

A Short Biography of Rosemary Wells

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I was a scrawny girl who grew up in the 1940's and 50's on the New Jersey shore. I was lucky. I had really good parents.

My mother was a ballet dancer for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. My father, a playwright. They were intelligent and sensitive. They praised what I did well and didn't care much about what I didn't do well. I drew uncannily for a youngster. Every week my mother would choose the best drawing of the week and thumbtack it to the mantle piece. In this way I learned that some of my pictures were better than others and I strove to please.

This was a good value to have. I didn't know at the time, but in my profession it made me pay attention to my editors.

I was a Tomboy and spent most of my time outdoors. I hated dresses and didn't care for dolls.

I hunted rats with a bow and arrows on the banks of the Shrewsbury River with our two dogs. I was a fierce and devoted Brooklyn Dodger fan. I went to public schools and had uneven grades—excellent in English, history and French yet poor in math and science.

I started putting in my ten thousand hours to be an artist at the age of two and cranked up at least three hours very night of my young life, drawing, copying, learning and drawing more.

In my young life I was disappointed not to become the first female major league baseball player, and also disappointed not to have a career as a FBI agent, so I turned to writing and illustration and have never looked back.

Luckily my husband and I had a very happy time of it for 38 years until he died 14 years ago. We had two children, girls. One is now 51 and a literary agent in New York City. The other is 47 and an organic farmer who also teaches at Cornell.

I have five granddaughters. They are the source of many a book to come.