



The Letterpress Project

An Interview With Chris Lynch

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

I have vivid memories of being read books like *The Secret Seven*, *The Famous Five*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* by my mum. I think you can see how this shaped my tastes for the mysterious and the fantastic from a young age!

I could pick so many different books as inspirational for me, but I'm going to go for *Iron Man #210*. Originally from 1968, my dad bought me a copy of it as a Marvel UK reprint in the airport while we were waiting for a flight many years ago. I read and reread that comic so many times. There is so much story crammed into such a small number of pages. I didn't know it back then, but I was getting a masterclass in story structure.

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

Writing is a path I've always been on. I've always enjoyed writing and there hasn't been a time since I was in school when I haven't been writing. Since my kids were born writing has taken on an extra meaning for me though. I love writing stories for them - they are the best editors, fact-checkers, and reviewers I've ever had!

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

Writing is a kind of weird magic. I arrange a bunch of symbols on a thin slice of dead tree and when you look at them, pictures and sounds manifest in your head. If I'm really lucky, if I do it just right, then you're going to feel something or think something or maybe even change your mind about something.

What makes a successful book? When that magic works just right, and the people who only used to live in my head start living in your head as well.

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

I write for children, young adults, and adults, so it's important for me to know which age range I'm writing for. I write pretty much the same kind of stuff no matter what age I'm writing for; I'm always doing something strange, and spooky, and mysterious; but I do adjust things depending on the audience. I also love putting little pop culture references and Easter eggs into my stories, so I have to try to remember that not everyone knows who Basil Brush is.

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

People have been saying that print books are dying for as long as I can remember. They never do. In fact, I think it's correct to say that more books are now being printed and sold than ever. There is something special about the printed page; the feel of the book in your hand, the pages between your fingertips. Real books (as I call them) pick up history as they travel with us too. They get dogeared and their spines crack, just like us ageing adults.

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

I certainly have a lot of books. My wife and kids have even more. If our house collapsed tomorrow, we could just live inside the books. We might not even notice that the walls had fallen down until we removed a key load-bearing book!

As for a special book that I'd like to own? There are actually quite a few. I've got a huge comic book collection and I'd love to convert it all into graphic novels or collected editions. (Although I would miss all the retro adverts).