



What's your story, Louise Borden?

I had a wonderful childhood! I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio and because of this I'm an avid baseball fan. My father used to take his three daughters to watch the Reds play at old Crosley Field, and later Riverfront Stadium. At one game (I was grown up by then) I saw Hank Aaron tie Babe Ruth's famous home run record!

I loved books and reading as a child because my grandmother Nana (who lived with us) worked part time as a librarian. She was from Nashville, Tennessee and my sisters and I always had to reply "Yes, M'am, or No M'am."

Our family was lucky in that we went to northern Michigan in the summertime to escape the Ohio heat. I grew up with a love of boats, and water, and searching for stones on the Lake Michigan beach in Leland. The 45th parallel! My other grandmother, whom we called Bami, always went to Michigan with us. She was afraid to swim! But she made beautiful clothes for all my dolls, even a tiny life preserver.

My childhood holds the seeds for many of the books I've written as an adult. I love the outdoors, and all four seasons. Snow appears in some of my books. Sleds, skates, friends, terrific teachers, and family. These all come from my elementary school experiences.



What were you afraid of?

We had a furnace room in our basement and I rarely ventured in there. When I was in first grade, I thought a witch lived in our furnace room!

Did you have a best friend? Who was it and why were you best friends?

My best friend was Hathaway. I loved the sound of her name. We played outside together; ice skated together, and went to the same school from first through tenth grades.

Now she lives in California, and we still are wonderful friends! I also had three other great friends: Polly, Lisa, and Beth. And of course, my two sisters.

Did you play an instrument? Which one(s)?

I took piano lessons from third through 6th grade . . . and I could never learn how to read music. My hands were too small to reach an octave. I was not very good but I loved to try to play by ear. I adored my piano teacher, and we shared the same name: Louise.

Did you have a nickname and if so what is it? Is there a story behind your nickname?

Leezie is the nickname that I had growing up because there were two other Louise's in my family: my mother and the grandmother who lived with us. So I was given a nickname. Later after I graduated from college, Leezie was hard for people to say and spell. . .so I am called Louise. I think that Leezie is easy to say: Lee - zee! Now that my mother is no longer living, I am happy that people call me Louise. It's as if she is with me, walking down all those hallways in the schools that I visit .

What advice do you have for aspiring young readers and writers?



Find books that you love, and then reread them as a writer. . . look to see how they are put together: words, chapters, pictures, etc. Be curious about the world. Be an explorer and use your eyes and your ears. Take photographs of interesting people and places. Mess around with paints. Try to put pictures in your words. Read your words aloud for the sound of writing. Carry a notebook. Have courage, and believe in yourself. Stand up tall and say these words: "I am a reader. I am a writer." And then go find good books to read, and

find friends who like to read and write, too. Become readers and writers together.

Do you have a special place where you write your books?

My desk in my house in Cincinnati. My husband Pete and I also live in an apartment near Washington, DC so sometimes I write parts of my books at a desk in the Library of Congress.

What's the hardest part about writing a book?

- 1. Finding just the words*
- 2. Writing the MIDDLE of the book.*

Read more about [Louise's](#) newest book, [His Name Was Raoul Wallenberg](#) in Beyond Boundaries [HERE](#). And stop back Thursday to read Louise's "Letter to Young Readers.

