

# Imagination

"I used to think I suffered from a lack of imagination, but then I opened my eyes."

It's a good thing Brentwood author Alison Norrington did, as an ever growing number of readers are now treated to vivid descriptions, an outstanding sense of place, and some feisty chick-lit through her novels.

Written by Lauren John



Like many authors, Alison began her literary journey with her nose in a book, and it's perhaps not surprising that she became an author when she was fascinated with analysing text in her school years. Along with this came a lust for life, a life that has brought her in to contact with many people, places, activities, and the odd adventure! She recently endured mouthfuls of salt water, learning to surf in the name of her craft, and a character in unpublished novel *The Houseboat Keeper*.

From talking to her it's easy to see that life experiences are a key inspiration in her work. As Alison says "There are ideas all around us, we all have funny/embarrassing experiences we can pull on." This philosophy led to Alison's debut novel *Class Act*, her first big challenge as an author, and an uncanny reflection of the person behind the words. "There was a lot of me in *Class Act*, it was very therapeutic to write, and was a springboard to bigger and better things."

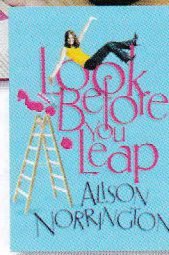
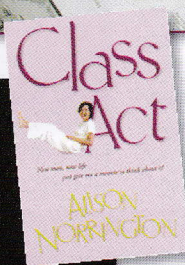
Alison's other characters all seem to be lively souls, with hidden depths and secrets, whose lives undoubtedly encounter humour. When reading her novels, you suspect that her favourite aspect of writing is the ability to 'play god' with these characters. "Treat him/her like a chess piece, pick them up and place them down somewhere, and see how they react. You can make them do/say whatever you want them to. It's great fun."

*Class Act* was partially set in Valencia, and it's the foreign spins in each of Alison's novels that give the reader a fascinating insight into, not only her passion for travelling, but also the different cultures she has experienced; a favourite destination being Lisbon in Portugal, a setting in *Three Of A Kind*. "Lisbon has been the biggest inspiration so far.



There are so many districts in the city, and they are so extreme from one another."

A novel titled *Three of a Kind* has also been published, with two new stories in the pipeline, but it doesn't stop there! Along with a busy family life, and her novels, Alison is successfully carving out a niche for herself in the world of feature writing. She has written for publications both in Ireland, where she spends some of her time, and here in the U.K. She also hopes to fulfil a few writing ambitions along the way. "Doris Day would be a dream character for me. She is feisty and fun and yet can pull up her skirts when she needs to. I am currently writing a book and using her as my muse. I have also always wanted to write a novel for children



and I am half way through my first children's novel aimed at the 9-13 age bracket."

When the subject of children is broached, it often raises the interesting issue of whether enough is done to encourage them to read, something which most authors, including Alison have a view on. "Children need to see their parents reading, and be encouraged to read themselves. It has to come as second nature to them. You're giving them skills, and a passion that will last a lifetime."

For those whose love of books develops in to a love of reading, then the advice is somewhat different. A special place for writing is a must, as is constant dedication to the task regardless of the result. "Aim for 2000 words a day, even if its rubbish and you hate it, it helps to fine tune your voice, and helps you to learn what works, and what doesn't. An idea for a story remains an idea as long as it remains in your head." Be warned though, once you catch the writing bug, like Alison, you may never want to stop. "I never really feel the need to completely switch off, I love my work and writing is now a huge part of me, I'll never stop doing it."

**Alison is ever ready to offer encouragement to other writers, and is also planning to set up creative writing courses in the Essex area. For more information on this, or her novels please visit the web links below.**

[www.poolbeg.com](http://www.poolbeg.com)

[www.alisonnorrington.com](http://www.alisonnorrington.com)