

## The 2019 #PBChat Mentorship

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**Julie Falatko** is the author of many funny picture books including two *Snappy the Alligator* books and *The Great Indoors*. She is the author of the *Two Dogs in a Trench Coat* chapter book series. She grew up in New Jersey, and now lives in Maine with her husband, four children, and two dogs, where she maintains a Little Free Library in front of her house.

Julie Falatko will be accepting applications for: non-rhyming picture books.

1. If you had to wear the same t-shirt with one word on it for a year, what word would you choose?

HI!

2. If you had your own talk show, who would your first three guests be? Bonus points for sharing the name of your show and what it would be about.

My show would be called, uh, PROCESSING WITH JULIE and it would be conversations with creative people about what their creative process is, because I am completely fascinated by it. And my first three guests would be Tina Fey, Lily Tomlin, and Steve Martin.

3. If you could instantly become an expert in something (non-writing-related), what would it be and why?

Oh boy, do I ever want to be able to play the banjo. I just think it's cool.

4. What are your five favorite picture books not written and/or illustrated by you?

*Amos and Boris* by William Steig

*Chloe and the Lion* by Mac Barnett and Adam Rex

*Everything You Need for a Treehouse* by Carter Higgins and Emily Hughes

*Who Needs Donuts* by Mark Alan Stamaty

*The White Marble* by Charlotte Zolotow and Deborah Kogan Ray.

5. What is the toughest feedback you've ever received?

An editor telling me "I'm afraid it's still not working. You should start again from a blank page." (For the record, she was right.)

6. What are some of the most important lessons you've learned so far?

Publishing takes a long time, but that's a *good* thing. It takes time to get every part of the book right, and you don't want to rush it.

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## **7. What writing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?**

Keeping at it. Not giving up is a major accomplishment. Not that I've ever thought seriously about quitting, but it's hard to keep going sometimes, and I'm proud that I still work on this every day.

## **8. What are your dreams and goals as an author?**

This job, writing funny books for kids, is my dream job. And if I can make kids laugh, that's amazing. What a lucky person I am. So I'd like to keep going, to keep publishing, to keep having books made.

## **9. What are your strengths as a mentor?**

I can help you figure out how to make your picture book (especially a funny picture book) stand out, how to make it surprising and different. I will push you to write the best book you can.

## **10. Who are you not the best mentor for?**

Overly didactic stories. Or rhyming stories (nothing against rhyming, I'm just not great at it).

## **11. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?**

Someone who is willing to learn and work to make their story better. I don't want someone who has written one story, thinks it's going to make them rich, and just wants an approval stamp from me.

## **12. What is your feedback/critique style like?**

I'm pretty nice! Honestly. But also I will tell you what's not working, and what is. I might tell you to delete everything except for one paragraph, and to expand that paragraph into a new story. I promise I'll be nice and encouraging about it, though, and tell you why that one paragraph is so great.

## **13. During the mentorship, how will you help your mentee and their stories develop?**

In addition to helping you get your manuscript in tip-top shape, I can also provide guidance on writing a query letter, what you need on your author website, and developing a social media presence. I'm also happy to answer any general questions you have about the publishing industry.

## **14. What type of relationship do you hope to establish with your mentee?**

I hope I can guide and help you in what can be a confusing industry.

## **15. What is your style of communication like?**

Friendly? Yes, friendly. Do note that I will not respond to every communication immediately, but I will get back to you within a day or two.

## **16. While reading prospective mentee's manuscripts, what do you hope to experience?**

That kernel of magic that comes from seeing inside someone else's head.

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### **17. What will you look for in the applications you receive?**

I am looking for someone who is interested in the legacy, craft, wonder, and art of picture books. Someone who recognizes what a picture book can do, and what it can be.

### **18. What about the idea of mentoring excites you most?**

I had so many people who helped me when I was getting started, and I recognize the power of having someone to ask questions of, and to guide you and your writing. It's super cool to be on this side of it now.

### **19. Is there anything, author-related, you wish people would ask you about? If so, what, and how would you respond?**

I guess more than anything I want people to understand that being an author is a ton of work, and it's not easy, but it's always fun.

### **20. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?**

If you have a story you need to tell, then there's someone out there who needs to read it. And you owe it to yourself, and to whoever needs to read your story, to make it the best it can be.