



To Books for Keeps From Jane Walmsley

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A traditional message in a novel form from **Jane Walmsley**.

A talented young designer and illustrator invites you to share her pleasure in making miniature books.

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In 1973 Jane Walmsley was in the final year of a course in textile and theatre design at the Central School. At a party, thrown by her Polish tutor, she met Jan Pienkowski who by one of those lucky accidents happened to be looking for people to work with him. Six months later Jane, thinking she was going to be one of several, found she was the *only* assistant.

Being assistant to Pienkowski is, Jane says, something of a wide brief. The job entails most things from providing cups of tea and smoothing the appointments path, to coping with crises and being thoroughly involved in the whole creative process which a man like Pienkowski generates through, it seems, most of the waking hours. She started by being allowed to fill in the black bits in some of the early Meg and Mog books and slowly over two years became Jan Pienkowski's right-hand lady.

One of the things that Jane has become especially noted for in the book world is the superb hand-lettering which is so often a feature of Pienkowski-designed books. She doesn't know quite how it came about, but somehow Pienkowski had got it firmly fixed in his head that hand -lettering was one of Jane's specialities - 'Actually I did lettering very badly, but managed to disguise this by lots of decoration.' The first project she was asked to do was a 'fearfully complicated' Festival poster and for six weeks with Pienkowski standing over her she grappled to imitate many different kinds of type-faces. At the end of this, even she admits, she'd become a fair copier. From this Jane went on to do lots of 'illuminated stuff - Gallery Five Christmas cards, carol cards and so on. The next big project was the lettering of **The Fairy Tale Library** (Heinemann) which occupied the whole of 1976. Each of these little books is about 2,000 words long and by the time Jane had finished she'd hand-lettered in beautiful script well over 12,000 individual words. She agreed that by then she'd become very good at it. She went on to work with Pienkowski on a variety of Meg and Mogs. friezes, the concept books and the Joan Aiken **Tales of a One Way Street**.

One of the books she's most proud to be associated with is **Ghosts and Bogies**, (a collection of stories by Dinah Starkey). If you haven't come across this book it's a must next time you go to your local bookshop. Jane said that when it was published everybody complained that it had been printed on toilet paper (the kind of thing you get on Italian camp sites) when in fact she and Jan had gone to extraordinary lengths to obtain the thick recycled, creamy coloured paper, which they felt was just right for this excitingly designed and illustrated book.

For **Haunted House** Jane did a 'bit of everything' - helping to work out some of the concepts, doing some of the drawings, colouring in and taking part in the creative arguments which inevitably are part and parcel of that kind of enterprise. The book was started in 1978 and was twelve months in the making. No-one who worked on it had any idea that pop-ups were going to be such big business or that Pienkowski's book would lead the field.

In 1980 Pienkowski, with Jane's help, started **Robot**. Nearly two years later it has just reached the shops with its shiny metallic cover and its even more staggeringly inventive mechanics.

Since **Robot** Jane has been freelance and works with Jan only one or two days a week. One of the first books she tackled on her own was **Ghosts and Shadows** by Dorothy Edwards (Lutterworth). She was quietly delighted to see it selected for Children's Books of the Year. Her most original and individual venture so far is to become her own publisher of miniature books.

She began playing around with miniatures about four years ago, making blank books for dolls' houses, which she sold to toy shops. It was a natural development from this to go on to illustrating and lettering these exquisite little books.

She draws each page twice-up (twice the size of the finished book). These pages are printed on to sheets and then reduced. All the colour work is hand-done with felt tip pens. The pages are cut out by Jane with a scalpel, collated and then stapled together. The covers, which are just like those on hardback books, on a tiny scale, are made separately.

Jane is fascinated by miniature things and finds hand-colouring the tiny illustrations very relaxing. She has sold her books to about a dozen shops, mostly in London, but she is wary of going into large-scale production. 'I wouldn't want to do it if I didn't enjoy it, and *having* to make books would rob it of the pleasure.'

To give you a taste of that pleasure Jane has designed a **Happy Christmas** book for you to make. It is a **Books for Keeps** original. Another way to share the pleasure is to take advantage of our special offer and get some of Jane's hand-made originals for your family and friends. But take our tip. If you are buying them for presents, make sure you get one for yourself. You won't be able to bear to give them all away.

To make your `Happy Christmas' book

1. Cutout the letters across the top of these pages and join tab 'A' to 'B' to make a continuous strip.
2. Colour the letters if you wish.
3. Fold the pages concertina-style and stick them together as shown here.

_ Glue back to back as arrowed cut???

4. Staple the pages into book form.
5. You can make a cover from two pieces of card covered in scraps of wrapping paper. Stick it to the 'To' and 'From' endpapers with double-sided sellotape or glue,

Jane Walmsley has given permission for readers of **Books for Keeps** to reproduce her original design if they wish to make more copies of the books with children.

Books for Keeps Special Offer

Jane Walmsley's Miniature Books

As you can see from our photograph, these really are tiny books which make superb little gifts for everyone: wives, husbands, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends - even children!

There are four titles to choose from, either in black and white or hand-coloured:

1. An Alphabet of Creatures From Alligator to Zebra

2. Nursery Rhymes All the favourites

3. A Birthday Book The book spells 'Happy Birthday'. Each letter beautifully illuminated.

4. Wild Flowers Snowdrops, daisies, buttercups, violets, etc.

Black and white - 80p each (inc. p & p)

Hand-coloured - £1.50 each (inc. p & p)

Because these exquisite miniature books are hand-made, our supply is obviously limited. Place your order *now* by completing the order form below or simply telephone your order to us direct (01-852 4953).

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