



## The Letterpress Project

### Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

# An Interview With Curtis Jobling

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

Two years old and visiting the land of the Wild Things. Maurice Sendak's fabulous book was the earliest memory I have of reading, and was discovered one day when my mum took me to my local public library in Warrington. I was captivated, understandably. A few years passed, with me returning every weekend, and I picked up my first ever novel there also, *The Hobbit*. That's when I fell in love with fantasy as a genre. It's all thanks to my local library.

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

I think it's born from a desire to entertain. Like many authors, I used to play roleplaying games as a kid, and it was here I learned how to tell a tale and spin a yarn. I loved to see the reactions of the players as I ran the games, coaxing a wide array of emotions from them, from shock and horror through fear and excitement and love and loss. That was my first experience of having an audience for my stories, and that buzz has never really gone away. It gives me a particular thrill on my school visits to tell children of all ages what my own path into becoming an author entailed. Hopefully I can inspire a new wave of writers with my own backstory...

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

That's the million dollar question, isn't it? The story has to engage. It can't be fatty or stodgy, every word has to be there for a purpose, to drive the story forward and take the reader into the world. For younger readers, the key ingredients are the four R's: rhythm, rhyme, repetition and retelling, all of which reinforce structure in a story for the child. The artwork needs to complement the written word, but ultimately – in my opinion – story is king. If the story is great, the pictures draw themselves.

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

I write for myself. Anarchy, fantasy and horror – they are the go-to words for all my work, be it picture book or middle grade and teen novels. We write about the things we know, and those three words pretty much sum up my own childhood. I was a subversive little monkey, always playing the good boy, when really I was up to mischief at every opportunity.

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

I think the e-book has reached a plateau. Those who want to use tablets to read will have them by now. The e-book hasn't taken over from the paperback as was predicted, and I hope that's never the case. Nothing beats the aesthetic buzz of having a real book in one's hands.

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

I guess my most valuable books would be the first editions of George R R Martin's *A Song Of Ice And Fire* – I have each of the first volumes in hardback, all of which are pretty damned rare. If they were signed by the author, their value would be frightening. Guess I need to track Uncle George down, pronto!

Curtis Jobling, October 2016

[www.curtisjobling.com](http://www.curtisjobling.com)

@curtisjobling on Twitface

Thank you very much for taking time to do this for us. We will advise you when we publish it on the website - [www.letterpressproject.co.uk](http://www.letterpressproject.co.uk). Please return the completed interview to:

**Karen Argent**

**Project Director** [Karen.argent@btinternet.com](mailto:Karen.argent@btinternet.com)