

Lisa Stewart

As a young mother, many years ago, pushing my daughter in her pram to any paper, art supply, card or book store I could find I was instantly attracted to wrapping paper with illustrations by Jane Ray (wonderful British illustrator and author). I adored her attention to detail and her animals, trees, water, sun, moon and stars. A new love was born, of children's picture books and paper.

Later in Germany I sent a CD of mine (*I play the violin*) and a letter of thanks to Jane for her artwork. To my delight she responded with five picture books and a glorious phoenix card of hers and a friendship was formed.

My family and I flew to England to meet her. Seeing her studio and her artwork (admired by her husband and her three children) framed and hung throughout their home filled me with joy. My secret dream was to become an illustrator and be like Jane.

The illustrative style I use came about during the creation of a 20 page wordless love story. I began to cut out hundreds of tiny pieces of paper and create images. Friends and family were represented as trees, birds, fish, dragons and whales. A broken heart became thousands of little flowers and the night sky a full moon on black rice paper.

With support from my dear friend Lynndy Bennett at Gleebooks, I sent some publishers a few of the pictures from the love story and had a call from Ana Vivas from Scholastic Press. We met and I sent in ideas for a book by Kerry Brown called '*Can I Cuddle the Moon?*'. I enjoyed doing some little drawings and to my amazement was chosen to illustrate it.

My dream of becoming an illustrator has come true.