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SCARLET

A. C. GAUGHEN

Many readers know the tale of Robin Hood but they will be swept away by this new version full of action, secrets, and romance.

Posing as one of Robin Hood's thieves to avoid the wrath of the evil Thief Taker Lord Gisbourne, Scarlet has kept her identity secret from all of Nottinghamshire. Only the Hood and his band know the truth: the agile thief posing as a whip of a boy is actually a fearless young woman with a secret past. Helping the people of Nottingham outwit the corrupt Sheriff of Nottingham could cost Scarlet her life as Gisbourne closes in. It's only her fierce loyalty to Robin—whose quick smiles and sharp temper have the rare power to unsettle her—that keeps Scarlet going and makes this fight worth dying for

AC Gaughen is a young adult author and a board member of the non-profit Boston GLOW, where she helps teen girls in the Boston area use their voices for change. She says, "when one person believes in you, it changes everything. Seeing the confidence that writing can inspire in young women is really incredible." She earned her Master of Letters from University of St Andrews in Scotland and now lives in Boston with two ridiculously cute and mischievous goldendoodles.

Scarlet is her first novel.



Walker Books for Young Readers

SCARLET by AC Gaughen
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Chatting with AC Gaughen

Scarlet is a retelling of the Robin Hood legend. What made you want to rewrite the story? Are there benefits to working within a familiar tale?

It really had very little to do with Robin Hood, actually. SCARLET started in grad school, where a teacher challenged me to write something totally different. I did--I wrote this angry, short piece in this very strange voice with poor English and a cagey, grumpy protagonist. It took me a long time to realize that this crazy voice I'd been writing in was Scarlet, and then her story--and her place in Robin's band--flowed from there. I think the amazing thing about retellings is that in some senses, it allows the story itself to fall away and lets the reader focus on the voice. There's never a new story, only a new way to tell it.

What makes Scarlet's voice so unique, and can you tell us about the decision to write it like that?

In a technical sense, Scarlet uses very improper grammar, convoluted syntax, and very limited vocabulary. But when you look at it from the standpoint of voice, it actually gives away some of her secrets before she does. As a writer, I had the voice first and then that totally informed her backstory. Everything you need to know about Scarlet's character is in the way she speaks, the words she uses and her cadence of language. Which is fitting, because I think our voices and the way we use them are crucial to the way we connect, even today.

What was your road to publication like?

In some senses, it was very long--in others, not so much! I've been submitting novels to publishers since I was fourteen years old, actually. I still have a very gentle rejection letter from the first editor I queried. After graduate school, I was submitting with a lot more information and professionalism, but it still took three years (working with three different manuscripts) to write SCARLET. I wrote the novel in about three months, and within a month had signed with an agent; five months after that, I had an offer for the book.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

There are a lot of different elements that inspire me, and often they all take a while of kicking around my brain before blending and distilling into a cohesive story. But everything inspires me. One of my teachers in high school told me "A writer is someone on whom nothing is wasted"--I've always really taken that to heart. Everything I see and experience it is my duty as a writer to absorb, process and appreciate.

Where can we find out more information about you, your appearances, and SCARLET?

The best place for information is www.acgaughen.com--the website has all the information on where to buy Scarlet, where I'll be speaking and signing books, and more ways to interact with the book. I'm also on Twitter as @acgaughen, and you can 'like' SCARLET on Facebook at www.facebook.com/scarletbook.

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