



**James Howe**

**TeachingBooks Original Movie Transcript**

James Howe, interviewed in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York on August 31, 2005.

This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.

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I write a lot about language and writing and words. I saw what words could do — create fun and make you laugh, but I was on the other end of words that hurt, too. So, I often try to empower my characters by giving them words, and in the process I'm empowering my readers.

**On Character**

I was an actor, and I was always very focused on character. I was an actor for pretty much the same reasons that I became a writer. When my writing is going well, it usually means that I am really seeing the world through the eyes of someone else. I'm sitting there really inhabiting that character. That comes from a lot of acting training and in learning how to ease into the skin of another person.

**On *Bunnicula***

*Bunnicula* was written for fun by two out-of-work actors; just from watching too many vampire movies late at night.

The *Bunnicula* books are about a little strange bunny rabbit. Even though I call them the *Bunnicula* books, they're largely about Harold and Chester and Howie. I purposely kept *Bunnicula* silent so he would remain a mystery. They're silly; they're fun. A lot of the fun of them has to do with the word play between Harold and Chester and Howie — who loves to pun. For me a lot of the fun is writing the dialogue. In fact, I wrote an entire scene in *Howliday Inn* just to get to the pun, "It's raining cats and dogs."

**Gender Issues**

In many of my books, I shake up the roles of gender by having the women or the girls do something that we think more typically is what the man does or the boy does. And it's the same with the boys. Like in the Pinky and Rex books, besides Pinky being who he is, it's his dad who's in the kitchen baking cookies. I want my readers to really think about assumptions they make about gender, and I do that because I think that's an area that is particularly rigid in our thinking, and it gets set very young.

***The Misfits***

*The Misfits* is about four best friends in the seventh grade who are called names and who are picked on, but do not buy into the names they're called or the reasons they're picked on. They know they're different in their own ways. And, they set about trying to change things in their school, to end name-calling, to pay attention to it.

One of the four characters, Joe, is gay and he knows he is and he's comfortable with it even though he's teased about it and called names. I wanted to write about feeling good about who you are.

### ***Totally Joe***

For *Totally Joe*, I came up with this idea of an alphabiography, for him to tell his story — in this case as a class assignment. Joe is a very dramatic kid, and as he says toward the end of the book, “An alphabiography, like life, should be full of italics and capital letters,” and that's who he is. He would have fun writing this — he would have fun playing with fonts and style. I think he's a great character. I love him: I think he's funny, and he'd be a great friend.

I want my books to open the minds, the thinking, but most importantly the hearts of my readers. I'd like my readers to open themselves when they open my books.

### **Books by James Howe**

- HAROLD AND CHESTER IN CREEPY-CRAWLY BIRTHDAY (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, forthcoming
- HORACE AND MORRIS SAY CHEESE (WHICH MAKES DOLORES SNEEZE!) (illustrated by Amy Walrod), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, forthcoming
- BUNNICULA MEETS EDGAR ALLAN CROW, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2006
- FRIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, THE: BUNNICULA AND FRIENDS #5 (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2006
- HOUNDSLEY AND CATINA (illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay), Candlewick Press, 2006
- HOUNDSLEY AND CATINA AND THE BIRTHDAY SURPRISE (illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay), Candlewick Press, 2006
- RABBIT-CADABRA!: BUNNICULA AND FRIENDS #4 (illustrated by Jeff Mack), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2006
- SCARED SILLY: BUNNICULA AND FRIENDS #3 (illustrated by Jeff Mack), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2005
- TOTALLY JOE, Ginee Seo Books / Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2005
- BUNNICULA: 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2004
- HOT FUDGE: BUNNICULA AND FRIENDS #2 (illustrated by Jeff Mack), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2004
- KADDISH FOR GRANDPA IN JESUS' NAME AMEN (illustrated by Catherine Stock), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2004

- VAMPIRE BUNNY, THE: BUNNICULA AND FRIENDS #1 (illustrated by Jeff Mack), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2004
- AMAZING ODOROUS ADVENTURES OF STINKY DOG, THE: TALES FROM THE HOUSE OF BUNNICULA #6 (illustrated by Brett Helquist), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2003
- BUD BARKIN, PRIVATE EYE: TALES FROM THE HOUSE OF BUNNICULA #5 (illustrated by Brett Helquist), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2003
- SCREAMING MUMMIES OF THE PHARAOH'S TOMB II: TALES FROM THE HOUSE OF BUNNICULA #4 (illustrated by Brett Helquist), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2003
- 13: THIRTEEN STORIES THAT CAPTURE THE AGONY AND ECSTASY OF BEING THIRTEEN (edited by James Howe), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2003
- HORACE AND MORRIS JOIN THE CHORUS (BUT WHAT ABOUT DOLORES?) (illustrated by Amy Walrod), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2002
- HOWIE MONROE AND THE DOGHOUSE OF DOOM: TALES FROM THE HOUSE OF BUNNICULA #3 (illustrated by Brett Helquist), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2002
- INVASION OF THE MIND SWAPPERS FROM ASTEROID 6!: TALES FROM THE HOUSE OF BUNNICULA #2 (illustrated by Brett Helquist), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2002
- IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE BED!: TALES FROM THE HOUSE OF BUNNICULA #1 (illustrated by Brett Helquist), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2002
- COLOR OF ABSENCE: 12 STORIES ABOUT LOSS AND HOPE, THE (edited by James Howe), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2001
- MISFITS, THE, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2001
- PINKY AND REX AND THE JUST-RIGHT PET (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2001
- BUNNICULA STRIKES AGAIN! (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1999
- BUNNICULA: 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1999
- BUNNICULA'S FRIGHTFULLY FABULOUS FACTOIDS (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Little Simon / Simon & Schuster, 1999
- BUNNICULA'S LONG-LASTING LAUGH-ALOUDS: A BOOK OF JOKES AND RIDDLES TO TICKLE YOUR BUNNY BONE (written with Louis Phillips; illustrated by Alan Daniel), Little Simon / Simon & Schuster, 1999
- HORACE AND MORRIS BUT MOSTLY DOLORES (illustrated by Amy Walrod), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1999
- BUNNICULA'S PLEASANTLY PERPLEXING PUZZLERS: A BOOK OF PUZZLES, MAZES AND WHATZITS (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Little Simon / Simon & Schuster, 1998
- BUNNICULA'S WICKEDLY WACKY WORD GAMES: A BOOK FOR WORD LOVERS AND THEIR PENCILS (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Little Simon / Simon & Schuster, 1998

- PINKY AND REX AND THE PERFECT PUMPKIN (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1998
- PINKY AND REX AND THE SCHOOL PLAY (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1998
- PINKY AND REX AND THE NEW NEIGHBORS (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1997
- WATCHER, THE, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1997
- PINKY AND REX AND THE BULLY (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1996
- NEW NICK KRAMER, OR MY LIFE AS A BABY-SITTER, THE, Hyperion Books for Children, 1995
- PINKY AND REX AND THE DOUBLE-DAD WEEKEND (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1995
- BUNNICULA ESCAPES! A POP-UP ADVENTURE (illustrated by Alan Daniel and Lea Daniel), Morrow, 1994
- HOSPITAL BOOK, THE (reissued), Morrow, 1994
- PLAYING WITH WORDS, Richard C. Owens, 1994
- THERE'S A DRAGON IN MY SLEEPING BAG (illustrated by David S. Rose), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1994
- WHEN YOU GO TO KINDERGARTEN (revised and reissued) (illustrated by Betsy Imershein), Morrow, 1994
- BUNNICULA FUN BOOK (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Morrow, 1993
- PINKY AND REX AND THE NEW BABY (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1993
- HAROLD AND CHESTER IN RABBIT-CADABRA! (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Morrow, 1993
- PINKY AND REX GO TO CAMP (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1992
- RETURN TO HOWLIDAY INN (illustrated by Alan Daniel), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1992
- HAROLD AND CHESTER IN CREEPY-CRAWLY BIRTHDAY (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Morrow, 1991
- DANCES WITH WOLVES: A STORY FOR CHILDREN (adapted by James Howe from the screenplay by Michael Blake based on his novel; photographs by Ben Glass), Newmarket Press, 1991
- PINKY AND REX AND THE MEAN OLD WITCH (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1991
- PINKY AND REX AND THE SPELLING BEE (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1991
- DEW DROP DEAD: A SEBASTIAN BARTH MYSTERY, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1990
- HOT FUDGE (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Morrow, 1990
- PINKY AND REX (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1990
- PINKY AND REX GET MARRIED (illustrated by Melissa Sweet), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1990
- SCARED SILLY: A HALLOWEEN TREAT (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Morrow, 1989
- CAROL BURNETT: THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER, Viking, 1988
- FRIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, THE (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Morrow, 1988

- I WISH I WERE A BUTTERFLY (illustrated by Ed Young), Harcourt, 1987
- NIGHTY-NIGHTMARE (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1987
- SECRET GARDEN, THE (written by Frances Hodgson Burnett; adapted by James Howe; illustrated by Nancy Sippel Carpenter), Random House, 1987
- BABES IN TOYLAND (based on the operetta by Victor Herbert and Glen MacDonough; illustrated by Allen Atkinson), Harcourt, 1986
- EAT YOUR POISON, DEAR: A SEBASTIAN BARTH MYSTERY, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1986
- LOVE NOTE FOR BABY PIGGY, A, Marvel/Weekly Reader Book Club, 1986
- STAGE FRIGHT: A SEBASTIAN BARTH MYSTERY, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1986
- THERE'S A MONSTER UNDER MY BED (illustrated by David S. Rose), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1986
- WHEN YOU GO TO KINDERGARTEN (illustrated by Betsy Imershein), Knopf, 1986
- WHAT ERIC KNEW: A SEBASTIAN BARTH MYSTERY, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1985
- DAY THE TEACHER WENT BANANAS, THE (illustrated by Lillian Hoban), Dutton, 1984
- HOW THE EWOKS SAVED THE TREES (illustrated by Walter Velez), Random House, 1984
- MORGAN'S ZOO (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1984
- MUPPET GUIDE TO MAGNIFICENT MANNERS, THE, Muppets Press/Random House, 1984
- CASE OF THE MISSING MOTHER, THE (illustrated by William Cleaver), Muppets Press/Random House, 1983
- CELERY STALKS AT MIDNIGHT, THE: A VEGETABLE ADVENTURE (illustrated by Leslie Morrill), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1983
- NIGHT WITHOUT STARS, A, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1983
- ANNIE JOINS THE CIRCUS (illustrated by Leonard W. Shortall), Random House, 1982
- HOWLIDAY INN (illustrated by Lynn Munsinger), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1982
- HOSPITAL BOOK, THE, Crown, 1981
- TEDDY BEAR'S SCRAPBOOK (written with Deborah Howe; illustrated by Timothy Bush), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1980
- BUNNICULA: A RABBIT-TALE OF MYSTERY (written with Deborah Howe; illustrated by Alan Daniel), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1979

### **Stories and poems by James Howe**

- "want to meet," a short story in GIRL MEETS BOY, BOY MEETS GIRL (edited by Kelly Milner Hines and Terry Davis), Roaring Brook Press, forthcoming
- "Learning How to Be a Boy," a short story adapted from TOTALLY JOE in GUYS WRITE FOR GUYS READ (edited by Jon Scieszka), Viking, 2005
- "Jeremy Goldblatt is So Not Moses," a story in 13: THIRTEEN STORIES THAT CAPTURE THE AGONY AND ECSTASY OF BEING THIRTEEN, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2003
- "Enchanted Night," a short story in THE COLOR OF ABSENCE, Atheneum Books for Young Readers / an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2001

- “Everything Will Be Okay,” a short story in WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE (edited by Amy Ehrlich), Candlewick Press, 1996
- “Pies: A Lament,” a poem in FOOD FIGHT (edited by Michael J. Rosen), Harcourt, 1996
- “Victor,” a short story in BIRTHDAY SURPRISES (edited by Johanna Hurwitz), HarperCollins, 1995

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