

Local author hoping to make a splash

MERMAID WARRIOR SQUAD IS ADAMS' FIFTH NOVEL

By: Sheldon Birnie

Posted: 08/11/2017 9:55 AM

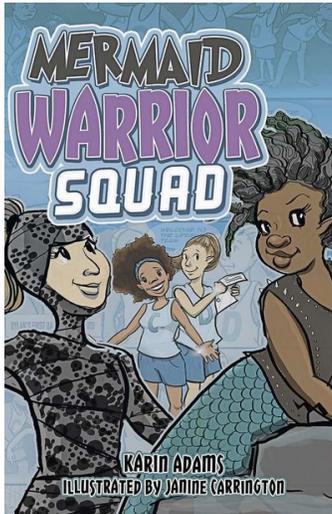
Author Karin Adams knows that creative work can be lonesome. That's why she draws inspiration from collaboration.

Adams' latest, *Mermaid Warrior Squad*, is a story of two girls who meet at a summer camp for creative kids. Dylan is a shy writer, while Coral is an outgoing illustrator. The two become fast friends and team up to create a comic book about mermaids fighting for eco-justice.



SHELDON BIRNIE

Karin Adams is a children's author from East St. Paul. Her fourth novel, *Mermaid Warrior Squad*, was released on Aug. 15 by Lorimer Kids. An official launch will be held at McNally Robinson on Oct. 1. (SHELDON BIRNIE/CANSTAR/THE HERALD)



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Karin Adams's latest novel, *Mermaid Warrior Squad*, is now available from Lorimer Kids.

"I'm interested in friendships and creative collaborations, all the things that come out of that dynamic," said Adams. "How that friendship morphs and changes while they create. There's the joy, but also the tensions that happen when they disagree."

With *Mermaid Warrior Squad*, which is published by Lorimer Children & Teens, Adams also worked closely with Toronto illustrator Janine Carrington to create comic strips to accompany each chapter.

"To watch her take an idea and run with it was so exciting," Adams said. "In a way, the way we created the book started to mirror the book itself, which was about a writer and an illustrator collaborating."

Adams, who lives in East St. Paul and has written four other novels for children since 2009, is involved with the Manitoba Arts Council's Artists in the Schools program. She said that working closely with kids in Grades 3 to 6 to develop their own writing in turn inspires her own work.

"My eyes are always open in the classroom," Adams said. "Watching them take an idea and letting it blossom is very inspiring."

In her work in the classroom, Adams shares her writing process with students, working her way from the spark of an idea to the finished product.

"I'm a planner so I like to plan it out through to the end," Adams said, explaining that each of her books has taken her about a year to write. "I plan it out using sticky notes, and I write chapter by chapter synopses. Then I'm ready to start with the drafting."

"There are many runs at that," she added with a laugh.

Along with her Artists in the Schools work, Adams has partnered with visual artist Anita Lebeau on a program where students create "scraphic novels," 3D books made with recyclable materials.

"We bring together the writing piece, which I guide the students through, and (Lebeau) guides them through the visual art component."

Adams said that working with Lebeau no doubt influenced her on some level when it came to writing *Mermaid Warrior Squad*, while the experience of working closely with Carrington on the graphic elements has her interested in further exploring such collaboration in the future.

"I'm always excited to try new things, and to tell stories in different ways and collaborate with others," she said. "There's a real joy in that process, and quite often you get a result that's something you couldn't even imagine."

While *Mermaid Warrior Squad* officially hit the shelves online and at booksellers across the country on Aug. 15, an official launch will be held at McNally Robinson on Sun., Oct. 1. The event will feature a reading, a Q&A, and time for socializing and book signing.

"Who knows, we may come up with something sea-themed to set the tone," Adams added.

Visit www.karinadams.com or lorimer.ca/children for more information.

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