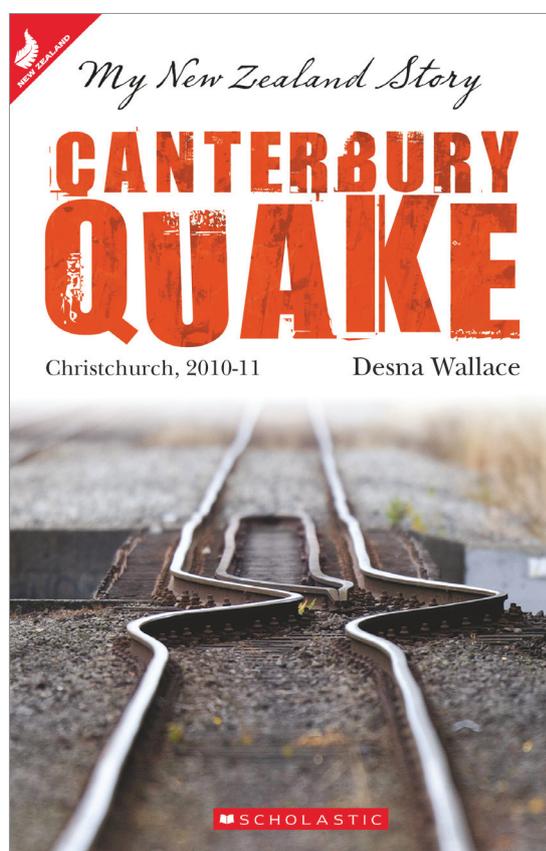
## DESNA WALLACE'S DEBUT NOVEL

The latest book in the My New Zealand Story series

An eleven year old's straight-from-the-heart account of life through the Canterbury quakes and shakes.

### **My New Zealand Story: Canterbury Quake**

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