



Collins
BIG CAT



Tara Binns

Meet the author: Lisa Rajan



When I was seven, I wanted to be a lorry driver when I grew up. When I was eight, it was a doctor. At nine, an author of children's books... or an explorer. After university, I tried my hand at a variety of jobs – scientist, journalist, editor, copywriter and politician. I liked a challenge, and doing my bit to try and change the world for the better.

Now I'm back at author, and write the Tara Binns mini-series for Collins Big Cat, which shows an inventive and resilient little girl taking on different jobs. The books showcase different careers to children, tackle gender stereotyping and raise aspirations – all by stealth as they master and develop a love of reading.

When my sons were little, they loved characters like Bob the Builder and Fireman Sam, who were always taking on a challenge or saving the day. Their bookcases were full of action, adventure and positive role models to identify with and aspire to. When my daughter was born, I wanted the same for her. She loves the books her brothers read but I wanted her to also see girls at the centre of things, getting the job done. The author Beverly Cleary said "If you can't find the book you want on the shelf, write it yourself", so that's what I did. In each book, Tara Binns is given a different costume by the dressing-up box in her attic and is whirled off into an adventure – as a pilot, a doctor, an engineer, a scientist, an astronaut, a palaeontologist...

I think Tara Binns is working through all the jobs I wanted to do when I was a child! My ambition now is to put big ideas in little minds, and help children believe that anybody can be anything.

