

INTERVIEW WITH JED HENRY

Question:

How did you come to be an illustrator?

Answer:

I got my schooling in animation. There are a lot of children's books illustrators who started in animation. After I won a bunch of awards, I thought it would lead to a job, but it didn't. You have to be a computer programmer and an artist at the same time. The ideal applicant would be a photographer/programmer—somebody who understands the properties of light and computer programming. Luckily, at the time, Will Terry, who illustrates children's books, was teaching a class at UVU, and I cornered him and begged him to let me be in it. Will Terry's the one who really introduced me to picture books.

Question:

One of those awards you won was a student Oscar. What was that like?

Answer:

It was cool. They put me up in a fancy hotel, and there was a ceremony where I was presented with an Oscar. I got to "thank the academy" and everything.

Question:

For your first published book, you illustrated Governor Mike Huckabee's story. Did you ever get to meet him?

Answer:

I never got to meet Mike Huckabee. He did sign eight books for me and sent them to me for free. My Republican sister was thrilled about that. She and all of her friends were super into the Huckabee book.

Question:

Your first two books have been collaborations. How does picture book collaboration work?

Answer:

You work through the publisher, rather than the author, and so really you never have contact with the author. The publisher just sends you the manuscript.

Question:

Your book, *Pick a Pup*, just came out. What's it about?

Answer:

It's about adopting a dog through a shelter. It's in rhyme. A little boy on the way to adopt a dog is wondering what kind of dog he should get. He's passing all the dogs on the street that his neighbors own and he can't decide. When he gets to the shelter, the dog picks him. It's cute and really good for young kids.

Question:

I understand February was a busy month on your blog. Can you tell me what's going on over there?

Answer:

Originally there was an event called NaNoWriMo, which stands for National Novel Writing Month. It's a novel writing marathon—you commit to writing an entire novel in one month. The picture book scene wanted to get in on it, so there have been a couple of people who have started a picture

book marathon where you either write or illustrate the covers for 26 picture books in the month of February. I posted my book ideas on my blog. I view it as an opportunity to invest in the upcoming year, get a bunch of ideas down so I can sift through them later, because, honestly, it took up most of my time that month.

Question:

There are some great book ideas in your picture book marathon. Have your blog readers told you which was their favorite?

Answer:

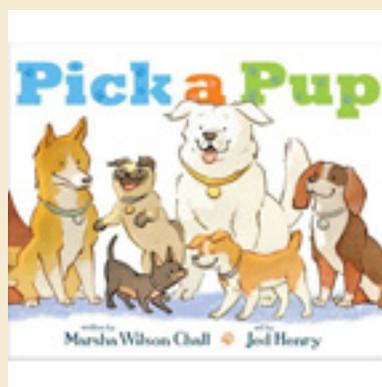
It's interesting because the ones I think people will like, they don't necessarily like. You never know what the public will like. Then again, that has nothing to do with what the editors will like. You can please the people on the blog then be surprised at what the editors end up liking in the end. It's interesting how disconnected public opinion is from New York opinion and back again. And I think the thing that bridges the gap between what people actually want to buy and what editors want to put out is marketing money—the editors telling people what they want to buy.

Check out more at :

<http://jedart.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.picturebookmarathon.org/>

<http://www.nanowrimo.org/>



OREM PUBLIC LIBRARY AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Question:

Besides it's being a place to post picture book marathon ideas, what are the advantages of maintaining a blog?

Answer:

The blog is interesting because every time I've ever gotten a job or an advance in my career is because of that blog. I always preach blog, blog, blog to everyone I meet who is an artist, at least if they want to work in commercial art.

Question:

What's next for you? What projects do you have coming up?

Answer:

I've written and sketched out two books that will be coming out in 2012. *I Speak Dinosaur* is about a boy who terrorizes his home and neighborhood with his knowledge of the dinosaur language. *Cheer Up, Mouse* is about poor Mouse who is feeling down in the dumps, but all his friends have different opinions on how to pick him back up again. I'm also working on a junior fiction book with author Lauren Myracle.

Question:

How has illustrating your own writing been different from your experience with collaborations?

Answer:

It's interesting because I've actually been paid less for the ones I did double the work on. I say, "double," but writing and illustrating is actually exponentially more work, rather than just double. It's probably four times the work because you're juggling all these things in the air at once. I was surprised because the contracts on those were so low in pay compared to just illustration.

Question:

One last question. What do you like about the Orem Library?

Answer:

I love that statue of the little kid reading. I also love the media collection. Any time I want to watch an old movie, I go there because I know you'll have it.



Jed Henry writes and illustrates children's books. He has worked with many publishers including Simon and Schuster, Penguin, and Harper Collins.