AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Marjoke Henrichs
on No! Said Rabbit

ABOUT THE BOOK
Rabbit is happy doing his own thing, and he doesn’t want to listen to anyone else. Or so he thinks. Then, Mom makes a suggestion he simply can’t resist!

Debut author-illustrator Marjoke Henrichs delivers a laugh-out-loud tale with Rabbit embodying every strong-willed child. Adult readers will recognize and empathize with parenting moments throughout, and a warm and loving twist at the end celebrates the joy of coming together again after a very contrary day.

Q: This is your debut picture book. What inspired you to write No! Said Rabbit and depict the relatable toddler stubbornness with which so many parents and adult readers can empathize?

A: I was inspired by my own children when they were little, and by my time observing and drawing at a Montessori nursery.

Q: What led you to study children’s book illustration? Did you always want to be a children’s book author and illustrator?

A: I worked as a theatre designer for years, which is basically creating visual stories, and therefore is similar to making picture books, except that in theatre everything is life-size.

It was not surprising that I got interested in picture books when my children were little, and I hoped to write and illustrate one myself one day. A few years ago, I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to get an MA in Children’s Book Illustration at Cambridge School of Art.

Q: What do you like most about writing and illustrating for children?

A: I love drawing pictures and dreaming stories. I also like that I might be able to bring more smiles and love to the world with those pictures and stories.

Q: Which comes first for you, the character or the story? Does your creative process change with each project?

A: The theme came first with No! Said Rabbit—opposites. Then the character, initially being a lion, who changed into Rabbit once I started drawing many different situations. Only then did the story emerge.

At the moment my creative process is pretty much the same, but I also love to experiment.

Q: What does a day in your life look like? Do you prefer to stick to a schedule, or do you like every day to be unpredictable?

A: I always wake up early to walk my dog Bella, who is a 13-year-old Springer Spaniel. Then I have breakfast and check my mail. Afterwards I make coffee and sit at my desk to decide what I will do during the day. Some days I have so much to do and work well into the evening, and other days I go to my painting studio to work on my fine art. At the moment I am finishing the second book about Rabbit.

Q: Is there any part of your daily routine you wish you could skip like Rabbit?

A: I was inspired by my own children when they were little, and by my time observing and drawing at a Montessori nursery.
A: Ha ha, I would like to skip washing the dishes!

Q: Where do you go to work on your projects? Do you have any tricks or rituals to get into a creative mood?

A: I work at home and my desk is in the living/dining room. I don’t have any tricks or rituals except that I like a good cup of coffee!

Q: What was your favorite spread to write and illustrate? Why?

A: My favorite spread is when Rabbit is in the bath, having so much fun! The feet of the bath were inspired by the bath of a good friend who lives in France.

Q: Who, or what, is your artistic inspiration?

A: I get inspired by watching people and children interact, also my immediate environment, and I always get ideas while out walking the dog.

Q: If you could go back in time, what advice would you give to your younger self as an aspiring author?

A: Everything you learn on your way, even if you think it’s totally unrelated, comes in very useful later. You will only see it in hindsight. Keep your vision for a very positive future.

Q: What do you hope young readers and their families learn from No! Said Rabbit?

A: That you are always loved whoever you are, and to be patient, kind, understanding, and loving.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marjoke Henrichs is a theater designer and a debut author-illustrator. She received her MA in Children’s Book Illustration at the Cambridge School of Art, Anglia Ruskin University. Originally from the Netherlands, she lives in the UK.