

About me

My name's Elly Griffiths, except it's not really. My real name is Domenica de Rosa and I've written four books under that name (see link above). I was born in London in 1963 and my family moved to Brighton when I was five. I loved Brighton and still do – the town, the surrounding countryside and, most of all, the sea. I went to local state schools and wrote my first book when I was a 11, a murder mystery set in Rottingdean, near the village where I still live. At secondary school I used to write episodes of Starsky and Hutch (early fan fiction) and very much enjoyed making my readers cry.

I did all the right things to become a writer: I read English at King's College London and, after graduating, worked in a library, for a magazine and then as a publicity assistant at HarperCollins. I loved working in publishing and eventually became Editorial Director for children's books at HarperCollins. All this completely put me off writing and it wasn't until I was on maternity leave in 1998 that I wrote what would become my first published novel, **The Italian Quarter**.

Three other books followed, all about Italy, families and identity. By now we had two children and my husband Andy had just given up his city job to become an archaeologist. We were on holiday in Norfolk, walking across Titchwell Marsh, when Andy mentioned that prehistoric man had thought that marshland was sacred. Because it's neither land nor sea, but something in-between, they saw it as a kind of bridge to the afterlife. Neither land nor sea, neither life nor death. As he said these words the entire plot of *The Crossing Places* appeared, full formed, in my head and, walking towards me out of the mist, I saw **Dr Ruth Galloway**. I didn't think that this new book was significantly different from my 'Italy' books but, when she read it, my agent said, *'This is crime. You need a crime name.'* And that's how I became Elly Griffiths.



Griffiths' first series features as a main character [forensic archaeologist](#) Ruth Galloway, who lives in a remote seaside cottage near [King's Lynn](#) in [Norfolk](#) and teaches at the University of North Norfolk. This character was inspired by Griffiths' husband, who gave up a city job to train as an archaeologist,^[4] and her aunt, "who lives on the Norfolk coast and filled her niece's head with the myths and legends of that area". Griffiths released the first book in this series, *The Crossing Places* (*Ruth Galloway* #1), in 2009.^[5]

Griffiths' second series, set in 1950s [Brighton](#), focuses on the duo of Detective Inspector Edgar Stephens and magician Max Mephisto. Griffiths released the first book in this series, *The Zig Zag Girl*, in 2014.^[6]

In 2017, Griffiths was the Programming Chair for the Theakstons Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival, part of the [Harrogate International Festivals](#) portfolio.^[7]

Griffiths won the 2020 [Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Novel](#) for *The Stranger Diaries*.^[8] In 2021, *The Postscript Murders* was shortlisted in the [Gold Dagger](#) category at the [Crime Writers' Association](#) Awards.^[9]

THE ZIG ZAG GIRL

THE PLAYERS

Magic Men:

Edgar Stephens-- Main Character- member of the Magic Men during WW2 and now a police detective. went to Oxford University for 2 years, then army.

Max Mephisto - Magician - great reputation

Tony Mulholland - slight of hand magician now trying to be a comedian

The Great Diablo - magician - aka Stan Parks (older than others by 30+ years)

Bill Cosgrove - Army

Charis Parsons - WAAF oversees activities of Magic Men

Major Gormley - Commanding officer

Police:

(Edgar Stephens)

Solomon Carter- police surgeon

Bob Willis - sergeant with Edgar

Larry McGuire

Frank Hodges- Chief Inspector

Sgt. Alan Deacon - At Bill and Jean's

Other:

Jean - WAAF, now married to Bill, had a crush on Edgar during war

Edgar's family - Bill, Rose (parents), Lucy -sister, Jonathan - brother killed at Dunkirk

Various performers- Ronaldo - sword swallower, Walter Armstrong- impressionist

Ethel- Max's best assistant -pre war, married, sends Max Christmas cards. Now in in thirds

Dr. Fitzgerald- cabinet maker and prop maker - especially of zig zag box

Ruby French- Max's new assistant and????

Mrs. Finegan - Edgar's landlady - thinks he's a traffic cop

Roy Coulter - stage manager Brighton Theater

Desdemona -(and mother) Tony's landlady's daughter who found Tony w/Edgar and who saw small man - creepy voice

Mrs. Steptoe - Ethel's landlady

Barney - GIANT baby -Jean and Bill's

Questions:

1. Why were the Magic Men brought together? What was their mission
2. What expertise did each bring to the group?
3. What is the importance of Brighton as a location- if any?
4. Why was it important that the 'package' sent to Edgar was addressed to 'Captain'?
5. What led police to question the flower seller? Did she have useful information?
6. Did anything get revealed at the Lost Luggage place at the railway station?
7. How did Max get his Bentley?
8. What was in Ethel's room that was of interest?
9. What career did Ruby really want? Who was Eusapia Palladino?
10. Why didn't Max kiss Ruby goodbye? (what did you think? anything?)
11. What happened to Tony? Who found him? What was the significance of meeting at 1:15pm?
12. What happened to Edgar in Norway that made him available for the Magic Men?
13. What was Edgar's hobby

14. Who thought up the name Magic Men?
15. Who said "Get the shadows right" what does it refer to?
16. Why did Edgar go to see Bill & Jean after the 1st time?
17. What is the Wolf Trap? What is it referring to in this story?
18. What do you know about the play 'The Mouse Trap'? Why were they talking about it?
19. How many sightings of the small man with a peaked cap and long coat were there? by who?
20. Did you figure out the clue 'Death with a thousand cuts'?
21. Who is Hugh D. Nee? Did you guess?
22. What is the REVEAL? Did you guess?

Extra Credit:

1. Can you pronounce 'FINGERSPITZENGEFUHL'?
2. Who was Dick Barton?

Quotes:

1. 'He tended to assume a calm professional tone with his boss knowing that this infuriated him more.'
2. 'Rich people are all very well as long as they keep in their proper place.'

and: By eleven o'clock, Edgar was ready to leave, Or kill himself. Whichever was quickest.

