

**ELWOOD:**  
Author appreciates  
background in Sisters

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considered writing — and writing about tech, which I've done for eight years — if it weren't for those opportunities," said Elwood from her home in Portland.

Growing up in Sisters gave Elwood insights into a child's small-town perspective based on boundaries and limited exposure to a diversity of opinions, lifestyles and cultures. She harnessed her experiences and wrote a book in 2010 that takes her young readers on an epic adventure that doesn't look like it will end well. "Spartacus Ryan Zander and the Secrets of the Incredible" (ages 8 to 13), has a kidnapping, scary clowns and sibling squabbles most kids can relate to in one way or another.

Elwood has found that a lot of kids grow up with a reality that evolves, once they explore other places and people. They begin to question what they've been taught and become their own narrator.

"Kids in small towns don't know that until later," explained Elwood. "I introduce the character to the world outside of his little town. He learned to question things on his own, question adults and then decide if they are reliable. Often, kids in small towns don't have the same opportunities to see various points of view."

Elwood's character learns

to ask more questions about motives and points of view.

"I don't know how many kids' books are covering that. Things happen to kids in books and they don't question why or see different points of view about drawing conclusions."

Elwood has had her own adventure in the publishing world. After her book was published, the publisher went out of business. Like her resilient character, she didn't give up and has rewritten the book and found a new publisher, Fitzroy Books. She's applying to book contests and pursuing new ways to get her book out into the world.

Combining her role as a children's book author and her career at KEEN has its challenges. She's talking in front of classrooms of kids who make up her reading audience. They can be scarier than adults. One way she's tackled public speaking and readings is by doing stand-up comedy.

"It fits in with my interest in improving my public speaking. I love dabbling in stand-up comedy, so I'm figuring out ways to tie that in and make my book approachable. I want to appeal to parents who would buy the book for their children. I want to be a smart feminist voice as my 'in' vs. just speaking as a children's book author," she said.

In Portland recently, Elwood ran into a former Sisters classmate whose mom had been her high school English teacher.

"I ended up talking to her mom on the phone that night, and thanked her for teaching

such a wide range of books," she said. "She still had a photo of our graduating class in her home. It's so nice to be from a small town. I know kids in small towns don't always feel like they fit in or have the same opportunities, but they can also get personal, hands-on treatment that you wouldn't get in a big city."

“ I love dabbling in stand-up comedy, so I'm figuring out ways to tie that in and make my book approachable. — Molly Elwood

Elwood wants folks in Sisters to know she appreciates the education and people she met growing up.

"I had Jim Cornelius editing my articles and an English teacher who took the time to talk me through my writing. I had a patient and kind tech teacher who was also my society teacher — having teachers know me beyond one class felt really important. There was the possibility for adult/teenager relationships



PHOTO PROVIDED

Molly Elwood has authored a children's book.

that aren't always possible in larger places. Sisters has such wonderful potential to help students find their voice and unique interests."

Elwood's book is available

at Paulina Springs Books in Sisters (online at [www.paulinasprings.com](http://www.paulinasprings.com)), Powell's Books, and Amazon. For more information, visit [www.mollyelwood.com](http://www.mollyelwood.com).

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