

## **Interview with Chet Spiewak** **Author of *An Ornaments' Tale***

Reader Views would like to welcome Chet Spiewak, author of the new children's Xmas book, "An Ornaments' Tale." Chet is being interviewed by Juanita Watson, Assistant Editor of Reader Views.

**Juanita:** Thanks for talking with us today Chet. Would you please tell your readers the storyline of your new children's holiday book, "An Ornaments' Tale"?

**Chet:** This seasonal adventure follows a group of Christmas ornaments in search of their holiday tree. The story opens with Percy and his Christmas ornament friends peering through a hole in the attic floor, overjoyed to see that a fresh Christmas tree has arrived just for them. But they are devastated to find themselves left behind by their family and tricked by Skitter and his obnoxious gang of Halloween ornaments. The Christmas ornaments soon teach Skitter the true meaning of Christmas, and in return Skitter, helps his new friends find their holiday tree.

**Juanita:** What inspired you to write your book?

**Chet:** The inspiration behind the book came from my childhood holiday memories. Every year our family would purchase a real tree and it was up to us children to decorate the Christmas tree. Sometimes there would be a box of ornaments that couldn't fit on the tree and they would be banished back to the attic until the following year. I always felt sorry for these ornaments, and wondered if they would someday come to life to find their holiday tree.

**Juanita:** "An Ornaments' Tale" is in full color with incredible 3-D computer generated graphics. Would you tell us more about the book's artwork?

**Chet:** I wanted to make artwork as real and believable as possible, so early on in the design process, I decided to illustrate this book with 3-D computer generated graphics. To make the ornaments looked as if they were purchased from actual store shelf, each of the ornaments received realistic textures, *ie* Topher- had a painted worn wood grain finish, Spencer -received a wool body suit, and Fiona was assigned a reflective outer glass skin. I built and lighted all the scenes and now it was time to use the 3-D cameras to render depth and perspective into book's 3-D illustration. The camera's effect proved to be spectacular! Anyone staring at the book's 3-D illustration had a sense of being in the page, standing right next to the rest of the ornaments!

**Juanita:** The computer imaging really is remarkable. How long is the process, and is this a one-man show, or does it take many people to put a book like this together?

**Chet:** An Ornaments' Tale was definitely a one-man show. I had to wear the hats of many graphic professionals to bring the book to reality. The process started with a set of drawn sketches, storyboards, and character designs. This artwork served as a reference for the computer modeling of the 3-D characters and scenes illustrated in the book pages. The imaging process also involved rendering each scene with lights, perspective and special effects to capture the mood of the story. In the end I felt as if I was a director behind a camera in charge of bringing this fabulous ornaments to life.

**Juanita:** Would you tell us more about your lead character Percy, and his significance to the story?

**Chet:** The story revolves around Percy, a timid wooden toy soldier ornament. Percy matures as the book progresses, he slowly gains confidence with each conquered task and eventually confronts Skitter, the leader of the Halloween ornaments. In the end Percy is responsible for uniting the Christmas and Halloween ornaments.

**Juanita:** Despite the obvious holiday reference, what will "An Ornaments' Tale" teach children about the true meaning of Christmas?

**Chet:** This book teaches children that Christmas isn't only about receiving presents, sometimes there is a bigger reward when one does the giving. In the story, Percy offers a present to Skitter and his Halloween cohorts. Percy's good gesture, forces a change in Skitter's cold heart. Soon the Halloween ornaments are helping the Christmas ornaments down to their Christmas tree.

**Juanita:** Would you comment on the incredible imagination children have to bring inanimate objects to life and the appeal of the ornaments in your story?

**Chet:** In this story the ornaments are alive. They live up in the attic year around waiting for that one time of the year when they hang on the holiday tree. This was my notion when I was a young child and had the task of hanging the ornaments on our Christmas tree.

**Juanita:** What is the reading age for "An Ornaments' Tale"?

**Chet:** The picture book is geared for children ages- 4-8

**Juanita:** What is the underlying message of your book?

**Chet:** The book has a subtle message of never giving up, and the importance of friendship. In the story, Percy, Topher, Fiona and Spencer have already surrendered to the notion of spending a lonely Christmas up in the attic. But Crystal, and Stanley aren't going to let their friends wallow in pity, and soon convince them that together they can find a way down to the holiday tree.

**Juanita:** I understand that you will be writing more children's books in the future. What draws you to writing for children?

**Chet:** What draws me to writing/illustrating, is a real desire to create storybook adventures that capture the imaginations of children. Here, I can work in a world where inanimate objects come to life. Farfetched story ideas are believable, and whimsical worlds really do exist. And this realm's only limit is a lack of an imagination.

**Juanita:** Would you tell us about your current project, the new book series, "Vinny, the Bug Man"?

**Chet:** My current project is a graphic novel series titled “Vinny the Bug Man”. This 3-D computer generated series stars Vinny Mazola a shrunken bug exterminator trapped in an insect underworld. The bug world is ruled a ruthless tarantula general and his spider army. Vinny will team up with an aphid jester, a talking seed and a rebellious ladybug princess, to lead all the insect clans to freedom. For more information visit site.. <http://www.bugem.com>

**Juanita:** Chet, would you tell us more about your interest in cartooning, and computerized 3-D imaging? How did your work evolve to encompass this cutting edge technology?

**Chet:** I always had an interest in cartooning and was really fascinated by Disney classics from my childhood. As I grew older I practiced and sketched every chance I had until, I perfected my own style of cartooning and character design. With the popularity of 3-D computer generated features, I decide to mesh my cartoon style with the new 3-D technology of today.

**Juanita:** How can readers find out more about you and your endeavors?

**Chet:** I have a web site, <http://www.cws-studios.com/tales.htm> The site contains more author information, design artwork, other books and future projects in development.

**Juanita:** Chet, thanks for taking the time to talk with us today. You are certainly bringing a new twist to children’s storybooks with your fascinating 3-D graphics. We look forward to seeing more of your books in the future, and encourage everyone to pick up a copy of “An Ornaments’ Tale” this Christmas. Do you have any last thoughts you’d like to share?

**Chet:** “An Ornaments’ Tale” combines great storytelling with amazing 3-D computer generated graphics creating a new holiday classic for many years to come.