

Q&A with Steven Butler

Q. Describe your book in about 15 words.

A. It's a funny romp at the bottom of the ocean with many scary plot-twists!

Q. How do you get the ideas for your books?

A. I get ideas from all over the place. A lot of it I make up, while other plots and characters are based on things that have happened to me, or people I've met.

Q. Why did you want to write this book?

A. I love telling stories and I really enjoy writing about the hotel and all the wild characters living there.

Q. What is your favourite children's book? Both right now and when you were a child. Why?

A. When I was a little boy, I loved Dinner With Fox by Stephen Wyllie and Korky Paul. It's hilarious and monstrous in equal measure and I read it all the time. I often fall in love with the book I'm reading right this moment, and I'm currently enjoying Rumblestar by Abi Elphinstone very much, so that's my favourite just now.

Q. Why are books important to you?

A. Because each and every book is the start of a completely new adventure. The more you read, the more exciting your life will be...

Q. Are there any key influences on your work/the book?

A. I was definitely influenced by the anarchic humour of authors I loved to read when I was young. Roald Dahl, Robin Jarvis and Jeremy Strong all had a deliciously wicked streak running through their stories, and it most certainly fine-tuned my brain to write mischievous characters.

Q. Was the process of making a book as you expected? Were there any surprises?

A. The whole act of writing is one big surprise. When I start a new book, I have no idea where it's going to end up and who we're going to meet along the way. It's also very surprising the first time you see the illustrations, as they often teach you things about your own characters that you didn't even realize.

Q. What do you hope young readers take from the book?

A. I hope my books fill readers with a sense of adventure and excitement. I like characters who are misfits and unpredictable, and I hope people see themselves in some of mine and it makes them smile, or, laugh, or cry, or write their own stories, or build a hotel for magical creatures...