

## Author Rob Skead: Submarines & Secrets

by Chazda Albright -

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This is a special 2-part interview with sports and history fiction author Rob Skead. ([Part 2 is HERE.](#)) What I find particularly interesting about this writer is that he sometimes co-authors with his dad. [He also visits schools and teaches kids how to write fiction](#), so his interests are right up my alley.

**In this 1st part of the interview, Rob Skead talks about the trilogy he wrote with his dad and how finding the right publisher is a lot like finding the right spouse.**

[Rob Skead](#) has written illustrated storybooks and novels for kids. His latest published novel (from publisher [Zondervan](#)) is [Submarines, Secrets and a Daring Rescue](#), the Revolutionary War story that is a sequel to [Patriots, Red Coats and Spies](#). Both of these books, along with an as yet unpublished third novel, were stories that Rob co-wrote with his dad. Rob is the writer. His dad is the history buff.

I asked Rob who had inspired him most in his life.

“My greatest inspirations are my parents... both are creative in their own ways. In her younger days, my mom was talented at drawing. And she repaired antique dolls as her at-home business. She’d do everything from molding body parts to the painting and fine details. She was amazing and her customers

came from all over.

“My father is a talented woodworker and woodcarver, and, as it turns out, writer and story developer. Having parents that enjoyed creative expression inspired me to find ways to do the same.”

### **What is Rob Skead most proud of with this particular writing project?**

“This story is one adventure after another (three in total, all interwoven creatively) and there is a special character arc. But most importantly, we wanted to let kids in on the fact that the patriots in 1777 were extremely creative with the invention of the Turtle submarine.” I can easily see this story being a hit with kids, especially boys, which is overall a tougher demographic.

The artist who created the book cover artwork for this series is [Wilson Ong](#). The look and overall feel of these books is quite different from Rob’s other work, which most often involves his love of sports.

The artwork is well done and captures the style and content well, but Rob says, “I’m torn on this one. The cover is like a spoiler almost — it tells that the main characters blow up a British ship, but it’s also a terrific and dramatic visual so it works. It’s the best choice for a visual but it steals a little thunder.”

### **What was his inspiration for this historical action-adventure series?**

“As the second book in the American Revolutionary War Adventure series, we wanted to find a hook (unique aspect of the Revolutionary War) that few people knew about. When I learned about the American Turtle submarine, I knew we had it.

“The need for gunpowder was such a key element of the War as well that we knew we had to combine these two elements into a story where the twins, John and Ambrose Clark (our main characters), would face conflicts and opportunities to test and build their character.”

### **How did you find your publisher?**

“[Kim Childress](#), the editor at Zondervan at that time we sold the book to them, was a huge American Revolution and Constitution buff. For years, I had been a fan of Harper Collins/Zondervan books and knew they’d do a great job with the story. Finding a publisher for a story is like finding your spouse.

“Oftentimes, a story has to date a lot before it finds an editor who falls in love with it. That’s why perseverance is so important—and not taking rejection personally.

“The key is not going to a publisher too early with subpar work. When a great idea and well-written story connect with an editor who loves that genre and sees its marketability, the initial stages of a love connection begin.”

### **What was working with editors Kim Childress and Mary Hassinger like?**

“Kim [Childress] and I spoke on the phone and communicated via email often, and when Mary Hassinger took over the project when Kim left the company, we communicated the same way. Taking a book from manuscript to final copy is a total collaboration with the editor(s).

“Mary and her team found holes in the story I never noticed. And Mary had several great ideas to improve character arc and story as well. I am so grateful for Mary and her talents.”

[Next up in Part 2: Rob Skead’s interview continues with details about collaborating with his dad and how he got started as a writer.](#)

**Keep creating, no matter what.**

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