

Kate Simpson is the author of beautiful picture book, Finding Granny, illustrated by Gwynneth Jones and published by EK Books. Kate writes about her experience pitching live to commissioning editor, Anouska Jones during the 2016 Kids and YA Festival. Her pitch summary is a perfect example of how to use a hook effectively and how to emphasise your story's value.

I pitched this to Anouska in a live pitching competition at the 2016 Kids and YA Festival at the NSW Writers' Centre. It was the winning pitch on the day and I followed it up with an email asking if she would be interested in seeing the entire manuscript. She was, and the rest is history.

My three top tips for a face-to-face pitch are:

- Your pitch should tell the publisher how your book fits in and how it stands out. You want to have a point of difference, but, especially for a new author, the publisher should be able to tell that you understand what is expected of your genre.
- Keep it brief but have more to say if the opportunity arises.
- Respect the publishers and agents that you're pitching to. Don't leave a bad impression that will hurt you in the long run. Remember that there will be future opportunities.

The pitch:

Every 10 minutes in Australia, somebody suffers a stroke. In *Finding Granny*, that someone is Edie's beloved grandmother, her "bedtime, storytime pantomime Granny, her I'm not afraid of some slime Granny." When Edie comes to the hospital, she is confronted by the changes in her grandmother: muddled words, a crooked face, a woman confined to bed. "That's not my Granny!" Edie says. But when Mum takes Edie to watch one of Granny's physiotherapy sessions, Edie starts to understand that the fiery, "I can do anything" Granny she loves is still there. And even a Granny who struggles to talk can be a "bedtime, storytime pantomime Granny."

Finding Granny is a 316-word picture book for 4-8 year-olds. You may be familiar with the many beautiful picture books on the market dealing with dementia, such as *Newspaper Hats*, *Celia and Nonna* and *Do You Remember?* Like these books, *Finding Granny* is a story about changing relationships and about the bond between children and grandparents. It is also particularly topical for the families of the 440,000 Australians living with the effects of stroke today.

Article by Kate Simpson

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