



**Mélanie Watt**

## **TeachingBooks Original Movie Transcript**

**Mélanie Watt, interviewed in her studio in Laval, Québec on September 27, 2010.**

**This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.**

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Every book that I work on starts with an idea, concept, or topic—something that I want to explore. And so I have to pick an animal that kind of works with that message. In every book, I try to merge the best way to communicate a message with a character and with the look.

### **On Illustrating *Scaredy Squirrel***

*Scaredy Squirrel* has a specific design style. It's very flat and it looks kind of cut out.

This is Kiwi, my parrot. Sometimes when I work in my studio, he stays with me and hangs out.

I use charcoal pencil, and I apply the color on the computer. The computer plays a big part in my work. I draw on paper, and then I scan it, and it appears here on my computer. I just kind of create a shape like this. And I can add a color like this. The colors have these rough edges and they never touch the black outlines.

*Scaredy Squirrel* is about a squirrel that is afraid of pretty much everything. Here we have the green Martians, the killer bees, tarantulas, poison ivy, germs, and sharks. He can only discover he's a flying squirrel by leaping out into the unknown.

Every kid has fears. The message behind this book is that if you don't take risks, you don't know what you're capable of.

### **On Designing Picture Books**

I like to control my environment, control the picture book, decide the colors, what type of text, and create a universe that is really just for that character

When I start a *Scaredy Squirrel* book, I look for graphic ideas: schedules, exit plans, lists. Here is when *Scaredy* puts on his emergency kit.

Chester doesn't agree with what I'm writing. And Chester just interacts with me, the writer. He has a better idea of how to make a book than I do. And he constantly interferes, because he has a huge ego. He doesn't want the book to be about a mouse, he wants it to be about a cat—himself.

Augustine is a penguin that moves and has to make new friends in a new school. She uses art to express her feelings as the book goes.

*You're Finally Here* is a story about a rabbit that is really happy to see you but in a way is kind of upset because you didn't show up earlier.

### **On Becoming an Illustrator**

I was born in Trois-Rivieres, Québec in Canada. French is my first language. I learned to speak English when I was 8. I loved to draw. I moved a lot a kid and that was always a way to break the ice—to draw for other kids in my class.

One of my favorite childhood memories is to dress up. I used to dress up my cat, too. So, of course, you see the parallel between that and how I dress up Chester at the end of every book.

What I'd like for kids to take away from my books is that it inspires them to be creative. It's always fun to hear from kids and how it inspires them to make their own drawings and create their own stories.

"It's my pencil."

### **Books by Mélanie Watt**

- SCAREDY SQUIRREL HAS A BIRTHDAY PARTY, Kids Can Press, 2011
- YOU'RE FINALLY HERE!, Hyperion Press, 2011
- CHESTER'S MASTERPIECE, Kids Can Press, 2010
- CHESTER, Kids Can Press, 2009
- HAVE I GOT A BOOK FOR YOU!, Kids Can Press, 2009
- SCAREDY SQUIRREL AT NIGHT, Kids Can Press, 2009
- AUGUSTINE, Kids Can Press, 2008
- CHESTER'S BACK!, Kids Can Press, 2008
- SCAREDY SQUIRREL AT THE BEACH, Kids Can Press, 2008
- CHESTER'S THE BEST, Kids Can Press, 2007
- SCAREDY SQUIRREL MAKES A FRIEND, Kids Can Press, 2007
- AUGUSTINE, Kids Can Press, 2006
- SCAREDY SQUIRREL, Kids Can Press, 2006
- ALPHABET, Kids Can Press, 2005
- BEARCUB AND MAMA (written by Sharon Jennings), Kids Can Press, 2005
- COLORS, Kids Can Press, 2005
- NUMBERS, Kids Can Press, 2005
- OPPOSITES, Kids Can Press, 2005
- SHAPES, Kids Can Press, 2005
- LEON THE CHAMELEON, Kids Can Press, 2001

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