



Jeremy Tankard Biography

Born:
Cape Town
South Africa

Current Home:
Toronto, Ontario,
Canada



Jeremy Tankard is an accomplished graphic artist whose clients include *Time*, *Fortune*, and *The New York Times*. He recently won a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Association of Educational Publishers for a series of illustrations he did for the children's environmental magazine, *Wild Outdoor World*.

His picture book *Grumpy Bird* grew out of drawings Tankard was creating for his daughter one afternoon. His daughter asked, "Draw me a grumpy bear!" and Tankard drew a grumpy bear. After drawing a grumpy snake and a grumpy clock, he drew a grumpy bird. "The grumpy bird made me laugh," states Tankard. "I wondered why he was so grumpy. So I wrote a story about a bird who's too grumpy to fly, so he goes for a walk instead. I was interested to see what sort of an adventure a grumpy bird might have. Now I know!"

Jeremy Tankard lives in Toronto, Canada with his wife and daughter. Here is how he describes himself:

I was born in Cape Town, South Africa, but I left at the age of five for a new life in the United States. My family lived first in Columbia, South Carolina, then Hazard, Kentucky, and finally Knoxville, Tennessee before making another move. This time we landed in Canada where I still live today

When I was young my dad used to tell my brother and me stories in order to keep us from complaining during long walks in the mountains. Some of the stories were true, others were not-and as for the rest of them, we still don't know whether to believe them or not. With a father who loved telling stories and a mother who oversaw school libraries, I grew up loving words and the power of storytelling. At some point I began writing and illustrating my own stories. The early ones featured a pig family who had a series of misadventures. The only words in the books were "Hallo", "HALP!", and "Bye bye"-probably because they were the only words I knew how to spell-sort of. Luckily I've learned how to spell some other words since then!

I studied drawing and printmaking at the Alberta College of Art and Design before embarking on a career as an illustrator. My illustrations have appeared in many magazines and ad campaigns including *Time*, *The New York Times*, *Guitar Player*, and *The Boston Globe*.

Somewhere along the way I realized that I was beginning to lose sight of what got me excited about illustration to begin with: telling stories. So, almost three decades after my first effort and armed with my new and improved vocabulary, I started writing books for children again. My first picture book, *Grumpy Bird*, was published by Scholastic Press in April 2007. My second book is called *Me Hungry!* and was published by Candlewick Press in spring of 2008. *Boo Hoo Bird* was published by Scholastic Press in 2009.

When not writing or drawing, I like to spend time with my wife, Heather, and our young daughter, Hermione. Hermione like in Harry Potter. And yes, she is magical. I dabble in music. I love going for walks in the rain. And I love Indian cooking. Yum! I'm still waiting for the authorities to knock on my door and take away my skateboard and sketchbooks and to tell me to behave like a grown-up.