



## **Kevin Franz**

**2507 LaBrecque Drive  
Plainfield, Illinois 60544  
815-254-9495**

**[www.Princess-Sisters.com](http://www.Princess-Sisters.com)  
[www.StarbellBooks.com](http://www.StarbellBooks.com)  
[StarbellBooks@comcast.net](mailto:StarbellBooks@comcast.net)**

### **Author's Bio**

Kevin Franz is the author of the successful children's fantasy series, the Castle Rose Adventures, published by Starbell Books in Plainfield, Illinois. The first book of the series, *Into the Hidden Lands*, was released in February of 2004, and serves as an introduction into the mythical world of two young princesses who discover and amazing new land of excitement and mystery.

Praised for its lavish illustrations, interesting footnotes and detailed maps, *Into the Hidden Lands* cleverly combines the realism of medieval castle life with the myth and magic of classic fantasy. Now in its second printing, the book won a loyal following of young adventure readers. The much anticipated sequel, *The Underwater City*, was released in June of 2004 to an eager audience, and the third installment in the series, *The Affaire at the Faire*, was just released to favorable reviews in January of 2005.

Born and raised in West Allis, Wisconsin, Kevin received a Data Processing degree in 1984 and moved to Naperville, Illinois to design telecommunication software for AT&T Bell Laboratories. His love and talent for writing eventually led him away from software design and into technical documentation, where he still spends many of his non-fiction hours. The birth of his daughters in 1993 and 1996 rekindled a love of storytelling, and eventually produced the original bedtime stories that would evolve into the Castle Rose Adventures.

In 2003, Kevin created his own publishing company, Starbell Books, and self-published his first work of fiction. Kevin is also an accomplished speaker, and regularly presents his Creative Writing Workshops to young audiences throughout Illinois and Wisconsin.

Kevin currently lives in Plainfield, Illinois with his wife Denise, daughters Rachel and Lisa, and son Michael.



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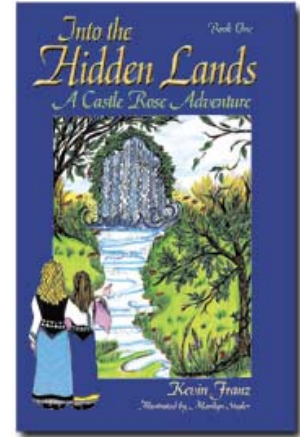
## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

Contact: Starbell Books 815-254-9495 ♦ Email: [StarbellBooks@comcast.net](mailto:StarbellBooks@comcast.net)

## From Bedtime Story to Publishing Company

Like many fathers, Plainfield resident Kevin Franz was often given “bedtime story” duty for his two daughters. But rather than just recycle the same old classics, Franz began creating his own tales using his daughters as the main characters. As time went on, the stories became more involved, and the made-up lands more detailed. Today, Kevin Franz and Starbell Books announce the publication of *Into the Hidden Lands: A Castle Rose Adventure* – a new children’s book based on those same bedtime stories.



“It was really my wife’s idea,” Franz remembers. “She used to listen outside my girl’s bedroom door, and she said I should really be writing all of these stories down. It had never occurred to me before that.”

Actually putting the stories on to paper proved to be quite a challenge for Franz, who has years of technical writing experience but had never before ventured into children’s literature. It took many months and several rewrites before Franz finally had something he was ready to share – an original manuscript featuring two young heroines named Princess Rachel and Princess Lisa. That manuscript eventually found its way to Wisconsin artist Marilyn Stigler, who immediately became interested in working on the project.

“My sister introduced me to Marilyn, and it’s been great working with her,” Franz said. “Without the illustrations I would have never taken things this far.”

Encouraged by positive feedback from teachers, reading specialists, and most importantly, the children that read the book, Franz decided to take the next step: publication.

“I could have tried shopping it around to the traditional publishers, or I could have paid to have it printed through a vanity press. But after looking into it, I decided that I would try and do it all myself. After all, how hard could it be?” Franz laughs.

Learning as he went along, Franz eventually created his own publishing company – Starbell Books – to produce and sell the Castle Rose series. Now, with the first book printed and available, Franz is planning speaking engagements at various libraries and schools both in the Plainfield area and near his hometown of West Allis, Wisconsin. He is hoping to not only promote his book, but also explain the details of self-publishing for any other aspiring authors.

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*Into the Hidden Lands* is available from Starbell Books, 2507 LaBrecque Drive, Plainfield, IL 60544. The price is \$7.99, plus \$2.95 shipping and handling. Credit card orders are accepted. Reseller discounts are available. For more information call 815-254-9495, or visit [www.Princess-Sisters.com](http://www.Princess-Sisters.com). Kevin Franz is available for interviews and speaking engagements. Email [StarbellBooks@comcast.net](mailto:StarbellBooks@comcast.net) for details.

## NEWS RELEASE

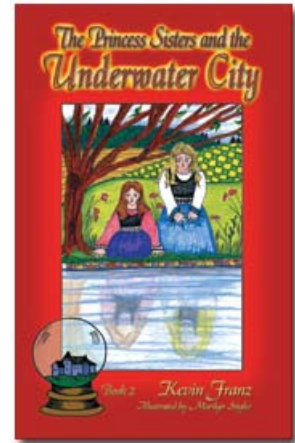
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## Book 2 (and Counting) for Local Author

“When will your next book be out?” That was easily the most common question that Plainfield author Kevin Franz heard while speaking at schools throughout the area. Children quickly fell in love with the characters introduced in his first book – *Into the Hidden Lands* – and now they were clamoring for more stories starring the Princess Sisters of Castle Rose. Today, to the joy of many young fans, the second book in the series is finally available.

*The Princess Sisters and the Underwater City*, Book 2 of the Castle Rose Adventures, continues the story of two young girls that stumble upon a hidden land of mystery and magic. Impressively illustrated by Wisconsin artist Marilyn Stigler, the book combines fantasy adventure with realistic details.



Even Franz himself is a little surprised at the success of the series. “When I saw all those boxes being unloaded from the truck, I was a little nervous.” he said. “I knew I could sell a few dozen to family and friends, but a thousand? That seemed like a lot.”

As a self-publisher, Franz knew that he and his company – Starbell Books – had a lot of work to do. He began speaking about the book at any place he could. At first, things moved slowly. Less than 15 people showed up for his first engagement at the Plainfield Public Library. But positive comments began to spread, and the phone began to ring. “Before I knew it, I was standing in front of 150, 200, even 300 kids at time – many of whom had already read the first book and were waiting for more! It was really amazing.”

Franz is also quick to give credit to others that have lent support to the project. “Marilyn (the series’ illustrator), and my sister Belinda, have both been a tremendous help in promoting the books and lining up appearances. And of course my wife Denise and the rest of the family has been fantastic, too.”

But it’s really all about the stories. “Children will come up to me – or even adults – and tell me how they couldn’t put the book down. That makes it all worthwhile.”

And while the release of the *Princess Sisters and the Underwater City* is a major achievement for Franz and Starbell Books, he has his sights set much higher. “This is still only Book 2,” Franz reminds us. “I’ve got three more Castle Rose stories already written, and ideas and plots lined up for many more. This is only the beginning.”

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*The Princess Sisters and the Underwater City* is available from Starbell Books, 2507 LaBrecque Drive, Plainfield, IL 60544. The price is \$7.99, plus \$2.95 shipping and handling. Credit card orders are accepted. Reseller discounts are available. For more information call 815-254-9495, or visit our web site - [www.Princess-Sisters.com](http://www.Princess-Sisters.com). Kevin Franz is also available for interviews and speaking engagements. Email [StarbellBooks@comcast.net](mailto:StarbellBooks@comcast.net), or visit [www.StarbellBooks.com](http://www.StarbellBooks.com) for details.



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## **What is a Kevin Franz Writing Workshop like? Here are just a few of the comments I have received . . .**

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Kevin,

What a wonderful experience! My Girl Scout troop had Kevin come and do a workshop on the creative writing process. I don't know what was more enjoyable- watching their faces ( with their eyes closed) imagining the "twist" Kevin had just given to the story he was telling or the realization that the writing process can be done by anyone.

Fantastic! (Yes this is a paragraph- Mr. Franz said if I am the author, I can make a paragraph anyway I want!)

The parents from my troop have commented on how excited their girls were when they got home. The workshop was enjoyed by young and old. Thank you for a great Girl Scout Meeting!

**Jenny Lecato**  
**Troop #248, Cedarburg, WI**

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Kevin,

I would like to thank you again for speaking to the students of South Milwaukee. Your lively, fact filled introduction to writing has encouraged many of the children to write stories. Your presentation is very clear with vivid images and interesting details. Your presentation is well planned and age appropriate. All of the children were engaged as you told the story.

Thanks again! We can't wait for the next book. Please keep us on the mailing list. Also, we look forward to having you speak again to the students. I will invite the fifth graders at all of the schools this time. They would really benefit from your writing tips and hints.

Sincerely,

**Deb Semrad**  
**Head Media Specialist, South Milwaukee School District**

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Dear Kevin,

On behalf of the students and staff of Lincoln Elementary School, THANK YOU so much for visiting our school. I've heard only positive comments - I know you have inspired our students to use their creativity and write!

We can't wait to read about Princess Lisa and Princess Rachel's Underwater Adventure!

Thanks again,

**Cathy Panozzo**  
**Reading Specialist**  
**Lincoln Elementary School**

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Dear Mr. Franz,

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to our students. Your experience and stories help the students more than you know.

I know you have inspired them to become even better writers!

Thank you again,

**Miss Bass and the Fifth Grade Teachers**  
**Meadow View Elementary School**

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Dear Kevin Franz,

Thank you so much for your author visit. The second thru fourth grade students at Rawson School have really enjoyed your first book. Your writing is enrapturing; you really take the students to the hidden lands.

You are a wonderful storyteller - the students could recite them word-for-word.

The simple guidelines that you gave the students to write their own stories were fantastic! I cannot tell you how many students told me that they are going to write their own stories and that they are going to use your tips.

Keep writing; you have many faithful readers at Rawson School waiting for your next masterpiece!

**Lynn Blochowicz**  
**Rawson Elementary School**

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Dear Mr. Franz,

I would like to add my personal thanks for your presentation to our students. All of us enjoyed it very much.

I think you simplified writing process is very accessible to elementary students, and, as I am the Middle School librarian, as well, I will also be recommending it to them.

I look forward to your continued success and a long list of publications.

Yours Very Truly,

**Mary Bandor**  
**Librarian**

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Dear Mr. Franz,

I am a second grade teacher at Lakeview and I just wanted to thank you for your visit. We are using your tips for writing stories in our classroom.

Sincerely,

**Mrs. Zdero**  
**Second Grade Teacher**  
**Lakeview Elementary School**

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Mr. Franz,

Thank you for coming to Rawson Elementary. We liked learning about how to write books. Maybe one of us will become an author or illustrator, too.

Thank you for letting us order your book and get it autographed by you. We look forward to your next book.

We hope you will come back again soon.

Sincerely,

**The Second Grade Writers of Rawson Elementary**



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**Books 1 and 2 of the Castle Rose Adventures Series were sent out to a select group of teaching professionals, reading specialists and education administrators. Here is a sampling of their reactions . . .**

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*"What a wonderful read! I was hooked at once and felt a special rapport with Princess Rachel and Princess Lisa as they ingeniously worked through totally enchanting adventures in a wholesome and intellectually clever manner. I ended each book anxiously anticipating the sister's next adventure . . . A wonderful series beginning!"*

**Barbara C. Johnson, M.Ed., NBCT  
First Grade Teacher and Alverno College Faculty Member  
2004 Wisconsin State Teacher of the Year**

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*"The Castle Rose Adventures are stories with the right blend of danger, fantasy, adventure and coziness that should delight girls ages 6-10 . . . A delightful blend of fantasy and adventure as two princess sisters use their wits to complete quests given them by an enchantress."*

**Pat Campbell  
Head Children's Department  
West Allis Public Library**

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*"A story where the girls are heros and true companions"*

**Jerry O'Shea  
Principal  
Meadow View Elementary School**

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*"The illustrations are fantastic. The detail in each picture encourages the reader to examine it and look for hidden items . . . The addition of maps in the book enhance the text and enable the reader to be a part of the magic."*

**Jan Brulz**  
**Second Grade Teacher**

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*"This book would be a great bedtime story. Such a loving family! . . . Hurray for a book with courageous girls!"*

**Debra Woodbury**  
**Reading Teacher**

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*"A real page turner for children of all ages. The maps add a nice touch."*

**Laura Drexler**  
**Special Education Teacher**

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*"What child wouldn't fall in love with magical horses, dragons and villains?"*

**Christine Klussendorf**  
**Owner, Director, Early Childhood Educator**  
**Sunshine Garden Children's Center, Inc.**

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*"I find the stories very entertaining. I didn't know what would happen next . . . The adventures and reactions are believable for children."*

**Kirsten Bass**  
**Fifth Grade Teacher**

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*"A new fairytale series that follows the adventures of two clever princesses."*

**Sharon Mix**  
**Learning Center Director**

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*"Good chapter endings for educators to use strategies."*

**Jackie Fox**  
**Second and Third Grade Teacher**