



A Q&A INTERVIEW WITH SARA TROFA

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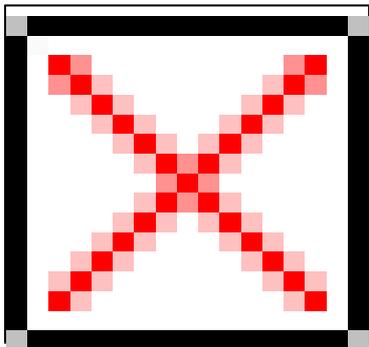
[Sara Trofa](#) [1]

[238](#) [2]

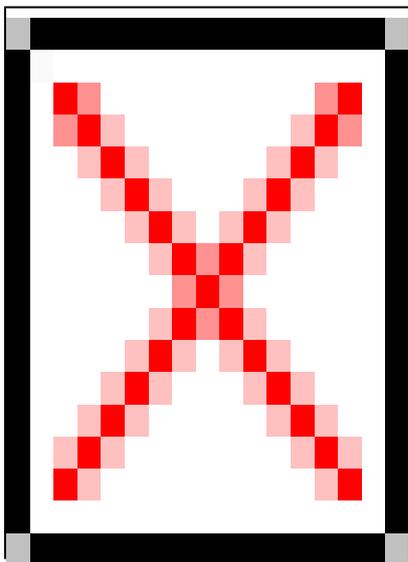
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Sara Trofa answers our questions on her book **Taxi Ride with Victor**

Sara Trofa's story of [Victor, space taxi driver](#) [3], is a celebration of accepting that mistakes happen, and just might lead to something really good.



She answers our questions about the book and her well-meaning central character.



Victor is a wonderful character ? how did he begin? Is he inspired by a real person or people?

Thank you so much for the opportunity to talk about Victor!

Sometimes I do take inspiration from real people to create my characters, but this whacky taxi driver just landed in my mind with all the essentials for me to develop his story. Like a big avocado seed with all the nutrients in it. It took a long time to grow, it changed along the way and it became something that actually inspires me. In fact, I wish I could do for my friends what Victor does for his passengers.

Still, Victor and I have something in common: we enjoy travelling and we get lost quite easily!

Lovely as he is, Victor is ? technically ? not very good at his job. Was it important to you to show children that making mistakes has positives?

Absolutely! I hope that both children and adults will relate to Victor and see how a mistake could also be a great chance to grow and to discover new things.

We call it ?a mistake? because we are watching it only from one side, but from the other side that ?mistake? might actually be the work that we had to put in to be able to get somewhere else in our lives.

When I was a child I had, and I still have, a stressful relationship with mistakes but now I?m aware that if you make mistakes it?s because you?re taking action, you?re moving forward. Mistakes can lead to opportunities and new ideas.

Are there other messages you?d like children (and adults) to take from the story?

Don?t give up, be gentle with others and with yourself, and let life surprise you!

How did you feel when you saw Elsa Klever?s illustrations for the book? What do you like best about her artwork and the way it represents your characters and story?

Elsa showed me her work for **Taxi ride with Victor** from the first sketches. I got to see the whole evolution of the illustrations and I was excited and grateful: a real treat.

I think Elsa and I share the same passion for adventure and for quirkiness, so working with her feels really natural to me. I love the characters as she drew them, it?s like I recognize them and actually get to know them even better. They are like the friends we have in common that we talk and share things about. Also, Elsa added so many details that each time you read the book you could spot something you haven?t noticed before.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to write a picture book?

Read constantly, study picture books? specific format, their structure and their narrative devices. Pay special attention to the page turns and to the relationship between words and images.

Have fun with your story and, if you find out that your idea is already out there published and you think it?s a great idea, try and see if you could find your own take on the subject.

Also, read your story out loud: it can reveal so much on the quality of the writing.

What is your favourite picture book (by another author) and why?

One of the many picture books I?m crazy about is [Du iz tak?](#) [4] by Carson Ellis. I love its dimension of wonder and discovery, the representation of nature?s rhythm, and the fact that the book is written in an invented language (I love all languages: natural, artificial and fictional ones!). The readers are immediately engaged and invited to figure their own translation out. Also, looking at the different versions of the book in different countries, it?s so much fun to notice how the adaptation of the invented language changes for each country, in relation to its mother tongue and culture.

[Taxi Ride with Victor](#) [3] by Sara Trofa, illus by Elsa Klever is published by Prestel, £10.99 hbk.

Page Number:

36

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Links:

[1] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/sara-trofa>

[2] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/238>

[3] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/238/childrens-books/reviews/taxi-ride-with-victor>

[4] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/222/childrens-books/reviews/du-iz-tak>