

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Hello Everyone,

It's author Ruth Eastham here. How are you all doing in the lockdown?

I hope you and your families are all fine and well.

I was actually booked to come into your school this month, and was really, really looking forward to meeting you all. Sorry that isn't going to be possible just yet. Meanwhile, I thought I'd out pen to paper to see how you are all getting on.

These are unusual times indeed, aren't they? Ordinarily, I would be going around the UK quite regularly, going into schools the length and breadth of the country, giving talks and running creative writing workshops. I have to say I really miss the travelling, albeit that I took it very much for granted – but spending time at home has, in many ways, been a wonderful opportunity as well.

Of course, I feel very lucky to be a writer, because I've been able to keep on with my stories. I've managed to finish two books! I've also done lots and lots of reading, greedy to get stuck in to what was an ever-growing pile of the amazing books by awesome authors out there – titles that I never seemed to have enough time to read in 'real-life'! For me, it's been stories that have truly helped me through any not-so-easy times as well.

We know that stories are powerful – as an escape, as a way to attach words to feelings – for lots of reasons... but mostly for the sheer entertainment of being able to explore the worlds inside the pages; to walk alongside the characters and see their stories unfold, with all the twists and turns life brings.

I hope you've had the chance to read some good books during the lock-down. If you haven't yet, why not get reading something good? Your teachers and librarians can give you loads of brilliant recommendations, and advice about getting your hands on the books you are interested in.

Of course, for those of you not going back into school, the time-out will run into the summer holidays, with even more glorious reading time on the horizon!

We know that this crisis will eventually come to an end, and there are lots of special moments to come for all of us. In the meantime, keep happy, and... Pick up a book! 😊

All the best,

**Ruth**

(Author of *The Memory Cage*, *The Messenger Bird*, *Arrowhead*, *The Jaguar Trials* and *Warrior in the Mist*)