

Author Biography: Margaret Peterson Haddix

Margaret Peterson Haddix was born on April 9, 1964, and grew up on a farm in Washington Courthouse, Ohio, in the same small town where her ancestors had lived since the early 1800s. She was one of two boys and two girls born to her father and mother, a farmer and a nurse. In school, Haddix enjoyed English, literature, and history, but really didn't like schoolwork itself. She hated what she termed "busywork"—all the mundane, meaningless assignments that took time to finish but really didn't teach her anything. She always knew, however, that she wanted to be a writer. The many adventurous and amusing stories her father told about their ancestors and his friends became her inspiration. She spent much of her free time reading and writing poetry behind closed doors.

Haddix was convinced that the only way she would be able to earn a living and still feed her passion for writing was to become a journalist. She attended Miami University in Ohio, where she majored in journalism and creative writing and still found time to write for the school newspaper. She was able to obtain newspaper internships during her summers off, writing for the *Urbana Daily Citizen*, the *Charlotte Observer*, and the *Indianapolis News*. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986.

Ms. Haddix remained in Ohio until 1987 when she married Doug Haddix, a newspaper editor. Her first job was copy editor for the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette and then the Indianapolis News, [both in Indiana], where she worked as a full-time newspaper reporter.

When her husband was offered a job in Illinois in 1991, she quit her job at the Indianapolis News to go with him. It troubled her that she had not taken the time to pursue her desire to become a fiction writer, so when they moved to Illinois, rather than continuing in the journalism field, she worked at various part-time jobs, including teaching English at a community college. It was at that time that she was able to begin work on her first novel, *Running Out of Time* (1995), which was inspired by an article that she had worked on while at the Indianapolis News about a "living history museum." Her ingenious story about the inhabitants of a historic restoration, who believed they were actually living in the 1840s, was an immediate success. This first novel won her many awards, including the ALA Best Books for Young Adults award.

Since that first novel, she has written seventeen others, including *Don't You Dare Read This, Mrs. Dunphrey* (1996), the story of an abused teenager, which was inspired by a newspaper article she worked on about neglected and abused children; and the Shadow Children Series which is comprised of *Among the Hidden* (1998), *Among the Imposters* (2001), *Among the Betrayed* (2002), *Among the Barons* (2003), *Among the Brave* (2004), and *Among the Enemy* (2005). She has also written another new book, *Double Identity* (2005). She has received numerous awards throughout her career, including the ALA Best Books for Young Adults award, an International Reading Association Children's Book Award, and the Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Readers.

Haddix says, "I know I have to write a story when the story keeps me awake at night, teases at the back of my brain all day, just won't let me go."

Margaret Peterson Haddix lives in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio with her husband Doug and their two children, Meredith and Connor.

Standards Focus: Analyzing Expository Writing

Directions: Using the article about Margaret Peterson Haddix, answer the following questions. Be sure to write your answers in complete sentences.

1. Haddix has written 18 novels in all. What are some of the things that have inspired her writing, as mentioned in the article? _____

2. How old was Haddix when her first novel was published? _____

3. How do you think Haddix's experience as a journalist contributed to her success as a novelist? _____

4. Describe the general qualities of Haddix's novels, according to the article. Why do you think her novels are popular among young people? _____

5. If you were completing a research project on Haddix, what two questions would you want to ask her? _____

6. Does this article contain primarily *facts* or *opinions*? _____

7. How is the information in this article arranged: problem/solution, chronological order, cause/effect, or compare/contrast? _____