



## This month, we've been talking to . . . Michael Oehley

Dr Michael Oehley is a South African-born New Zealander currently working as an emergency doctor in rural parts of Australia. Despite his busy doctor's schedule, he has found time to visit over thirty countries on five different continents and to write two adventures for children about Daren S  ner. He is already working on a third, not to mention a novel for adults.

Michael plans to spend the second half of 2012 travelling across Asia and the Americas from north to south. In the meantime, he tries to squeeze in as much time writing as possible between long shifts at the hospital where he works.

We asked Michael some questions about himself and his writing, and here's what he said...

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

I was born and grew up in South Africa until I was 10, lived in New Zealand until I was 25, and have been working in Australia the last three and a half years.

*Where did you go to school? Did you have a nickname?*

I went to Southwell School and St. Paul's Collegiate in Hamilton. I was sometimes called "Mo" or "O'Wheeley".

*What were you like in school? What is the naughtiest thing you did?*

I was a good boy at school, but my favourite teacher once caught me swearing about a kid I didn't like.

*What was your favourite book growing up?*

I loved Willard Price's Adventure series (eg. Amazon Adventure, African Adventure), and I loved Bryce Courtenay's *The Power of One* because it reminded me of Africa.

*Who is your favourite children's author?*

Philip Pullman (author of *His Dark Materials*).

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

My favourite food is dark chocolate, colour is ocean blue, and I'm a big fan of movies. Some of

my favourites include *The Shawshank Redemption*, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, *Galaxy Quest* and *Jurassic Park*.

*Who inspired you to write?*

Probably my Dad, who told me bedtime stories. (I would tell him what was supposed to happen, and he'd tell me something different just to annoy me!)

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

I have been writing stories since I was five. My early stories were about Superdog, one of which involved his battles against tornadoes created by an evil witch!

*Why did you want to be a writer?*

I have loved telling stories/writing since I was a boy. It's never been a question of wanting to be a writer – I always knew I was a writer.

*How do you think up ideas?*

Often I'll go for a long walk on the beach to puzzle out plots for my books. Sometimes ideas just pop into my head right before I fall asleep at night, and I have to leap up and write them down before they disappear into my dreams!

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

My desk, on a little notepad computer.

*What is the best thing about being an author?*  
Getting to meet kids and see how much they enjoy my stories.

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

On my first book tour I wore long, thin Converse All Stars and kids kept asking me questions like 'Why are your feet so big?'

*What do you do when you are not writing?*

I am a very busy bee. I work 50 hours a week as a doctor in an emergency department. In my free time I write, play tennis, and take walks with my fiancée Claire. I also travel overseas at least once or twice a year, sometimes for months at a time.

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

A film actor or a history teacher (hopefully I will still do both, one day!)

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

Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar.

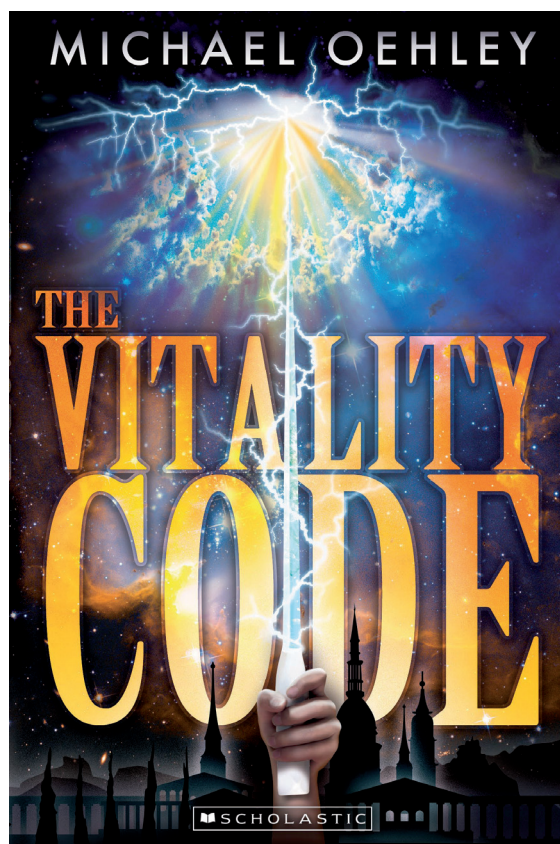
*Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?*

I am engaged to be married in April 2013, I'm going to spend July-December 2012 travelling through Central America, South America, the Galapagos Islands, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Nepal and India.

Website/blog details:

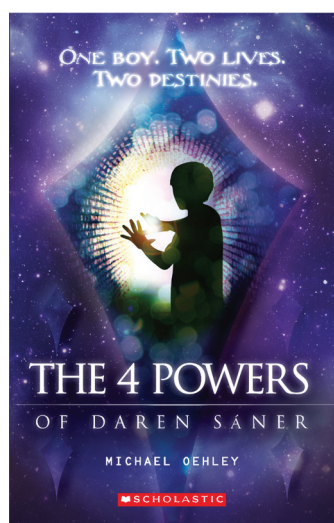
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## BOOKS BY MICHAEL OEHLEY



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