



JESSICA CABE / POST INDEPENDENT

Local author and artist Jessica Meath is celebrating the release of her first children's book, "Nile in Denial," with a book signing from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday at the Main Street Gallery in Glenwood Springs.

Local publishes first children's book, will hold release party

Jessica Cabe
jcabe@postindependent.com

Local author and artist Jessica Meath, who has lived in the valley for 15 years, has always been fascinated with children's books.

Now, she's written and illustrated her own: "Nile in Denial," a playful story about a caterpillar who hates change and dreads his metamorphosis.

Meath, who has a degree in art education with a minor in graphic design, will be at the Main Street Gallery in Glenwood Springs from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday for a book release party and signing. Attendees can purchase signed books and prints, and children will be able to participate in a coloring contest that could win them a copy of "Nile in Denial," a custom bookmark and a set of book plates.

"Nile in Denial" is also available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Ingram Content Group, nilethebutterfly.com and Book Train. Meath said she's contacting other local businesses to see if they'll stock the book, too.

Meath sat down with the Post Independent to discuss her love for children's books, the process for creating her first one and whether any more are in the works.

Post Independent: What made you decide to write a children's book?

Jessica Meath: I've always wanted to illustrate a children's book. I've always just been intrigued by them. I love the colors, I love the fantasy and whimsicalness of it. So when the idea

for Nile came to me, I thought, 'OK, well that will be a great opportunity to explore how I enjoy illustrating.'

PI: What is the book about, and what lessons can kids learn from it?

JM: 'Nile in Denial' is about a caterpillar who does not like change. He likes everything exactly the way it is; he's very stubborn. So the whole concept of metamorphosis is not something he's very into. He meets another caterpillar, Harvey, who's very adventurous, and who's all about change and experiencing something different, which Nile is not happy to hear at all. Throughout the book, Nile goes through these transitions, and he's just grumpy about it. It goes through how he learns to acknowledge and accept change and how he grows to appreciate the benefits of it in the long run. I think it relates to all of life.

PI: What was the process like for completing the book?

JM: It's been an interesting learning curve. I was actually surprised at how easily the story just kind of flowed. I sat down, and a lot of it just came out, and it seemed very natural. The hard process was going back and then refining and learning about different vocabulary and what's appropriate for different age ranges.

I wrote the story and then went back through and did a storyboard trying to figure out what would be appropriate, how I wanted to break the story up, what images were fitting in my mind and then developing those. I want to say each image took about 15 to 18 hours, so that was the other

IF YOU GO...
Who: Jessica Meath
What: Book release/signing
When: 2-5 p.m. on Saturday
Where: Main Street Gallery, 817 Grand Ave., Glenwood Springs
How Much: Free

long process after the story. And then it came into, 'How do we want to go about publishing?'

I started researching traditional publishing and what it takes to send in something to an agent and all of those things and realized that, typically, they don't want to see illustrations with the manuscript. Considering that was one of my main motivations for pursuing the story, I just started researching some self-publishing options and ended up going with a package through a company called FriesenPress, who does a lot of the work that a traditional publisher would, but you have a little more freedom on the creativity front. So I thought, 'Well, I'll try this out, I'll see how I like the process and then maybe pursue something traditional in the long run.'

PI: Do you think you'll write more children's books in the future?

JM: I hope so. I do have some ideas. I think right now I'm just seeing how this goes, and then I can kind of re-focus and see how I want to pursue those other thoughts.

