

Matt Ottley Masterclass

(Notes by Kathryn Apel)

Talent is not born in you – but develops out of a passion.

Don't write a best seller – write what you love.

Knew he was talented as an artist, but wasn't certain of his writing ability.

Home and Away (with John Marsden)

Picture books are becoming cheaper to print. The idea of a picture book being more than 32 pages is not so ludicrously expensive. Picture books for Young Adults and Adults are more feasible/viable.

Child drawings done with left hand. (Child psychologist – get kids to draw)

Plans storyboard and works closely with author.

Often the simplest things are the best.

Picture books are not always easy to read. (Sometimes the text in 'Home and Away' isn't easy to read. So readers may not always get the full story first time.)

Adamant in sticking to his intent with illustrations. Marketing Departments have tried to tame down some darker images but he goes into bat – even through mediation, to argue for his intent.

Me and My Dad

Perspective and viewpoint – and how viewpoint enhances the subject. Subtext in illustrations is important.

Images and words work together to tell the whole story.

Tautology (??) – when the illustration doesn't add anything to the story.

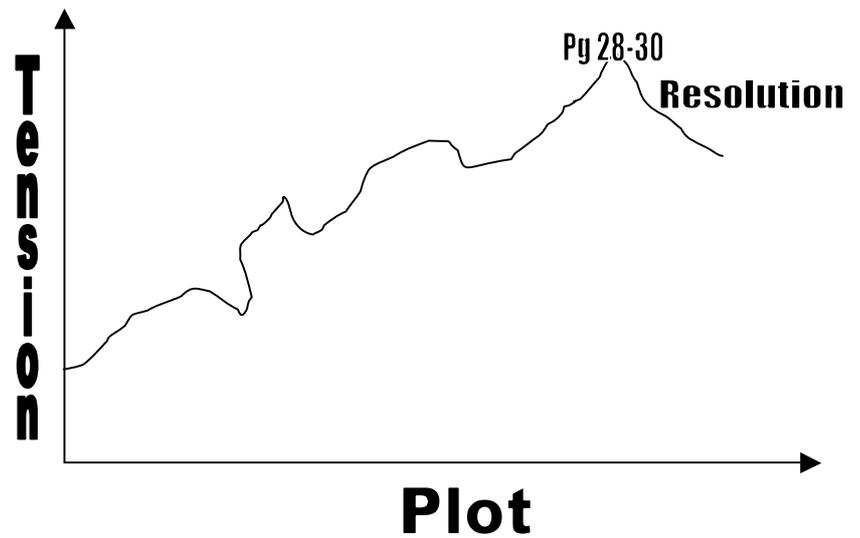
Likes to collaborate with authors.

On illustration notes – not averse to illustration notes, and in fact likes the fact that they give him the author's vision for the story. And some things need this explanation. That said, don't be prescriptive.

Openness – not preciousness. Both author and illustrator benefit from discussion and openness to new ideas.

A PB is a journey that both author and illustrator go through in making changes for the better.

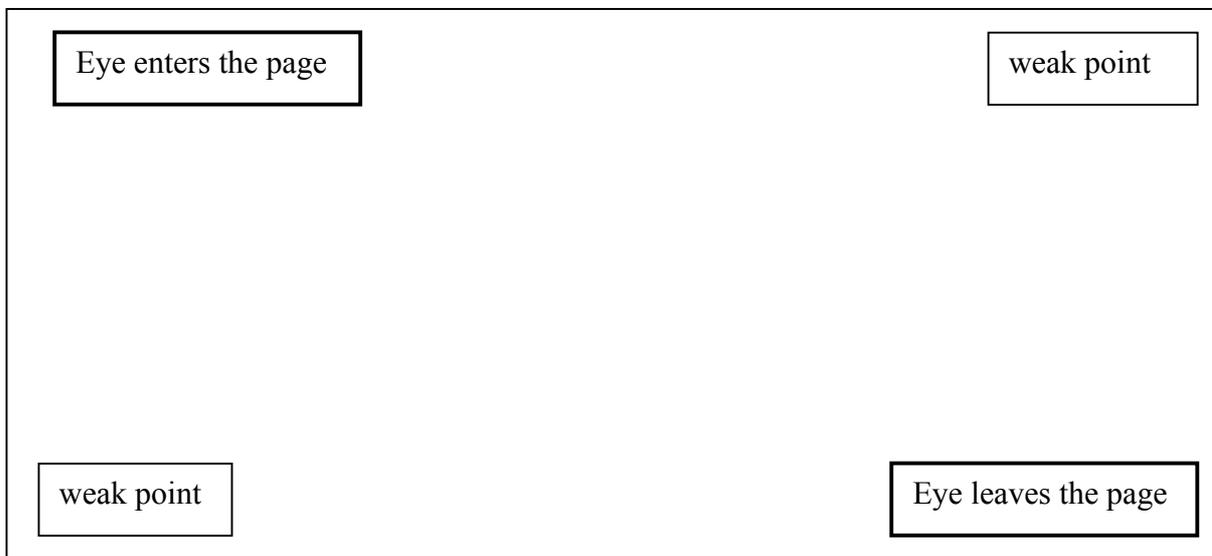
On loyalty to one particular publisher: The industry has changed and I wouldn't advise anybody to do that. (Stick to one publisher only)



Vignette – No narrative order. Number of random illustrations on a page

Graphic sequencing – when there is a narrative order to the illustration – leading to a story

Would suggest that writers paginate the text. This was a discussion point as some publishers prefer non-paginated stories.



Power hierarchies – looking up on something makes it powerful/focus of an illustration. Looking down on it takes away the power – makes it unimportant.

Art

Our brains like to work in patterns. We draw in shapes. As we develop the shapes are more intuitive. But if wanting to improve drawing skills, that is a great way to start... Look for shapes and patterns.