

★ 1. MEET THE AUTHOR ★

Lori-Ann Preston (Lori) was born on 12 July 1973 in East London. From an early age, she had big dreams twinkling in her eyes about what she wanted to become when she grew up.



At the top of her list of dreams was to become a teacher. Lori loved gathering her soft and cuddly toys, arranging them in neat rows, and playing teacher. Her favourite toy was a Pink Panther named Pinky.

But that wasn't the end of Lori's dreams. She also had a wish to become a writer. How did she start? By snipping pictures from magazines, gluing them onto paper and then taping the pages together to craft her very own stories.

Lori's room had a bookcase above her bed that held a wonderful collection of Ladybird Fantasy books. These books whisked her away to enchanting lands filled with castles, fairies and exciting adventures. Lori read these books over and over, dreaming of becoming a published author one day.

Her days were filled with joy at Crewe Primary School. School was great, but the afternoons were even better. Lori and her brothers would zoom around the neighbourhood on their bicycles, climb trees that reached for the sky, and build forts.

High school, however, was tough for Lori. Sitting still and listening were not her strong suits. Looking back, she realised she should have put more effort into her schoolwork and finish her homework. To earn pocket money, Lori, along with her brother and best friend,

hatched a plan. They dressed up as silly clowns and put on puppet shows at children's parties. They performed so many shows that Lori saved up enough money to buy her very own car - a white Volkswagen Beetle that she named Snowy.

After matriculating, Lori opened a children's Educare. For a whole 10 years, she had so much fun taking care of adorable children who were 2 to 4 years old.

When Lori was in her early thirties, she thought, "Why not get a proper degree?" So, she enrolled and studied through Unisa, the University of South Africa. But that's not all - at the same time, she taught drama at Clarendon Preparatory School. Lori was a superstar student, and she graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Education degree. She loved studying so much that she even went on to complete her Honours degree.

Lori loved being a teacher. Every single day, she gathered her class around and read to them. She was an educator for a whole 20 years. Can you imagine the number of stories she has read!

Then, while reading a book to her Grade 2 class at Beaconsfield Primary, Lori had a brilliant idea. She really, really wanted to read a book to her class that had been written by a South African author. But, at that time, she couldn't find what she was looking for at her local bookstore. So she decided to look on the internet.

During her online search, Lori stumbled upon something exciting - a writing competition called the Golden Baobab Prize. Without hesitating, she decided to give it a go. But wait, she needed help! So she asked her class what kind of book they wanted to read. Her class said, "Ma'am, just make it a great adventure, and make sure it's funny!" What awesome advice that was!

Guess what happened next? Lori won the Golden Baobab Prize in 2016 for her Early Chapter Book, *The Ama-Zings!* Winning the competition gave her confidence in her ability as a writer.

Lori has a passion for making reading more awesome for kids. The books she has written include: *Trixie, Slooths, What do Monsters and Mermaids Munch?* and *Fab Farm*. Plus, of course, her fun-filled adventure series, *Thabo, the Space Dude!*

Lori loves creating picture books too! Six of her stories have been accepted by Nalibali in partnership with SABC for their radio programme. You might even hear her tales on the airwaves!

Her work has also been featured in the anthology, *The Vegan Vampire*, which includes three of her poems and a play. Recently, the Wimpy franchise, working with Ethnikids, published her story, *Trevor, the Hero*, as part of their reading initiative.

Writing is Lori's daily dose of excitement, like taking a magical journey into the unknown. Her goal is to write 400 words per day, and she is constantly editing her work, making her stories sparkle and shine. Her mission is to spread the joy of reading far and wide among kids like you!

Now, let's peek into Lori's world outside of writing. It comes as no surprise that she loves to read! Her bedside table is always stacked with books. But that's not all - Lori is a bird enthusiast! She has captured over 300 feathery friends on camera. She's also a gym-goer, a puzzle builder, and a beach walker with Chapter - the best dog ever! Horror movies, and making her bed every day? Let's just say those are not her favourite things.

If Lori had to pick just three things to keep in the whole wide world, it would be her husband, Mike, her daughter Jessica, and, of course, the amazing Chapter.

And that's a wrap! Remember that each day is a new adventure waiting to be written. Just like Lori, you have your own special story to create!

★ 2. LISTENING TEST ★

The biographical information provided could be used as a listening test to assess the learners' ability to actively listen and take note of what is being read aloud.

1. In what month was Lori born? (1)
2. What was the name of Lori's Pink Panther? (1)
3. Why did Lori struggle at high school? (1)
4. How did Lori make pocket money? (1)
5. Was Lori's first car called Sparkle? (1)
6. From which university did Lori graduate? (1)
7. Name three books Lori has written. (1)
8. How many words does Lori try to write every day? (1)
9. Supply the missing word in this sentence: It comes as no surprise that Lori loves to _____. (1)
10. What is the name of Lori's dog? (1)

[10]