



# Liz Leonard Talks About Frizzy Lizzy



By Dr. Jen Harrison ⌚ 7 Mins Read

AGES 4-8

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## INTERVIEW

WITH AUTHOR  
LIZ LEONARD



An interview in partnership\* with Liz Leonard and [The Children's Book Review](#).

**Liz Leonard**, a passionate storyteller based in New Jersey, draws from a diverse background in animation, film, and television, as well as her executive role at a global hotel brand. Her creative journey, rooted in childhood experiences and parenthood, fuels enchanting tales filled with life lessons. Through the “Fizzy Lizzy” series, Liz aims to inspire children with confidence, creativity, and comfort, blending her own motherhood journey with her love for the arts.

With its vibrant illustrations and relatable family dynamics, *Fizzy Lizzy* (along with the forthcoming books in the series) serves as a platform for discussions on preparedness,

leadership, and self-reliance, offering young readers a captivating adventure while imparting valuable skills.



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9 min

## **Tell us a little about the inspiration for the book – how did you develop the character of Lizzy?**

**Liz Leonard:** Frizzy Lizzy was inspired by three things:

1. Becoming a mother to my AMAZING frizzy-haired, 3-year-old daughter, Izzy.
2. A mission to help children build confidence, leverage creativity, and to comfort those with an atypical or difficult family life.
3. My love of creating ART! In addition to my college studies in Fine Art, creativity allowed me to persevere through my complicated childhood and has always served as a therapeutic method to overcome my challenges. Prior to starting this project, it had been a while since I created anything. Tapping back into the other side of my brain again has been such an enlightening experience.



In terms of inspiration, the book is based on a true story from my childhood in the 90s with very minor tweaks. Frizzy Lizzy is based on me, but she also

embodies a lot of my daughter's personality as well. She will continue to evolve throughout the series, and I can't wait to reveal the next books!

### **Why did you choose a hike as the setting for the first story?**

Besides being based on a true story, it's important to encourage children to get back to the basics... and to get OUTSIDE! Many kids are glued to their screens and incredibly reliant on technology. I often miss the "old days" when cell phones weren't even a thing. This is the exact reason I kept the payphone in the story. I wanted this to be a discussion point for parents and children.

### **The illustrations for the book are amazingly vibrant and detailed — are they drawn from a real place?**

All characters, places, and things in the book were intricately and collaboratively developed based on my experiences. Every detail in the story was carefully curated based on real things, and I also planted a lot of easter-eggs in the drawings.

For example, Randone's (which is pictured when the family emerges from the woods) was a real place my Dad took us to on Sundays before he dropped us off with our Mom. We always ordered the Italian combos (also pictured in the story), which continue to be one of my favorite sandwiches.





In terms of the illustrations, I chose to collaborate with the extremely talented Katherine Hillier because her artistic style is very similar to mine or what I wish mine was like! I wanted the book to be different, to have some edgy undertones and many layers of content for discussion.

### **Tell us a little about the stepmom – she’s very grumpy in the book!**

The stepmom is grumpy in this book because she is adjusting to three very dynamic and active young girls. However, she will continue to evolve within the series, as will her relationship with the girls. I am really excited about the next book as we start to see another side of her personality emerge.

**A lot of the subtext in the story revolves around family relationships. Do you feel this story is relevant to readers regardless of their family structure? Why or why not?**

Yes, I am hopeful that this story is relevant to many! With the understanding that perfection is not a reality in most families, I hope that readers are inspired by Frizzy Lizzy's courage when faced with aspects of bullying, peer pressure, and a little sibling rivalry. I would think that these are challenges that consistently play a role in our lives.

**How do you think parents and educators can use this book to educate children about preparedness? What do you imagine when you picture it being used in a classroom or learning setting?**

I am hopeful that this book will help educators talk about preparedness, trusting instincts, and anticipating needs by diving into Frizzy Lizzy's pocketbook and even the skepticism of her sisters. By literally unpacking the items Lizzy has in her purse – one can certainly incorporate this into a lesson about planning, leadership, and self-reliance. We've actually been working with a lot of teachers who have been sharing Frizzy Lizzy with their classes, and so far, so good!

**What advice do you have for readers anxious about exploring and adventures?**

I would recommend using your support system, bringing along a friend, and/or practicing relaxation. You should always look at the positive side of things and imagine all the wonderful things that could happen on your adventure. Research where you're going, pack your bag with extra supplies, and also bring something that you love to do – even if it may not make sense. You never know what lies ahead, and there is magic in every adventure!

**What other favorite preparedness stories and activities would you recommend to parents and educators working on this skill with their kids?**

Like Mary Poppins (a favorite, of course), Frizzy Lizzy always seems to have the right thing in her purse at the right time. This allows her to relax, thrive, and be confident. I would recommend games and activities about packing. Each child is given a specific destination and asked to create a packing list. This list can be shared, and the students can guess the destination. When I was little, we used to do this in the form of "I packed in my grandmother's suitcase."

**What were your favorite stories about family adventures when you were young, and why did you love them?**

Roald Dahl was always a favorite author of mine as a child, and *Matilda* is certainly an adventure! This story teaches us that family is what you make of it – not necessarily what you're born into. I loved this story because I related to the complexities of her family relationship... and always wished I had powers!

### **Can you give us a sneak peek of what's coming up next in the Frizzy Lizzy series?**

The next book is about friendship, sharing, and caring for others! As mentioned, we see a different side of the stepmom in this story and even get to meet a really cool new character. Katherine and I are hard at work on this one and cannot wait to share Frizzy Lizzy's next Adventure.

*For more information, visit <https://frizzylizzy.com> .*

## About the Book





## **Frizzy Lizzy**

**Written by Liz Leonard**

**Illustrated by Katherine Hillier**

Ages 4-8 | 34 Pages

Publisher: Frizzy Lizzy Books, LLC (2023) | ISBN-13: 979-8350914566



**Publisher's Book Summary:** Join Frizzy Lizzy on a series of heartwarming adventures filled with family, friends, and a sprinkle of magic. In the first book of the series, Lizzy and her sisters find themselves lost during a family hike. Faced with the daunting task of finding their way home, Lizzy steps up, using her sharp wit and trusty pocketbook to navigate the challenging situation.

Targeted at children aged 4-8, “Frizzy Lizzy” teaches valuable life lessons about preparation, trusting one’s instincts, and learning from challenges. Paired with the captivating illustrations of Katherine Hillier, the stories inspire children to be proactive, creative problem-solvers and, most importantly, to become their own heroes.

The “Frizzy Lizzy” series is a testament to the power of resourcefulness and the magic of everyday adventures. It’s sure to captivate young readers, encouraging them to engage their imaginations and teaching them that they can overcome anything with a little creativity and courage.

“ **Frizzy Lizzy** introduces a delightful cast of characters who are sure to keep delighting readers for many more books as the series develops.

— *The Children's Book Review*

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This interview — Liz Leonard Talks About Frizzy Lizzy — was conducted between Daniel Jarrett and Bianca Schulze.

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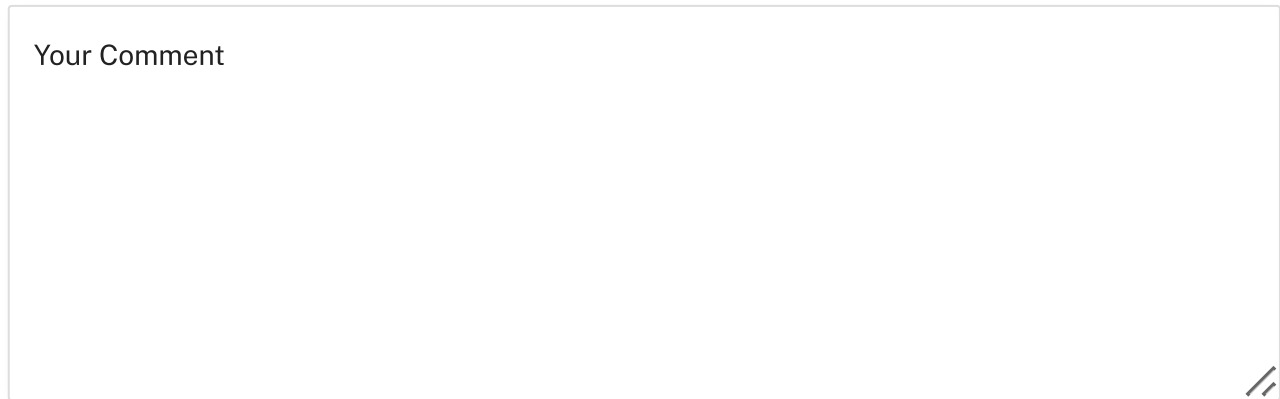
**Dr. Jen Harrison**



Dr. Jen Harrison provides writing and research services as the CEO of Read.Write.Perfect. She completed her Ph.D. in Children's and Victorian Literature at Aberystwyth University in Wales, in the UK. After a brief spell in administration, Jen then trained as a secondary school English teacher and worked for several years teaching Secondary School English, working independently as a private tutor of English, and working in nursery and primary schools. She has been an editor for the peer-reviewed journal of children's literature, *Jeunesse*, and has published academic work on children's non-fiction, YA speculative fiction, and the posthuman.

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