



The Letterpress Project

# An Interview With Sandra Van Doorn

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

I come from a very small village in the Alsace, France. My most wonderful – if not my earliest - memory of books is that of a library bus visiting our school once a month. It was like stepping into an enchanted box on wheels! I remember the impatience I felt while queuing, the excitement of stepping in that narrow corridor filled with books - I could choose three to take home. That was always the hardest part, choosing. I had many favourites.

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

When I was a child I used to doodle in my school books. I often got into trouble for it, but I firmly argued it was the way it was supposed to be. So, while I got to be an illustrator in a roundabout kind of way (I studied Business and Marketing first then natural therapies) - I think the desire was always there.

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

It really depends on how we define success. On a monetary level, our readers buying our books make a book successful. But as an illustrator, a successful picture book lies in the quality of its artwork as well as its creative graphic design.

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

Perhaps this is going to sound selfish, but my first audience is myself. I like to feel good when I visit the pages I draw. It's also really important to create a world for our characters, a place engaging enough for readers to pause on each page and stay a little longer. I like the idea of picture books that engage children and adults alike. My way of doing this is to add layers to the text, a story within a story.

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

I wish I could tell for sure! I like to believe there will always be real books, at least when it comes to picture books, because paper truly gives artwork a soul.

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

I buy way too many picture books - mostly based on the artwork. *The Little Prince* from Antoine de Saint Exupéry is my all-time favourite book. I would love the opportunity to illustrate it someday.