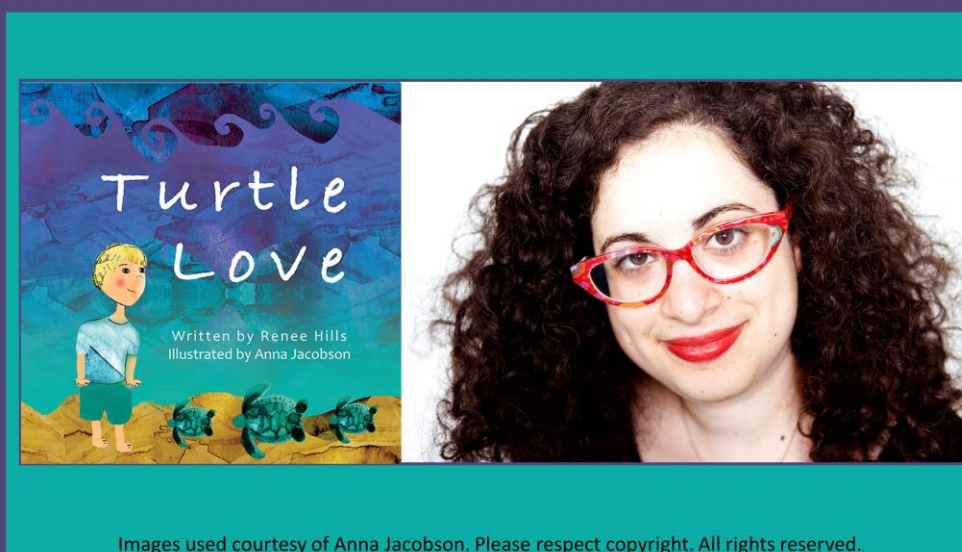




Illustrator Spotlight – Anna Jacobson



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Illustrator: **Anna Jacobson**

When did you know you wanted to illustrate picture books?

When I was a little kid, my Mum would put a stack of picture books at the end of my cot for when I woke up early in the morning and I would look at them for hours. Even then, I knew I wanted to create something like that one day.

Do you have a special place for working on your illustrations?

I create the ink textures outside but spend most of my time at the computer building up layers of imagery. It doesn't feel like I'm at the computer though, as I lose myself in the world of the image. I am so fortunate to have my own study and desk with a window that looks over the trees.

What time of day do you most enjoy illustrating?

Sometimes I wake up and begin straight away, have a break, then power on until the afternoon. I'm not a night owl but if I'm working on an image and want to finish it as best I can, and it's telling me to keep working it out, sometimes I work into the night. Other times, if I leave the illustration overnight, when I come back the next day I can see what's working and what's not working right away and fix it.

What things do you most like to draw?

I like drawing objects, plants and animals. I find people quite difficult to draw, which was why *Turtle Love* was such a great challenge as it had many different characters in it.

What did you think of Renee Hill’s story *Turtle Love* when you first read it, and why did you decide to illustrate it?

I met Renee in a memoir writing workshop and when she mentioned she had written a children’s book and was looking for an illustrator, I said I’d love to illustrate it. When I read *Turtle Love*, I thought it was an important story about animals and the environment.

What did you most want to show through your illustrations?

I wanted my illustrations to be bright and colourful, to help bring the story to life and spark children’s imaginations.

What media did you use to create the illustrations, and why?

I used a mixture of ink, which I then scanned, along with other textures, like felt, stitching and fabrics. I used Photoshop to colour my illustrations and create digital collage. I love layering imagery as it allows me to move characters and objects around until I am happy with the composition.

How much did you need to collaborate with each other in making *Turtle Love*?

Renee told me the story behind *Turtle Love* and sent me photographs of the special rocks that appear in the story. This helped in my artistic interpretation of the landscape. I would then create the image and send it to Renee. She would tell me if there was something she wanted me to change and I would send back another version until she was happy with the final result.

Anna, do you have any advice for teachers when responding to children’s artwork?

Encourage children’s creativity! Do not worry about a child ‘staying within the lines’. When I was in grade one, I got in trouble from the teacher aide for drawing multi-coloured fireworks. She told me there was no such thing. My advice for teachers is to let children’s imaginations be as wild as they like.

Do you have any advice for children when creating artworks?

Do not worry if you make mistakes! Turn it into a challenge to make your artwork even better.

What is your favourite picture book?

My favourite picture book from childhood is *The Tiger Who Came To Tea* by Judith Kerr. A recent picture book I discovered, that I also love, is *We Found a Hat* by Jon Klassen.

Who is your favourite author or illustrator? What do you like about his or her work?

My favourite illustrator is Brian Wildsmith. My Mum still has her copy of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *A Children’s Garden of Verses* illustrated by Brian Wildsmith. The colours and stunning imagery inspire me.