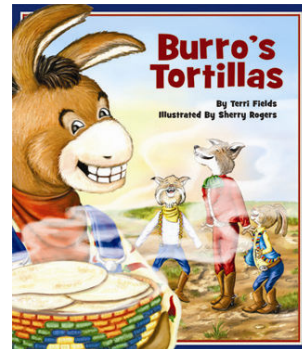
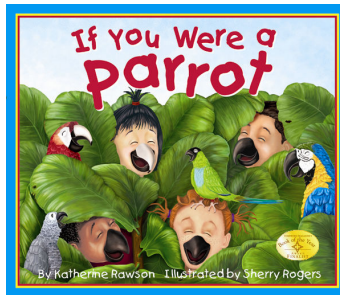
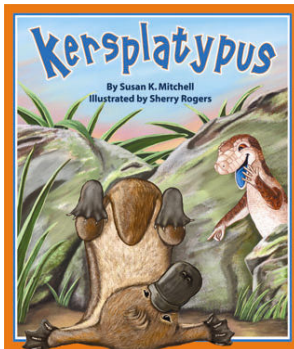


A Conversation with Sherry Rogers, illustrator of Kersplatypus, If You Were a Parrot and Burro's Tortillas!



When did you decide you wanted to be an illustrator?

I had always loved to draw, paint and be creative in some way or another. It wasn't until I was thirty-two years old and my children were two and seven that I decided to go to college for graphic design/graphic art. Before having my children, I'd had a career for 12 years as part of the management team at US Bank in Oregon. After having my children, I chose to stay home with them, but knew that I eventually would go back to work outside the home and thus, the decision to change careers and go to college. Going back to college at thirty-two worked out perfect for me, because I was able to clearly see that art was where my interests had always been. College was a pleasure, and the homework was not a problem, because after the core classes were done, I got to have creative classes like painting, drawing, color study, etc.

Where does your inspiration come from?

My inspiration comes from many sources. I get inspired by looking at other artists' work—finding what things I do and don't like. That studying has helped me define my current style. A lot of what I draw as far as children, comes from watching my kids when they were small and many times I think the children in my books look a lot like my kids did when they were small. Since my kids are grown now, I watch other small children when I am out in public to inspire me. I love watching kids. They are such a gift and their personalities and features vary so much.

I have two dogs and two cats, and a lot of the personality traits for animals I draw come from watching their expressions and movements. I love animals. I would have tons of animals if my husband would let me. He's a great guy, don't get me wrong; he's just not into having a farm.



Explain your favorite illustration technique/media.

I started my art career as a technical illustrator/graphic designer, so professionally I have chosen to be a digital illustrator. Photoshop is my program of choice, although I do know Adobe Illustrator. It's very powerful program, but I really like the results I get from Photoshop much better. I do paint in acrylics, but only leisurely, and I don't find much time for leisure painting. Both mediums have wonderful things about them. Digital is easy clean up. In fact, it

has virtually no clean up! Acrylics has the wonderful brush to canvas feel that digital just can't give you. Maybe someday that will change.

What's your favorite/least favorite part of being an illustrator?

My favorite part of being an illustrator for kids is knowing who my audience is and knowing that my art may inspire them and make them happy and laugh. I also love holding the finished illustrations in my hands and knowing what a huge process it was to get to that point and knowing that I gave it 110%. People who don't create art have no idea what a struggle it is for an artist to create. We truly enjoy it and quite frankly couldn't live our lives without it, but man, it really takes a lot from us at the same time.

My least favorite part of illustrating is finding time to fit it in. There is a certain amount of time it takes to actually focus in and create an illustration. It would be nice to be able to sit down and just draw without thinking and have wonderful things come out. And sometimes I can do that, and I love it. But a lot of times I have to just sit and look at the blank page for a while, so the characters can show themselves to me. That may sound weird, but I really do start to see them on the white blank page. It's almost like they are there on the paper but so light and faded no one else can see them but me. And it's my job to darken them up so others can see and enjoy them. That may sound weird, but that is really how it works for me.

At least as a mature artist I know that in the end the characters and story will come. They will be creative and fun. When I first started illustrating I wasn't sure of myself so there was the fear of failing. Now that I have illustrated six books and am working on the seventh, I know I have it in me to do it. My confidence level is much better, and I feel that helps me be more creative and confident in my work. Since I work from home and my family and friends are so important to me, they come first. Often times I find myself working at 2am and cramming to get the project done, because I have let my personal life take precedence, which is definitely by choice.

What are the most frequently asked questions you get as an illustrator?

Your job must be fun?

Do you make a lot of money illustrating?

What has been the most rewarding aspect of illustrating children's books?

Hmm...I guess it has to be how much I have grown as an artist. I look back at *If You Were a Parrot*, which was my first book with Sylvan Dell, and even though I am terribly proud of it, I can definitely see how much better an artist I am now that I have finished *Paws, Claws, Hands and Feet* for Sylvan.

The process of illustrating a picture book is still huge, but I know the process now, so I can concentrate more on characters and creating another world for children to explore rather than what the next technical step actually is.

Want to continue this conversation? Schedule an interview!

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