



An Interview with Nick Hornby

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

I just read – anything. My mum took me to the library every week, and I was happiest when I found a book that was part of a long series. I read whatever comics I could get my hands on, too. I think my favourite book was Erich Kastner’s Emil and the Detectives.

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

I think my relationship with the arts, with music, cinema, television and books, was so intense that I couldn’t bear the thought of not trying to make something myself. I knew I’d never be happy in a regular job.

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

If a book finds a readership, however big or small, and that readership, or a percentage of it, loves it. In other words, it must do more than pass the time for somebody.

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

No. I write what I want to write, and hope it lands. It gets easier when you get older, and you know that you’re not writing for yourself. It’s very rarely subject matter that people respond to – it’s tone and storytelling, and there comes a point when you know what you’re doing.

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

I seems unlikely to me that e-books will see off physical books. This isn't to say that I'm sanguine about the future of books, though. I'm worried that we're heading towards a post-literary society. Physical book sales are holding up, but I see no evidence that the next generations have a huge appetite for reading.

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

I have some first editions that mean a lot to me – a Dickens, Anne Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist*, a signed Kurt Vonnegut. I buy nice copies when I see them, but there's no special book. I love the cover designs of the mid-twentieth century. Those are the things I tend to splash out on.

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:

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