



**The Letterpress Project**

**Author and Illustrator E-Interviews**

# **An interview with Rebecca Cobb**

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

The first book I learnt to read through repeating it so often was 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. I remember loving this book so much and being fascinated by the troll under the bridge. Some of my other early childhood favourites were: 'A Tale of Two Bad Mice' by Beatrix Potter, I think identified with Hunca Munca losing her temper, 'Angelina Ballerina' by Helen Craig because I wanted to be a ballet dancing mouse and 'The Jolly Postman' by Janet and Allan Ahlberg with it's envelopes full of beautiful letters and postcards to pull out and read.

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

My Mum is very good at drawing and she used to draw a lot with me when I was little. I spent most of my childhood drawing, painting and making little picture books. I also grew up surrounded by books and my parents passed on to me a love of reading. I think being an illustrator is something that I always wanted to do and once I began studying illustration at university and was introduced to the work of so many incredible illustrators, I discovered just how exciting the picture book world really is.

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

For me a successful picture book is one where the words and the pictures work together to create something greater than the sum of its parts. I love books that play with the relationship between words and pictures. How a reader interprets a

gap or contrast between them is a very rich - but invisible - part of a story. I also think that a sign of a successful book is when it stays with you for a long time after you've finished reading it and you can't stop thinking about it.

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

I don't think that I imagine an audience when I am writing and illustrating. Instead, I am concentrating on the characters and trying to imagine what it is like to be them and then get that experience down on paper. When I write, I usually write in the first person and it is usually a child's voice - I am very interested in the way that children view the world in contrast to adults. I hope that the end result will be something that both children and adults will enjoy reading.

**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 that the availability of the electronic book has actually made us appreciate the printed book even more. The world of children's books is currently incredibly exciting and rather than being endangered by other forms of entertainment I think that the picture book is thriving and becoming accessible to more children than ever. I am constantly in awe of the beautiful, funny, clever and informative children's books that are being published and I think that the beauty of the book as a physical object to be treasured is being celebrated. There is something out there for everyone and it is so exciting that children have the opportunity to discover all of these fantastic books for themselves, through places like their schools, local libraries and bookshops. I always knew that children's books were wonderful and valuable and special but seeing how much my daughters love them makes me realise just what a hugely important part of their lives they are.

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

Yes, I buy lots of picture books and always have because I find them very inspiring. There is usually a long list of books that I'd like to own!