



The Letterpress Project

An Interview With David Barker

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

I loved lots of books growing up, but the one that inspired me the most probably is *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* by Douglas Adams. Funny, clever, a nice plot and sharp observation of modern life.

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

I spent most of my professional life crunching numbers in finance, so I wanted to prove I had a creative side and produce something that might make my daughter proud.

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

The perfect blend of plot and character. A main character that the reader cares about with a plot that makes it hard to put the book down. And that plot should be specific to the character – something that couldn't happen to anybody else. Icing on the cake if the book cover is gorgeous and perfectly captures the tone of the story.

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

I write in a wide variety of genres – thrillers, children's adventures and pantomime scripts – so the intended audience is very different for each of these. For my Pax stories, I am aiming at children 9-13 years old. For those at the bottom of that age range, it's an adventure to make them think about how they react when faced with adversity. For the older readers, I hope it also starts them thinking about their place in the wider world.

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 there is a place for both. Electronic books are convenient to carry and store, but I still love to sit down with a physical copy of a book in my hand. I know that highly illustrated fiction is very popular with children right now and I just can't see them enjoying those comics/graphic novels on a screen as much as in physical form.

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

I do have quite a collection of books across SFF, crime, thrillers, children's adventures, fighting fantasy gamebooks, non-fiction such as military history and writing guides. I would love a first edition of *The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien or *Dune* by Frank Herbert.