



## The Letterpress Project

# An Interview With Catherine Barter

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

I was very lucky to have been taken on frequent trips to the local library when I was a child, and I have lots of very happy memories of choosing big piles of books to check out. I particularly remember falling in love with Judy Blume books, and borrowing the same ones over and over again. *Tiger Eyes* was my favourite - I think I must have read it at least twenty times.

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

I think the inspiration to write for young adults came from the fact that the most meaningful and formative books for me are mostly the ones I read as a teenager - I wanted to recapture that, and write the books my fifteen year old self would have loved. I always loved reading and writing, and making up stories, and I liked the idea of writing a novel but I wasn't sure I ever could. The day I decided to try writing from a teenage perspective, suddenly the words just flowed.

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

Characters! Every time I've fallen in love with a story, it's been because of the characters. Whether it's because I relate to them, root for them or because I get to see the world anew through their eyes, the most successful books for me are always the ones with complex, well-drawn characters.

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

I write broadly for teenagers and young adults, but mostly I just try to write the stories that I know I want to read, and hope that somebody else will, too.

**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 physical book is going anywhere. If it was going to be replaced by the e-book, I think that would have happened already. It didn't take long at all for CDs and cassettes to be made obsolete by digital music, but e-readers have been around for a while now, and physical books are still going strong. I'm a bookseller as well as an author and I see every day how much people value being able to browse a bookshelf and hold a book in their hands

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

I have piles and piles of books but I wouldn't call myself a collector, as such – I think of collectors as people who treat their books with more care, and I write all over mine (in ink!), and fold pages and crease the spines. I'd love to find copies of some of the books I used to have when I was a child, just for the nostalgia, but I'd probably end up giving them away again to make space for more.