



## The Letterpress Project

# An Interview With Aurea Reis

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

Well, I grow up in Portugal, and my parents were still leaving in Angola. I would only see them on the summer holidays and Christmas time. So, to keep my mind busy, I remember my mother one Christmas, giving me a whole compilation of the books 'Uma Aventura' (One Adventurous). And she was so right, I used to read two books in one week.

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

Those adventurous books inspired me to be an author. From when I was 11 years old, I used to say. One day I am going to write a book. But, although I was just reading fiction and adventurous books, I didn't want to write anything similar. I wanted to write something meaningful that would help others. My mother used to say, 'but these books help you to easy your mind and dream far away'... she was right about it, but I wanted something more deep and 'real'. The idea didn't got lost in me but during the years it got forgotten. However, every time I would finish reading a book the same feeling would come back. Twenty-six years later, and after many trials and tribulations, I finally wrote my book. Nevertheless, the book started as a diary while I was having therapy sessions. One day I had a dream, and when I woke up, I knew that the writings that I have been doing in my diary was going to be my book. The rest is history.

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

To be a page turner, the story in the book needs to be relatable and inspirational, if nonfictional; And if fictional, the author needs to really know how to use connotations to create the settings in the reader's mind. In both cases, the writing needs to be clear, engaging, with some emotions and with a plausible story or meaning behind. Like a painting were different people watch it, but the feeling and meaning are according to their perceptions and experiences in life. I feel like a successful book as the same impact. I have read same books in different occasions of my life, and I always come away from them with a different message or idea. That for me is a great book, because every time I read it I 'get' a different message from it.

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

When I started writing my book, I thought that perhaps it was more for an adult audience and mainly women. But when I finished, I realised that it's suitable for teenagers and adults of all backgrounds and genres.

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

There was a time that I thought that the physical books were going to end eventually. For me that was a sad thought, as I am an old schoolgirl and I like to carry my books around. It gives me pleasure to hold my books in my hand and smell them (laughs). So, when my book was to come out, the publisher asked me if I wanted to just have the kindle version or both. I said I wanted both, but the kindle version came out first. Believe it or not, I had many people texting and emailing me, asking me to consider the paperback option too, as they don't like kindle. Also, from my sales report from Amazon, I noticed that the paperback sales from my book are higher by 20% than kindle. This just to say, that although technology is the future. When it comes to reading, I believe that there are still many old school people like me out there that like to hold and keep their books. And it's up to those people to pass that passion to the future generation. I do that with my son, and our conversations has led him to write his own book. So, hopefully he will also be an old soul that likes to keep books around like his mother (laughs)

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

It depends on the book, if there is one that touch me deeply, or that I think I might want to go back to it eventually, then I will keep it. Currently, I am collecting books of fellow authors from my publishing house and I ill keep them as they are all signed. However, there is a book that I would love to own but it hasn't been written yet... and that it my mother's biography. She is a remarkable woman with an extraordinary life story, and I can't wait to have her book on my bookshelf. But bear with me as first I have to convince her to write it or let me be the ghost writer for her biography.