



REEVE & MCINTYRE ON THE LEGEND OF KEVIN

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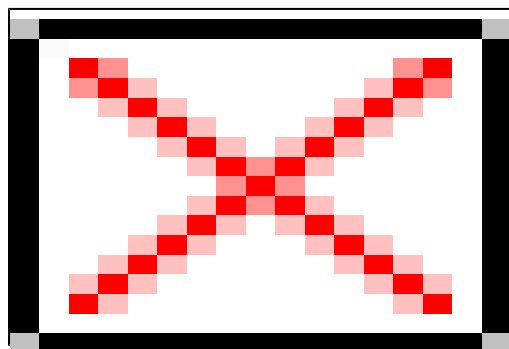
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Collaboration and inspiration by **Reeve and McIntyre**

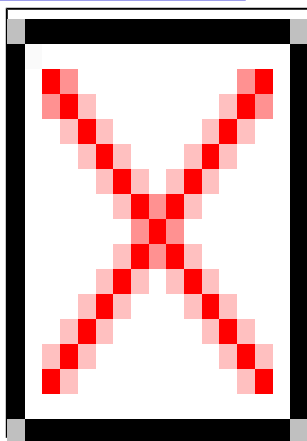
Sarah McIntyre and Philip Reeve answer our questions on their new collaboration, [The Legend of Kevin](#) [4].



You have a wonderfully productive and creative partnership and clearly really enjoy creating books together. Can you describe the process, from ideas stage to the actual writing and illustrating - letting us know what happens when, where and how?

M: Often when we start, Philip will ask me, 'What would you like to draw?' Sometimes he loves to challenge me with something he hasn't seen me draw before, such as the spaceships in **Cakes in Space**.

R: For [The Legend of Kevin](#) [4], Sarah was inspired by a little painting on driftwood of a fat flying horse that I'd done



years ago. She saw it at my house and started drawing her own version, and we invented a story around him. We discussed what would happen together, then I went back to my house on Dartmoor and wrote it. When we had a whole story, Sarah got to work on the illustrations.

M: Actually, Philip helped me with the pencil roughs. While he was in London, he came to my studio, sat at my big desk with me and we went through all the pictures in the book. The final look of the illustration is mine, but you'll see

little bits of Reeve style coming through sometimes.

What do you think is the best thing about your partnership?

M: When I make picture books, very often I work alone, or work with a writer but only meet them after the book is finished, sometimes years later. It's so much more fun coming up with ideas together, with a friend.

R: And doing stage events to promote the book, it's so much easier when there's someone else to riff off of, or pick up the slack if I go suddenly blank on stage!

Do you think working together has changed your solo work? If so how? What have you learned from each other?

M: I dedicated my [Dinosaur Firefighters](#) [5] picture book to Philip because he was such a big help in making it. We thought up the plot line together while we were on tour, and I often showed him work in progress artwork.

R: I never used to show work in progress to anybody, until it was pretty much finished. But nowadays, I show Sarah whatever I'm working on. So she got to read all the [Railhead](#) [6] trilogy as I wrote it. Her advice was very helpful! She's a good audience.

M: That was brilliant! Once I had a terrible fever, for several days, and couldn't do any work at all. Philip read me his draft of [Railhead](#) [7] over Skype while I sat all wrapped up on the sofa, and made edits as he went.

Do you ever argue? If so what's it likely to be about?

R: No.

M: Constantly.

R: No, we don't.

M: Yes, we do.

R: No, we don't.

M: YES, WE DO!

R: GET OUT!

Sarah exits. Pause. Phone rings.

M [on telephone]: DO DO DO DO DO DO DO NO RETURNS!

Would you recommend collaborations like yours to other authors? If so, what advice would you give them?

R: I'd strongly recommend it but only if you can find someone who's prepared to give and take a lot. It's not about your own ego or your own individual vision. It's like being in a band rather than being a solo artist.

M: You can't be a diva all by yourself, you have to learn how to be divas together.

[The Legend of Kevin](#) [4] is published by Oxford Children's Books, 9780192766083, £8.99 hbk

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