



The Letterpress Project

Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

An Interview With Dan Metcalf

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

My earliest memories are being read a book of Aesop's Fables, particularly the one about the sun and the wind. Also a children's version of Hiawatha. I found *The BFG* quite inspirational; our head teacher used to read Roald Dahl books in assembly when he was supposed to be reading bible stories, and he did all the voices. It was great to see 300 children laughing along to a book.

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

I think it was a case of *having* to be a writer. I was a daydreamer first, and then when I learned to write well enough, I wrote the daydreams down and they became stories. Later on, when I learned that you could make writing your career, I knew that this was what I had to do.

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

The best thing is when a reader connects with a book and when you can't imagine a time when that book wasn't in your life! You know the characters as well as you know your friends. You feel as though that book is your friend. It's like in *Catcher in the Rye*, when Holden says that he wants to call up the writer and just chat.

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

Me, aged 9 years old! I was a big reader back then and loved adventures and anything that grabbed me and wouldn't let go.

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

Nah. I think there will always be hardcore bibliophiles (like me) that will keep the printed book alive. Textbooks and non-fiction may go online purely for reasons of cost. Also I don't

think illustrations look right on ebooks yet – I love an illustrated book in all their sizes and shapes, and you can't get a 'special' reading experience when the book has to be re-formatted to fit your iPad.

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

Yes! My wife is a lecturer in Children's Literature and I'm an ex-librarian, so we have A LOT of books. Not as many as we used to have – having a family forces you to make adjustments to your book budget! I'm not fussy about antiquarian stuff, just fun books that are meant to be read, not put away in a display case. As for books I'd like to own? Thousands! I'm rather taken with the lush hardback versions of graphic novels like Y: The Last Man by Brian K Vaughan or Scott Pilgrim by Bryan Lee O'Malley. I have the original paperbacks though so can't justify the prices. Ho-hum. When I'm a millionaire perhaps...

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. Please return the completed interview to:

Karen Argent

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