

Authors Q & A

Nora Dåsnes, author of the graphic novel *Cross My Heart and Hope to Die*

Original title: *Ti kniver i hjertet*

Published by Aschehoug 2020



Authors photo: Oda Berby

1. **What kind of story is *Cross My Heart and Hope to Die*?** *Cross My Heart and Hope to Die* is both a coming of age-story, and a coming out-story. It's written as a diary, and follows twelve year old Tuva through big and small dramas as she tries to navigate the space between being a child and a teenager.
2. **What inspired you to write *Cross My Heart and Hope to Die*?** Conversations with my childhood friends, reminiscing about how weird and wonderful it was to be a pre-teen girl. I started sketching out memories, feelings and characters, and the story grew from there.
3. **What time of the day is best for you as a writer?** Mornings and late afternoons are usually best. I usually lose focus around midday and end up having really long lunch breaks.

4. **How long did it take you to write and illustrate *Cross My Heart and Hope to Die*?** It took about a year from the first sketches, with a really intense drawing period of about three months.
5. **What do you wish you had known before starting writing and drawing *Cross My Heart and Hope to Die*?** I wish I knew how long the different stages would take, just to make planning a little easier. I'd never done a project with so many drawings before, so I really didn't know what I was getting myself into, especially because it ended up being about a hundred pages longer than I'd imagined!
6. **What do you like best: writing or drawing?** Both! To make up stories with both words and pictures feels the most natural to me.
7. **What do you think makes a good story?** Conflict. Ideally conflict that isn't just good versus evil, but where both sides have a good reason.
8. **What do you like to do when you're not writing?** I love going for long walks around Oslo, throw dinner parties, go to concerts and travel by train. These days I have taken up both knitting and sourdough baking as «quarantine-hobbies».
9. **As a child, what did you want to do when you grew up?** A marine biologist. I was really obsessed with sharks!
10. **Who are your favorite author and favorite book?** It's so hard to choose, but I think Tove Jansson might be my favourite author overall and John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* my favourite book.