
ILLUSTRATOR SPOTLIGHT



Anca Sandu on *Lana Lynn Howls at the Moon*

Lana Lynn is an intrepid sheep. The other members of her flock are content to nibble grass in the pasture, sip water from the pond, and nap in the meadow. But not Lana Lynn. She wants...adventure! So one night, when the moon is high and the other sheep are asleep, she finds a disguise and dashes into the wild woods to see what life is like as a wolf. It's fun to run through the wild woods, stay up very late, and howl at the Moon—but is life with the wolf pack everything it seems?

Q: *How did you imagine Lana Lynn when you first read her story? Did your illustrations change as you became more acquainted with the characters?*

A: I always start developing the characters by drawing them realistically, and as I get more acquainted with them, I start to extricate certain features that speak to me the most, and develop the actual whimsical character. I imagined Lana as cute and fluffy as any other sheep. Her eyes, however, revealed her intrepid spirit and her desire for adventure.

Q: *What medium did you use to create these illustrations? Is your illustration process usually the same for every book, or do you change your process depending on the story?*

A: I drew everything by hand, then scanned the sketches and translated them into digital illustrations.

Every story is different, and it deserves a different process/medium.

Q: *Your bio says you often drew while spending time with your grandmother's sheep in the Romanian countryside. Did they inspire your interpretation of Lana Lynn?*

A: Absolutely! I spent countless hours drawing them, or just trying to imagine stories for each of them. (It was in front of said sheep that I proclaimed to my grandmother's neighbors that I was going to grow up and make books.) It was such a pleasant surprise to receive a manuscript that spoke to my childhood.

Q: *What did you enjoy most about working on this picture book? Do you have a favorite spread?*

A: I loved trying a new medium. This is my first entirely digital book. I tried to keep it minimal and let the story flow. It was an interesting experiment. I love the opening scene most: what is a sheep doing in a tree! The contrast between the ridiculous sheep and the bored ones that are doing normal sheep stuff makes me laugh every time.

Q: *Do you identify more with Lana Lynn or Shawn?*

A: Definitely Lana Lynn! She is dissatisfied with being "just a sheep" and looks for more. Eventually she realizes who she is, and manages to find a balance between adventure and routine, and embraces her identity and her limitations.

Q: *You dedicated this book to a person whose sense of adventure inspires you. How do you think Lana Lynn will inspire young readers to embrace their own adventurous sides?*

A: I hope it will give them courage to try new things, but also give them confidence in their identity, in their limits, and help them not perceive embracing these limits as a failure. I am afraid that people are more and more focusing on the things that they could be doing, instead of finding joy in who they are and what their daily life is made of.

Q: *How do you feel illustrations further the importance of a story?*

A: I think illustrations should complement a story. I love integrating details and storylines that are not mentioned in the text.

Q: *Did you always know you wanted to be an artist? How did you get into the world of children's book illustration?*

A: My grandmother saw that I was very passionate about drawing perfect circles when I was a toddler, so she encouraged me to draw every summer I spent at her house. Eventually she accepted her role in me not becoming a doctor, as she had hoped...

I cannot recall a certain time when I decided to be an artist. It was something me and everyone in my family accepted as my path.

Later I was drawn to children's books in particular after illustrating a few poems for a couple of Romanian authors. Later I discovered the MA program that launched me into this fantastic world.

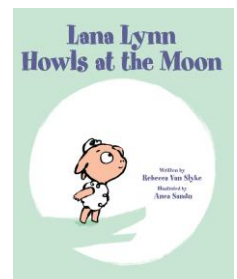
Q: *What's next for you?*

A: I am currently illustrating a couple of other stories, and working on a few stories of my own. I had taken a break from books for a while, so I am really excited to be back working with amazing people, and telling amazing stories.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anca Sandu was born in Romania and studied children's illustration at Anglia Ruskin University, in Cambridge, England. She works as a freelance designer, and *Churchill's Tale of Tails* was her first picture book. She lives in Oregon.

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HC: 978-1-68263-050-1