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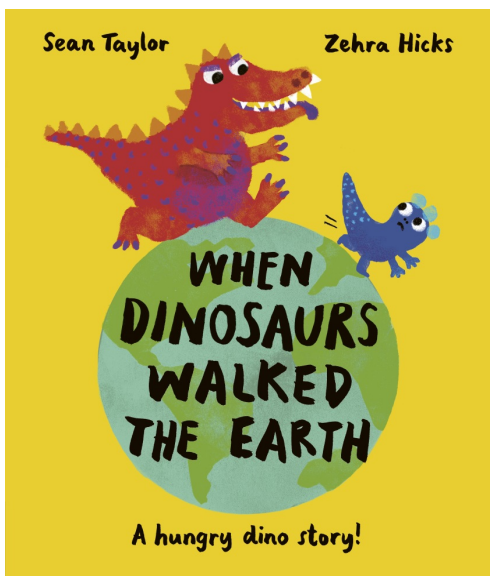
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Walking with dinosaurs … not quite

19 April 2024



Epsom-based **Zehra Hicks** is an award-winning children's book author and illustrator whose books have been translated in over 20 languages. Through her work, she shows the magic of storytelling to children through her comical illustrations, which has led to an already impressive list of accolades, including being highly commended for the Macmillan Prize for Illustration and winner of the Heart of Hawick Award, to name a few.



When Dinosaurs Walked The Earth, authored by Sean Taylor and illustrated by Zehra, is one of five shortlisted books for this year's £10,000 **Oscar's Book Prize**. Founded in honour of book-loving Oscar Ashton who passed away aged three and a half from an undetected heart condition, the prize seeks to find the best children's picturebook, and is supported by **Amazon** and the **Evening Standard** with Princess Beatrice as a patron. The winner will be announced at a ceremony in central London on the 7th May.

Zehra is a tutor at Chelsea College of Arts, where she completed a short course in Book Illustration in 2009.

Since then, she has been highly commended for the Macmillan Prize for Illustration, winner of the Heart of Hawick Award, named Lovereading4Kids Debut of the Year in 2011and shortlisted for the Read It Again! Cambridgeshire Children's Picture Book Award.

About Epsom Zehra told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "I moved to Epsom from London 14 years ago when I was pregnant with our second child. For quite a while I missed living London, but now I definitely have the best of both worlds. I feel incredibly lucky to be living in a town with so many open green spaces like Epsom Common and Epsom Downs, yet only being a 35 mins train ride away from the capital.

"I love going for daily walks with my sausage dog, Vincent. Sometimes I even run with him. I'm much more likely to come up with book ideas on a walk or run than stuck behind my desk! And I love bumping into people for little chats. Being an author and an illustrator can be quite lonely, and I find Epsom residents and dog walkers so friendly.

"I work in cafes too, so although some people may think there are too many cafes in Epsom, I happily make use of them ALL! You may often see me in Gail's or D's Coffee House with a sketch book working on new ideas. I love the buzz in cafes – it helps my creativity, and I love that there seems to be more and more residents working in cafes, creating a lively working community."

"Having an art shop and bookshop is a huge benefit to me too, as is the market. It would be lovely to have some more independents though. A few are cropping up, but very, very slowly!"

Image: Zehra Hicks and her sausage dog on Epsom Common

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