



## The Letterpress Project

# An Interview With Valeria Szucs

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

My earliest memories of books and drawings were done by authors / artists such as A.A. Milne & E. H. Shepard's sketchy ink lines – I vividly remember being addicted to these books, in the library in my home-town reading all these books in the children's section of the library, and when I found Roald Dahl's BFG! It was a great time.

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

I have always loved drawing since I was a child. I remember I was drawing all the time around the house, with my friends, in school – I loved when we had art classes! I have worked in numerous industries and had many hobbies, passions over the years but the one constant thing that has always stuck with me is drawing, it never gets boring and I absolutely love it. For me to be able to work doing something I love is a dream come true.

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

I believe there are a lot of contributing factors to make a book successful, and all parties need to come together in harmony to create this, things such as timing, content, marketing, the illustrations and the list goes on forever, it is definitely not an easy thing! For me, the characters and the timing (such the era) are very important factors in a good story. I quite like late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century themed

books, but I also like fantasy and Agatha Christie crime stories! As an illustrator, my aim is to capture the authors fantastic writing, when the author has done such a great job the drawings almost draw themselves. The illustrations have to work without the story too, like they have their own story!

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

I usually read the book a few times to get a feel for the characters, I also target my drawings towards the age range. For me, in a book such as this one the images being fun is the main thing.

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

I personally think that digital books are great for convenience, but they will never replace the physical book. A real book looks great in the house on a shelf, feels nice to touch and turn the pages. It even has a distinct satisfying smell that gets more pungent with age. A digital book can never replace this, also I feel for night reading looking at a kindle or other screen has a negative effect on my wellbeing.

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

I collect lots of books, all sorts of classics and even cookbooks, many are in my native tongue Hungarian! My dream would be to have a library room one day in the house full of books. Probably my favourite series of books are JK Rowling's Harry Potter, I have them in different editions, illustrated etc. I would love to have a first edition of the Philosopher's Stone, but having seen the incredible value & cost of this edition, it's unlikely to ever happen!