

Subject to Change: A Novel by Karen Nesbitt



Karen Nesbitt - author of *Subject to Change*

Ms Karen Nesbitt, our school's guidance counsellor, has recently released a novel. The book, *Subject to Change*, tells the story of a young boy named Declan, who faces many challenges when the truth behind his parent's divorce is revealed. In order to furthermore understand the work and ideas behind the novel, I asked Ms Nesbitt a few questions regarding her career as an author, as well as questions about her new book.

Q: What inspired you to write this book?

A: I've wanted to be an author since I was about 12 years old. I'd read a book called *Deenie* by Judy Blume and was stunned by how it made me feel understood (I was a teen with a medical problem). I decided then that one day I would write books like that. I even wrote to Judy Blume to tell her that and she wrote me back a very encouraging letter. I wrote a lot of poetry as a teenager, and have always loved to write. But I got caught up in other things and eventually became a Guidance Counsellor. About 7 years ago, I decided to take a creative writing course for writing YA fiction, and that I was going to return to my dream of writing stories for young people. Working as a guidance counsellor, I talk to kids all the time about what's important to them, their problems, their relationships and families. The main character of *Subject to Change* is an amalgam of students I've seen over years tweaked by my imagination, but the idea to write this story came from working with a particular student who's own story touched me.

Q: Who would you recommend read this book?

A: I think anyone who likes reality novels about kids who struggle with issues will like it. It's pretty fast-paced (I've been told it's a page-turner) so read it if you like that. I think boys will like it because the protagonist and his friends are regular guys (my son, who's 15, is enjoying it, and he's not a big reader). It's also a tear-jerker and there's even some romance. I've been surprised to

find that adults really like it as well, which makes me happy. People who like it say they fell in love with Declan, the main character.

Q: Have you written other books, or thought about writing other books?

A: *Subject to Change* is my first novel. I'm currently trying to decide between two ideas I've been playing around with for my next one. My editor has asked me to write another book, but I've been so busy with publicity for *Subject to Change* I don't have much time these days to write. I hope to make a decision and get a serious start on something over the summer.

Q: Is there a specific message you would like readers to take away from your novel?

A: I guess my message would be to believe in your own mind, learn to think for yourself. Also, don't judge people, because very often we have no idea what's going on under the surface. I've met so many kids who are true heroes, who come to school every day even though their home life is really hard, or being at school saps them of all of their energy and confidence, and most people have no idea who they are. We need to look for where kids shine - because they all do, and maybe it just isn't at school. I believe books have a special power to enable us to empathize with others who may be very different from ourselves.

Subject to Change was released to stores on February 28th, 2017. The novel has already received positive reviews from many readers, as well as author Monique Polak. If you would like to support to release of the novel, a book launch will be held on the evening of March 20th at Westwood Senior.

by Hayley Daye