



The Letterpress Project

Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

An interview with Cathy Hopkins

Q1. What are your earliest memories of books and reading? For example, did you have a favourite or inspirational book?

I lived in Kenya in East Africa until I was eleven and we didn't have TV there so books were our main source of entertainment. Favourites were the Narnia books by CS Lewis, What Katy Did by Susan Coolidge, The Children of Cherry Tree Farm by Enid Blyton.

Q2. What inspired you to become an author / illustrator?

I realised that I would like to be a writer in 1986 and I did every creative writing course I could to learn as much as I could. I also read books and listened to CDs on the art of writing . I enjoyed all of them and I'd say they inspired me to do all I could to make writing my career.

Q3. For you, what makes a successful book or illustration?

For me, it starts with character having to face challenges. If I am interested in a character at the beginning of a book, I want to read on to see what happens to them.

Q4. Do you have a specific audience in mind when you write your books / plan your illustrations?

As I write for very different age groups, younger and older, I have to keep that in mind when I am plotting a book. I have to think what issues people of different ages might be facing, although sometimes, there can be a cross over.

Q5. What future do you think the physical book has? For example, do you think the electronic book will replace the physical book?

I don't think the e book will replace the physical book. They're good for when you have to travel light but from what people I have spoken to have said, most like to have an actual book in their hand so they can refer back to earlier chapters easily and then keep the books they love on a shelf.

Q6. Are you a book collector? Is there a special book you'd love to own?

*I do collect books. The house is full of them, every room with so many waiting to be read and others to be reread. Recently someone found me a copy of the book I mentioned earlier: *The Children of Cherry Tree Farm* by Enid Blyton and it's nice to see it there on the shelf, like an old friend from my childhood, reminding me of afternoons spent reading in the shade of the verandah away from the fierce African sun.*