



# A Q&A INTERVIEW WITH VICTORIA CASSANELL

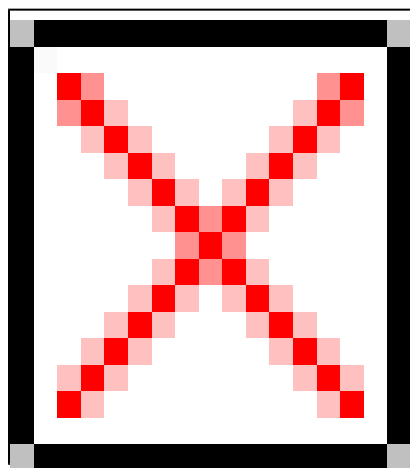
Article Author:

[Victoria Cassanell](#) [1]

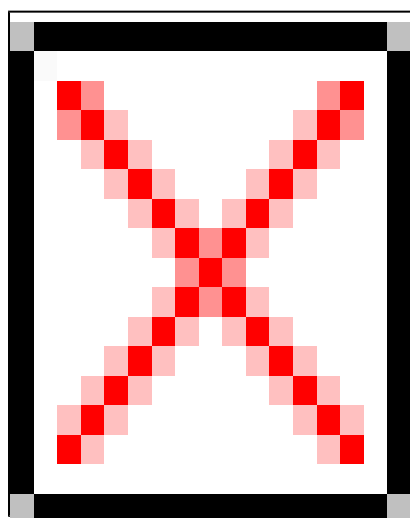
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Byline:

**Victoria Cassanell** introduces her debut picture book **The Gizzly Itch**



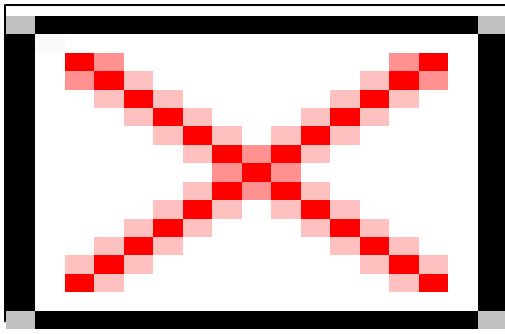
Victoria Cassanell graduated with a degree in Illustration from the Hull School of Art and Design. For her final project, Victoria created a picture book which led her to embark on a Children's Book Illustration MA at the **Cambridge School of Art**. Victoria loves drawing characters then creating stories and settings around them. **The Grizzly Itch** is her debut picture book and already a favourite at **Books for Keeps**. She answered our questions on the book.



Can you describe [The Grizzly Itch](#) [3] for us and tell us about the inspiration?

**The Grizzly Itch** is a story about a Bear and Beaver who form a friendship through solving a problem. My main inspiration for the book is the natural world. Whilst I was growing up my Grandparents lived in the Lake District. I spent a lot of time there and always enjoyed drawing the scenery. I wanted to create a story set in a beautiful place and bears make great characters.

Can you tell us about the illustration techniques you used?



I created the illustrations using mainly watercolour paint and ink, with a touch of pencils and pastels. I create the elements of the illustration separately, then layer them up in Photoshop.

### **What is your favourite spread in the book and why?**

My favourite spread is probably the last one (Bear and Beaver sitting next to one another under a sky full of stars). It was my favourite to illustrate and the one I'm most happy with. I always enjoy creating double page spreads, particularly scenic ones. This spread was fun to illustrate as it a different time of day and atmosphere to the rest of the book. I was happy with how it came together and I like the way it depicts Bear and Beaver's new friendship.

### **What do you regard as a perfect picture book and why?**

I don't think I could pick just one perfect picture book. I love anything by Catherine Rayner, her illustrations are so beautiful. Jon Klassen's books are genius, **I Want My Hat Back** is so funny. **You're Called What?** by Kes Gray and Nikki Dyson is simply hilarious. Steve Anthony's **Mr Panda** series teach great morals in a subtle way. I also love Ciara Flood's **Those Pesky Rabbits**, the subplot and detail in the illustrations mean there is something new to see each time you read it. There are so many amazing picture books, it's impossible to pick just one!

### **What is the best piece of advice you've ever been given about creating picture books?**

The best advice I've been given is not to have the text doing all of the storytelling, let the images do some of the talking too. The text and illustrations work together, you need both to tell the full story, and to make it engaging for the reader.

### **Are you working on a new picture book at the moment?**

I'm working on book two with Macmillan. This one will hopefully be out next year and this time features a different type of bear!

**[The Grizzly Itch](#)** [3] is published by Macmillan Children's Books, 978-1529013573, £6.99 pbk

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