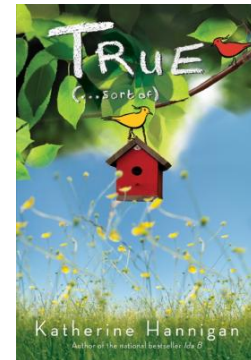


A LETTER TO READERS FROM KATHERINE HANNIGAN

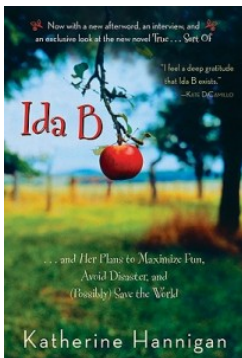
Dear Reader,

I hope you're enjoying reading *True (...Sort Of)* as much as I enjoyed writing about Delly, Brud, Ferris Boyd, and all the other characters who live in River Bluffs.

Parts of my life sneak always their way into my books: my cat Lulu showed up in *Ida B* (as did my habit of talking to trees). I live in a place where there are lots of wild animals, so *Emmaline and the Bunny* was full of them. But in *True*, I wanted to write about how friendship, and a new place, can transform somebody's life. Because that's what happened to me.



I grew up in a city in New York State. This city had a mall, movie theatres, and all kinds of restaurants and stores. Then, about eleven years ago, I moved to a tiny town in Iowa. In this town, there's no mall, no movie theatres, no streets full of stores. There aren't even traffic lights. And when I moved here, I didn't know anybody, so it was pretty scary. But it was also pretty wonderful, because all around the town are hills and fields and woods, and sometimes when I go running bald eagles fly over me. In this town there's a river, and if I paddle my kayak down it I see giant turtles sunbathing. There's a meadow behind my house and woods beyond that, so I've met all sorts of wild creatures—deer, skunks, raccoons, possum, wild turkeys, groundhogs... The people here are kind, and they became my friends.



I got a whole new life moving to this place, and it changed me. I started doing things I'd never done before. I got a garden going, and grew some of my own food. I learned to kayak and canoe. And I decided I wanted to write some stories. I didn't know if I'd be any good at writing, but I really wanted to read a story about kids growing up in a place like this. The only way to read that story was to write it for myself.

Writing stories ended up being so much fun. It was hard, too—writing isn't easy for me. But writing *True* (and *Ida B* and *Emmaline*) were some of the best times I've ever had because, while I'm writing, it's as if I'm hanging around with Delly and Ferris Boyd and Brud. In my imagination, I get to do all the things they're doing: I'm sitting up in the hideaways, playing basketball with Brud, having breakfast on the lake with Delly and her mom, and laughing about those words Delly invents (especially the nocuss ones).



I also wanted to write about kids who feel different, like Delly, Brud, and Ferris Boyd do, because I've always felt that way. Maybe everybody does. It was important to me that

one of the heroes of *True* be a kid who's been in so much trouble that she's starts to believe she *IS* trouble, because I've known kids like that. And, if I'm honest, there were times when I was young that I thought about not talking anymore, like Ferris Boyd.

There's a lot of humor in *True* because I love to laugh and make other people laugh, as well. So I hope you laugh at least a couple of times as you read it. I also wish that if you ever felt different and were sad about that, or if you ever had something so hard happen that you didn't know how to talk about it, you got some hope, and maybe some help, from *True*. Maybe you, like Delly, will become a hummin bin, too.

Best wishes,

[Katherine Hannigan](#)