



The Letterpress Project

Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

An Interview With Janet Bingham

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

I won a school art competition when I was six. (It was the pinnacle of my artistic success!) The prize was a copy of Pookie, by Ivy Wallace. I adored that book. I think I wanted to be both the little rabbit seeking his fortune and Belinda, the girl who mends his broken heart. I still have it.

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

I was very lucky growing up, because we had a huge garden in a village surrounded by countryside, and my mother was a schoolteacher and a nature-lover. She nurtured my love of finding things to write notes and poems about. I also had an inspiring primary school teacher called Miss Wiltshire who encouraged my poetry-writing. Plus I loved reading books, so very early on I thought I'd like to be a grown-up writer. I changed my mind a lot over the years, and ended up becoming an editor instead. When I had my own children, I enjoyed their picture books so much I wanted to try creating them myself.

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

I think it's being able to relate to the main character. I love being pulled into an adventure or other situation with a character I can identify with, flaws and all - whether they're a rabbit or a hobbit or... well, whoever they are.

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

Picture books need to appeal to parents as well as young children, so I'd say I write them for myself, but myself as both a child and an adult. I also ghost-write adventure series for children aged six and

up. For that audience, I consciously aim to give them age-appropriate, page-turning excitement within a reassuring story-arc structure.

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

I love my kindle, especially for reading in bed. But nothing beats browsing physical bookshelves in leisurely search of old favourites to re-read or share with a friend. I'm sure the physical book is here to stay.

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

Well, I hoard them - see Pookie in Q1. I try not to keep them all; it's hard to part with a book I've enjoyed, but there's also a real pleasure in passing it on to someone else. In some parallel universe I must have a first edition of Good Omens by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman, signed and personally dedicated to me by both authors. I wouldn't part with that!