

The Story of Knife and Packer

As children:

Both Knife and Packer spent most of their childhoods in London - but on different sides of the river. Knife in South London and Packer in North London. Although they wouldn't meet for another 20 years they were already heading in the same direction. Knife loved to draw, taking inspiration from Ronald Searle, The Dandy and Beano. Meanwhile in North London Packer loved to read, enjoying everything from Dr Brainstorm to Willard Price and Asterix to Tintin. So even though they hadn't met they were already laying the ground work for their partnership of writing and illustrating books together. In their spare time Knife was happiest playing with his toy soldiers, while Packer would head down to the Regents Canal with a pint of maggots and even catch the odd fish!

As adults:

Knife was working in an antique bookshop, doing cartoons in his spare time and Packer was writing comedy when they first met in 1993. They shared the same sense of humour and soon started working together. At first they did cartoons and cartoon strips for newspapers and magazines including the Guardian and The Sunday Times. In fact they still do and can be seen in Private Eye every week. But Knife and Packer loved developing crazy characters, and children's books were the perfect place to put them. Knife and Packer live in London, at different ends of Hackney.

As artists:

Knife and Packer's first book was all about teachers, Teachers The Naked Truth, was published in 2001. Since then they have written and illustrated over 40 books, including Badly Drawn Beth the award nominated series for Orchard Books, Fleabag Monkeyface, now a Citv animated series as well as Freak Street for Scholastic Australia and many others. Working as a team is quite unusual as authors and illustrators mostly work separately, with the illustrator brought in when the book is written to provide pictures. Knife and Packer develop all the characters, stories and designs together. Knife works in a studio the size of a broom cupboard and Packer has a tiny laptop and can be found in libraries or cafes - anywhere where he can get a bit of space. They meet up every couple of days, but mostly email ideas and sketches backwards and forwards. They love meeting their readers and have done hundreds of events in schools, libraries, bookshops and festivals. They also enjoy seeing their books in foreign languages and their books have been translated into lots of languages including German, French, Turkish, Thai, Chinese, Portuguese and Korean.