

# Daf James

## Where did you grow up?

Cowbridge.

## Where did you go to school?

Ysgol Iolo Morganwg and Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf.

## What was the best / worst thing about your school?

I hated travelling on the school bus because of bullies, but I found comfort in going to the music room or the drama studio – like Jac in the book, to some extent.

## What did you want to be when you grew up?

An actor. I didn't know any writers and didn't realise that you can have a career in writing!

## What was your favourite book when you were a child?

*The Witches* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I also liked *The Chronicles of Narnia* and books by Gwenno Hywyn and Irma Chilton.

## What are your hobbies?

Writing and composing. I've also started going to the gym and doing weightlifting and having cycling lessons.

## What makes you happy?

My husband and children.

## What makes you angry?

My husband and children! And leaders and politicians who lie.

## When did you consider being an author?

Ever since I've been able to write, I've been writing creatively. When I was a child, I enjoyed writing short stories and poetry. I think it was my way of preparing myself for the big emotional things in life. I studied English literature – lots of plays – and worked as an usher in a theatre. Then, whilst studying at drama school, I wrote my first play. I was in my forties before writing a novel. I had always wanted to write a novel; books were my first love.



## From where do you get your ideas?

Everywhere! Personal experiences, conversations I've overheard, something I've read.

## Are there any themes which particularly appeal to you?

Stories about characters on the edge of society; stories of love; stories about characters who overcome big difficulties; stories about magic and mythology; stories about LGBTQ+ characters, and stories around music. I like stories that make me laugh and cry.

**What advice can you give to budding authors?**

In the words of the band Eden – and these are also in *Jac a'r Angel* – “Paid â bod ofn”. (Don't be afraid). Start writing and don't overthink things. Lots of my most successful pieces developed from material I thought was rubbish!

**What's the best / worst part about being an author?**

Having any audience reading or listening to your work is a privilege, but it can also make you feel vulnerable.

**Quick fire questions:****Favourite childhood book?**

*The Witches* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

**Favourite character from a children's book?**

Paddington, and Miss Trunchbull!

**Favourite place?**

Home, Mwnt beach, and Ynys Llanddwyn.

**Favourite food?**

Anything cooked by my husband – he's a genius in the kitchen!

**Favourite film or show?**

The film *Y Dyn Nath Ddwyn y Dolig*, which was the inspiration for *Jac a'r Angel*.

**Favourite word?**

*Ansbaradigaethus* (the Welsh word for 'amazing').

**Superpower of choice?**

The ability to fly.

**Favourite social media network?**

Instagram.

**What makes you smile?**

My children in stitches with laughter.

**If not an author, what would you be?**

The frontman of a cool band performing on the main stage at Glastonbury, or the world's best footballer for at least a day.

**Top tip for budding authors?**

Everyone has a story to tell, and everyone sees the world differently; write from the heart, and don't be afraid.