



The Letterpress Project

Author and Illustrator E-Interviews

An Interview With Bren MacDibble

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

B: Oh, I was reading before I could read. I memorised my favourite books and followed people around shouting my books at them until they praised me or told me to go away. I'm not sure how anyone considered that annoying. Once I started school, I actually learned to read for real and by then I had little brothers who would sit and listen. We didn't own many books so every summer all us kids would fight over a massive copy of Dune! The kid who got to read it was the one who could climb a tree the highest with a massive novel stuck in their shorts. I wish I could say it was usually me, but no.

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

B: Mostly the work of other writers. There are so many amazing books that make my heart sing. I'm a creative person so how could I not want to try to be creative in the same way?

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

B: I think if you write a book that has a character so real and so likeable that people forget they're reading a book, and just want to be there with your character, sharing that adventure.

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

B: I write to entertain me, to explore what I want to explore, and apparently that can be interesting to other people. If I pay too much attention to what I imagine an audience wants or what other work is popular in the marketplace, I'm not going to be writing fresh, original work, although I do take the audience into consideration in the edits.

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

B: What I see happening around me now, is young people who read most of their books by borrowing, mostly from libraries, both paper and eBooks (but more often paper), and then they 'collect' the physical books they love in either hardback or paperback and build up bookshelves of just their favourite books. They're quite happy to trade away those books they no longer love, but books to them are like friends. They also talk about them on social media, collect sets, special edition covers, and display their bookshelves. This is their hobby. I think both eBooks and physical books have benefits and have a place in the future alongside each other. I love eBooks because I had a house fire and all my paper books burned and now I live in a bus so I can't have a big bookshelf, but there's nothing more decadent than your own private library, is there?

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

B: I'm an ex-book collector. See Q5. It's a sad topic. I no longer collect anything tangible. I get upset when I can't get books of lesser known authors who only sell in the US or UK. Sometimes it's hard to get books downunder. Even eBooks sometimes only sell in their own countries, leaving me waiting and hoping an Aussie online store will get them in.