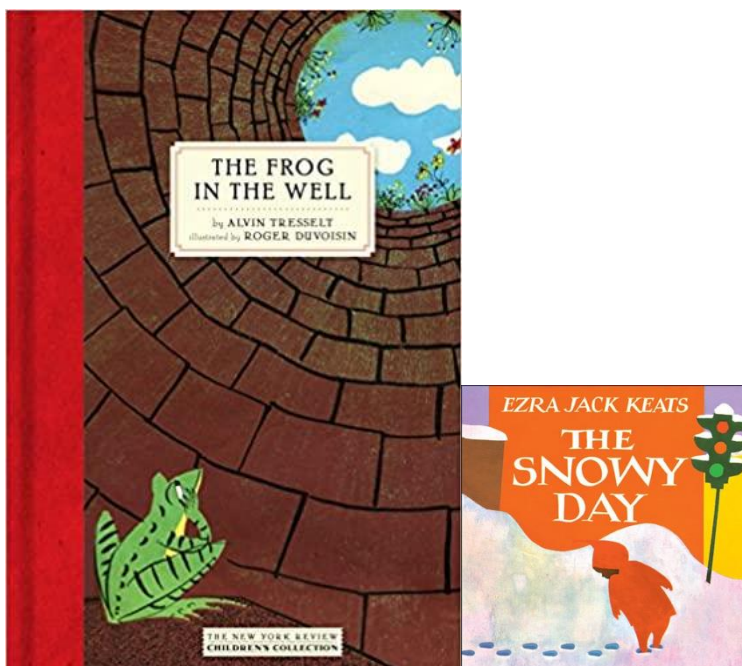


An Interview With Marcus Sedgwick

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

My very first memories of books are of two picture books – The Frog in the Well by Alvin Tresselt and Roger Duvoisin and The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats. Later I fell in love with Susan Cooper’s The Dark Is Rising series, books which I think played a major role in me becoming a reader.



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

I don't think there's much choice in it, for me. I think it truly is a calling and it just took me a while to work out that being a writer was what I needed to do with my life. That need to express oneself, to try to make sense of the connections that form between one's imagination and one's experience of the external world – that isn't something you have much choice over, if any. I am just glad that I managed to work out that I wanted and needed to write, and that I did also managed to do something about it.

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

That's a great question, and one that you could write pages and pages about in response, but to keep it simple, I think a successful book is one that leaves the reader in a slightly different place from where they were before they read it.

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

No, I wrote my books for myself, for versions of myself. This may sound arrogant, but actually, I believe the arrogant thing would be to make the huge assumption that I know what anyone else wants to read. How can I? I think the only way to proceed is to write a book for some version of yourself, and trust and hope, since we are all the same species, that there may be other people out there who like it too!

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

The last time I heard statistics on this it seems that the two forms have found a roughly 50/50 position and I think that makes sense. E-books are very useful, especially for certain situations and certain readers, but the haptics of a real book is always going to be of beauty for book lovers.

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

I am, and as it happens I bought the most precious book in the world to me last year – it's a first (English) edition of *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann, published in 1927 and I am even happier to say signed and numbered by Mann

himself. Not only that, but by chance, the copy I now own is number 77, and anyone who has read the book will know the significance of those 7s...