



James Howe

Author Program In-depth Interview Insights Beyond the Movie

James Howe, interviewed in Yonkers, New York on August 31, 2005.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Your first book, *Bunnicula: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery* was published in 1979 and has been so successful, it led to many more Bunnicula books. Where did that first idea to write about a vampire bunny come from?

JAMES HOWE: I wrote *Bunnicula* with my late wife, Debbie. We were two out-of-work actors who had some time on our hands in between temp jobs and auditioning. *Bunnicula* really got its start before that with a little greeting card I made of a vampire rabbit — inspired by watching too many vampire movies late at night. I didn't think anything of writing a book about it. But Debbie's mother said a vampire rabbit would be a great character for a children's book.

Neither Debbie nor I thought of ourselves as writers at all. I always wrote for fun, but just little fragments of things, nothing I would think about getting published. So, we sat down one night after dinner and took out a piece of paper and started to do something that we had no idea how to do.

The final, published story is essentially there in the first draft, just as we told it. In fact, it only took maybe three or four drafts, and mostly that was fixing and polishing.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What was that collaboration like?

JAMES HOWE: We would take turns writing. One of us would hold the pad of paper and essentially be secretary. We wrote that book completely out loud — we told the story; one of us would begin a sentence, and the other one might jump in and finish the sentence.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Then, Debbie was diagnosed with cancer; did you write the whole book straight through?

JAMES HOWE: Yes, midway through writing the book, Debbie was diagnosed with cancer and the writing kind of went out the window. We had other things to deal with. But, after a few months, we needed to laugh. We needed something to put our minds to that wasn't so serious and difficult, and we went back to writing *Bunnicula*. Writing that book really made us laugh; it served the greater purpose of easing the pain and lifting our spirits.

We wrote some of it in the hospital where Debbie was a patient. Some of it, we wrote in her parents' apartment, where we lived through much of the latter part of her illness.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What are the subsequent Bunnicula books about?

JAMES HOWE: They're largely about Harold and Chester and Howie, who are trying to solve mysteries. As much as I was influenced by vampire movies in writing them, I was also influenced by watching a lot of Sherlock Holmes movies.

It took me awhile to realize this, but Chester is Sherlock Holmes and Harold is Watson, and they are kind of bumbling detectives who try to figure things out.

The Bunnica books are really not about a whole lot — they're silly and 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.

TEACHINGBOOKS: You seem to enjoy word play in your books.

JAMES HOWE: I grew up in a family that loved words. There was conversation at dinner every night, a lot of word play, a lot of joking and a lot of punning. I had three older brothers. Every night at dinner, my dad or one of my brothers would say, "I heard a good joke today..." That was just part of the conversation. To keep up, I would go to the school library and get out joke and riddle books and come armed with material. I was eight years younger than my next-oldest brother. I was the little guy and I wanted to be part of the gang, so I would always want to come up with material, too. Also, my family often played Scrabble and other word games after dinner.

That's part of why I think I fell in love with language, because I got to see all the fun you could have with it. I want to pass that along to my readers.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What other influences informed your writing?

JAMES HOWE: I grew up on *Mad Magazine*, on comic strips like *Peanuts*, and comic books. That was a lot of my reading as a kid.

My dad was a minister and a very, very good preacher. I think a lot of what I learned from him about writing came from listening to his sermons. Even though I was a little kid and I wasn't listening to every word, there was a style and a rhythm of writing that I was exposed to every week. In his sermons, Dad was also a social activist, and very liberal — very much on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. He used his words to affect people by speaking out, by writing. I had that as a model, too.

The other part of my childhood that influenced my becoming a writer was a lot of make-believe play. I acted out stories, either with my friends or with little figures that I would create stories with. I would create almost little stage sets out of blocks, Legos, whatever I might have to work with. And then I'd create stories. That was all writing too.

I started writing as a kid, and I wrote because I loved to and because I got great responses to my writing. In fact, my mother said when I was little that I should be a writer when I grew up. My teachers were very supportive of my writing as well.

TEACHINGBOOKS: You said your dad's use of words to affect people was a model for you. Explain more about that, please.

JAMES HOWE: I came to see words as more than black marks on a page or something to pass the time. They had the power to really change how we think, how we feel and how we behave. And that's how you change the world. I really believe that, because you change things one person at a time. You just don't know where your words are going to fall and who is going to hear them

— who’s going to pick them up and maybe carry those words the rest of their lives. And in some way those words might be the catalyst to something that really can have a great effect.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What children’s books have been important to you in your writing?

JAMES HOWE: When I was six, one of my brothers gave me a book for Christmas that year called *Charlotte’s Web*. Nobody had ever heard of *Charlotte’s Web*, because it had just been published, and I took it to my first-grade class and asked the teacher to read it aloud. Everyone laughed when we got to the name of the pig because my teacher’s name was Miss Wilbur, and she laughed hardest of any of us.

Charlotte’s Web spoke to me in terms of what it was about. It was about being the little guy — Wilbur is the runt of the litter. I was the runt of the litter in my family. There’s that really basic fear for your own survival. And it’s a great story about friendship, and about the power of words — what book says more about the power of words than *Charlotte’s Web*? Also, I loved animals, and I loved that Fern could be a part of the world of the animals.

I don’t know whether I was influenced by *Charlotte’s Web* or this was just going on anyway, but I always would imagine what my pets were saying when I left the room. That was a big part of where the Bunnica books came from — imagining what the animals would say if they could talk to each other.

TEACHINGBOOKS: You were an actor before you were an author. How did this influence your writing career?

JAMES HOWE: From the time I was ten, I dreamed of being an actor. That’s what I wanted to do. And I majored in acting in college. I met Debbie there, who was also an acting student. And, even though it’s been many years since I’ve been involved in the theater (I didn’t actually work as an actor for a very long period of time), I draw on it all the time.

In fact, it’s hard for me to understand a different approach to writing than getting inside the characters, really becoming the characters. Sometimes people ask, “How do you recall your childhood, or what it’s like to be a child so well?” I actually don’t recall a lot of my childhood that well. But I can tune in very easily to what it feels like to be that 7-year-old or that 10-year-old or that 15-year-old. And that comes from acting training, and learning how to ease into the skin of another person.

When my writing is going well, it usually means that I am truly seeing the world through the eyes of someone else. I’m sitting there inhabiting that character, and hopefully all the characters that I’m writing about.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Your Pinky and Rex books — where the boy is “Pinky” and the girl is “Rex” — are popular with newly independent readers. What kind of questions do you find this has raised with your readers?

JAMES HOWE: I’ll have kids come up to me all the time and say, “I think you got those names wrong — I think the girl is supposed to be Pinky and the boy is supposed to be Rex.” And I’ll always say, “That’s why I wrote these books, so you would wonder about that.”

The Pinky and Rex books are meant to be friendship stories and stories about childhood, but I want the reader to think about the assumptions they make, even at a young age. I want them to think, “Why couldn’t a boy’s favorite color be pink?” And I often ask that when I go to schools.

TEACHINGBOOKS: You open up readers' thinking about words and about gender.

JAMES HOWE: 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. And there are kids — I was one — who don't comfortably fit what we think is how a boy is supposed to be or how a girl is supposed to be, and it is extremely uncomfortable to be one of those kids in an environment where you're told, "No, this is what boys do, this is what girls do, and that's the end of the discussion."

And so I want to help those kids, but I also want to open up the thinking of all kids and adults, too. And I try to do it in ways that more than anything just gets us thinking, "Why do I think this way? I like this character, so why am I so uptight when I encounter someone in real life who might be like this character?" "If this is making me uncomfortable, why does it?" "I love the scene where the dad is in the kitchen baking, so why do I think only women should be in the kitchen?"

Also, the mom in a story might be the soccer coach. Or in one of my series, the Sebastian Barth series, the girl, Corrie, wants to go out for the football team.

I'll ask kids, "How many think it's okay for a boy's favorite color to be pink?" And many will raise their hands. Then I'll say, "Well, what if this boy was your best friend and he rode a pink bike, how many think that would be okay?" They start giggling and the hands go down. "And what if he wore pink sneakers?" I just get them thinking about these questions and whether it's okay or not in their mind. It's to open up some thinking.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Names are important in the Pinky and Rex books. Name-calling is a focus in your acclaimed middle grade novel, *The Misfits*.

JAMES HOWE: The Pinky and Rex series is very much a precursor to *The Misfits*. *The Misfits* is about four best friends in seventh grade who are the kids who sit at the table in the cafeteria farthest away from danger. They are called names and are picked on, but — very importantly — they do not buy into the names they're called or the reasons they're picked on. They feel fine about who they are. They know they're different in their own ways. And they set about trying to end name-calling and bring attention to it.

When I wrote the book I didn't know ultimately that that's what it was going to be about. I knew it was about these four kids and I wanted to write about feeling good about who you are, even if you're picked on, even if you're called names. I wanted to give strength to the kids out there who are picked on and called names. But as I wrote it, it became clear that it was going to take the sort of political direction that it did when the kids formed the no-name party to run for student council and try to end name-calling.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What did you draw upon in writing *The Misfits*?

JAMES HOWE: *The Misfits* got its start from a short story that I never finished. The first chapter of the book is very close to that unfinished short story. I remembered the voice or the narrator in the story — Bobby Goodspeed — and I thought, "That's the voice to tell this story."

Bobby is the one who's least comfortable with himself. As a result, he's the one that I knew I was going to have to give the big moment to — the *Rocky* moment, as I thought of it. He was going to have to be the one to get up and give the big speech and be transformed, because he's the one who was invisible. He's the one I wanted to keep completely quiet and not be called

on in class because being seen would mean being picked on. Ultimately, he was the one to step up to the plate and become visible.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What are some of the thoughts you want readers to take away from reading *The Misfits*?

JAMES HOWE: I wanted *The Misfits* to both reflect reality and to point toward a different possible reality. And that's a tricky thing to do. Some readers say, "I love this book because it made me happy to have things end the way they did." And I've had others say, "It was unrealistic at the end, it really wouldn't have worked out that way."

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. The book involves, among other things, crushes that kids have on each other, the beginning of dating or going out with someone. And I thought, "You know, I'm tired of reading about the boy and the girl ending up together, but if it's a boy and a boy or a girl and a girl, forget about it." I said to myself, this time the boy is going to get the boy. He's going to have a boyfriend by the end of this book. That was really, really important to me.

I know how hard it would be for two boys to really date in the seventh grade. But I want people to be asking, "Why? Why is it so hard? Why is it okay for a boy and girl to walk down the hall holding hands but not two boys?" We need to start asking these questions. So that's pointing the way to a different reality, by raising the questions. And, I kind of like schmaltzy endings, too.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Since *The Misfits* began with Bobby's voice, and you only knew you wanted to write about those four characters, how did it evolve into the no name-calling movement?

JAMES HOWE: Very early on in the book, Addie, who is very outspoken and smart but almost too smart for her own good sometimes, refuses to say the Pledge of Allegiance because she doesn't believe there's really liberty and justice for all in this country. That's something I did when I was in high school, and the reaction of my principal was very similar to the reaction of the principal in the book — he respected my view, agreed I did not have to say the Pledge, but told me I did have to stand with everyone.

As soon as Addie took that form of being outspoken and political, the book started to go in that direction. And before I knew it, the book was about trying to stop name-calling and using the political process to do so. Toward the end of writing that book I thought, "Wow, this could really model something for schools. Maybe schools will start trying to have a no-name day or do something like these characters are doing to end name calling in their schools."

What happened went far beyond that. The idea was picked up by a national organization that started National No Name-Calling Week. This has taken place for a couple of years now in middle schools all over the country. It's been hugely successful, and *The Misfits* has taken on a whole other life, which is really thrilling.

TEACHINGBOOKS: You wrote a sequel of sorts to *The Misfits*, called *Totally Joe*. Did you know when you finished *The Misfits* that you were going to write a companion book?

JAMES HOWE: No. I actually decided I wasn't going to write a sequel to *The Misfits*. You see, I had received letters from a group of eighth-graders raising a lot of questions about the ending of

The Misfits. Kids were okay with the two boys dating, and they were okay with a black boy and a white girl dating. What they said was really hard for them to get their heads around was that a popular kid and a non-popular kid could end up dating. I thought that was really interesting. Those questions got me thinking, “How realistically do I now want to deal with the consequences of what I’ve set up?” I decided to leave the ending open so the reader has to think about it, and not to do a sequel.

Then I started going to more and more middle schools, and over and over again, Joe was the character that kids focused on. They’d ask, “Why did you come up with that character?” or “Why did you make him like that, why does he act the way he does?”

And I could see that not only were they curious, they were uncomfortable. Joe is the gay character, and he’s somewhat effeminate in his behavior. Gay or not, an effeminate boy is going to be targeted. He’s the one that kids get nervous talking about, all giggly and jabbing each other. I thought, “You know, we need to get to know who this boy is.” I think he’s a great character — I love him. I think he’s funny, and he’d be a great friend.

I had had a very hard time figuring out how I was going to tell a story as a sequel to *The Misfits*. And then when I thought about telling Joe’s story, it fell into place. *Totally Joe* picks up where *The Misfits* left off, but it’s told by a different character. It’s much more focused on Joe, so some of the events that are left off the end of *The Misfits* are kind of secondary.

TEACHINGBOOKS: *Totally Joe* uses a unique format. Please describe it.

JAMES HOWE: The premise of *Totally Joe* is that Joe is writing a school assignment, which gives him the ability to tell the bigger story of his life, at the same time moving events forward. The format is an alphabiography, a concept I “stole” from one of my daughter’s teachers. The assignment was to use each letter of the alphabet to describe some characteristic, some quality or some important word about the person and then write about it.

I added Joe’s life lessons to the alphabiography, because as Joe says in his opening letter to the teacher, “I guess you wanted us to think.”

I know how hard it is teaching these days with having to teach to the test and with so many restrictions on the curriculum. But I hope the idea of this assignment is one teachers can use. The life lessons are there to encourage thinking. Like Joe, students will ask, “So, what did I get out of this? What’s my life lesson that I’m going to pass on?” And that’s very empowering, to think, “I’m teaching something — me, the kid, I’m teaching something.”

TEACHINGBOOKS: The life lessons at the end of each chapter make it sound as if *Totally Joe* were a serious book, but Joe has a lot of fun writing it.

JAMES HOWE: 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. And so he would have fun writing this — he would have fun playing with fonts and playing with style. I drove my publisher crazy with this book because of all the design stuff, but it was really coming out of Joe. This is how he would have fun writing this assignment.

TEACHINGBOOKS: There will be those who say *Totally Joe* is pushing a gay agenda. What is your response to that?

JAMES HOWE: That's complete nonsense. My agenda is for people to feel good about who they are and to be able to grow up feeling good about who they are.

I've had some people say that it's unrealistic for Joe to know at 12 that he's gay. Here's my point. If we could all grow up to be who we are naturally, without getting all these other messages telling us we're immoral, we're sick, there's something wrong with us, many of us would have a clearer idea of who we are at a younger age. Imagine being asked who you're taking to the dance without the automatic assumption that it's someone of the opposite sex. Imagine it not being a big deal. Kids could get through their teenage years without all the damage that's done to so many.

I think we're getting there. Despite the climate in the country at this moment that is strongly anti-gay, there's another climate in this country with a lot of young people who are feeling much stronger, much clearer about who they are, and in general feeling more relaxed about issues of sexual and gender identity. Some kids are coming out at 12. They know who they are.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Are there similarities between Joe in *Totally Joe* and yourself as a youth?

JAMES HOWE: Well, Joe is part me, but not strictly me. As with some other characters I've written, Joe is the kid I wish I could have been. I wish I could have had his courage and his clear sense of himself. I grew up in the 1950s. I was gay but didn't know it. I knew I was very different. And I was called names for many of the same reasons Joe is.

I have an adult character, Mr. Kellerman, say in *The Misfits*, "I believed all the names I was called in school and took them with me into the rest of my life." So this deeply affected my sense not only of who I was, but what I was worth. It took me a long time to feel really good about who I was.

And when I got to that point, I said, "Now I'm going to write a character who is who I was but feels really good about it and can talk about some of the things that, even as an adult, I was still feeling uncomfortable about. So Joe is me, but Joe is also a lot of other boys, and a lot of other kids who just feel different for whatever reason.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Are you going to explore other characters from *The Misfits* in future novels?

JAMES HOWE: Yes. I'm planning on writing two more books from the points of view of Addie and Skeezie. Addie's book, I imagine, will be very political. Skeezie's will not. Skeezie's is going to be a whole other kind of book.

Skeezie is the character in *The Misfits* that almost everyone who reads the book says they know the least about. For a lot of kids, he's their favorite character. He's always got something funny to say, and I think they think he's kind of cool. But he's the one I know the least about too.

I find out a lot about my characters as I write them. They reveal themselves to me as I write, and I'm very much looking forward to finding out more about Skeezie. I have some ideas about who he is. I think of all four of the characters he is the most romantic, and I'm going to explore what that is about and where it comes from and why he's so guarded against it.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Your young adult novel, *The Watcher*, is a powerful and multi-layered story.

JAMES HOWE: *The Watcher* is a very psychological book. And it was written in a time in my life where I was doing a lot of soul-searching, dealing with a lot of issues. It was a very personal book for me, and it took me two years to write. I actually had to meet with my editor twice in the

course of those two years to talk with him about the book so that he could give it back to me, because he held my original vision.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Please share the basic premise of *The Watcher* as well as its underlying meanings.

JAMES HOWE: In *The Watcher*, Margaret's circumstances are very difficult and have forced her into a kind of isolation where she feels like an extreme outsider — outside herself even — and she is just desperately trying to figure out how to fit in, to the point where she creates fantasies. She is "the watcher" in the book's title.

Margaret watches others and tries to figure out how their lives can be as perfect as she imagines them to be, and she creates fairy tales in which she becomes a character and they save her. That emerged from my own wanting to belong, feeling isolated and wanting not to feel like an outsider.

When I was writing that book, I had a subtitle in my head: "The Inner Life of Children." Among other things, I wanted to write about the influence of significant adults in a child's life. I think that's an important thing that's not in a lot of books for kids — often the adult world exists almost like it's on some other planet or some parallel universe. When in reality, of course, it doesn't not at all. Kids' lives are deeply affected by their parents and other important adults in their lives, and yet sometimes this doesn't get talked about.

The Watcher is also about redemption. It's about, again, the power of language and words, and in this case finally speaking the truth. And it's about courage, about crossing a line from watching and living from fear to taking action and actually intervening in someone's life and in so doing, not only saving someone else, but redeeming yourself.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Please describe a typical workday.

JAMES HOWE: I have a lot of work that doesn't involve writing; it may involve preparing for school visits or speaking, or it may be responding to mail or dealing with a book that's been published, or that's been written and is in production.

I often get to my writing work in the afternoon, and I like to start out by doing some reading first. I will usually spend a half an hour to an hour reading whatever fiction I happen to be reading at the moment. Reading gets my writer's mind going. Because I'm reading someone else's work, there's none of the tension around what I'm doing with my own book. I can just simply enjoy the book I'm reading, and also I start paying attention to what that writer is doing. That usually gets my wheels turning about my book.

It's always best if I've left something unfinished from the night before. If I haven't finished a chapter, it's easier for me to go back in and pick up where I was than if I've come to a nice, neat stop. Then it's harder to get the wheels turning again.

With some books I do more what I call pre-writing, where I spend quite a bit of time setting the book up. I don't outline. I don't do too much planning ahead if it's a novel. The only books where it's really important to know everything that's going to happen are mysteries, because they're sort of like a puzzle. You have to take them apart to put them back together and you have to know all the pieces. Otherwise, I often let the book just evolve as I'm writing it; I let the characters lead the way — their voices and who they are tend to move things forward.

I'll work until late afternoon or early evening, and then call it a day.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What do you do when you're stuck?

JAMES HOWE: When I go into schools and talk to kids about writing, I often ask them what they do when they get stuck, because I pick up some tips that way. The best thing I do for myself is to read. I go and read something else, and that gets me thinking about writing again.

Sometimes I have to just sit there and keep working it through. I try to ask a lot of questions that will shake up my thinking. In other words, instead of continuing in the same line of thought that I've been on, I'll say, "Well, what if this happened instead, what if I just had somebody I didn't expect open the door and come into the room, or took the characters outside or changed the whole setup of the scene?" Because usually when I'm stuck, I've got my head set about how things are going; something about that isn't working, so I need to shake it up and move away from it.

TEACHINGBOOKS: What do you like to tell students when you visit schools?

JAMES HOWE: I like to tell kids that if they like writing that there's no difference between us, because that's all I was. I was a kid who liked writing. I also had a talent for it — and I do make the point that having talent helps and is important.

I also tell them to really pay attention to how words are used, and to be conscious — and not just in the things they read. If they're watching TV or listening to a commercial, how are those words selling them something? How are those words making them laugh? How do words scare them or make them get that chill up their spine if they're reading a scary book or seeing a scary movie? I tell them to really pay attention to that and then to think about it when they're writing. Think about the effect their writing is going to have — how they are going to make somebody else laugh or feel scared or whatever.

I also just tell them to have fun writing. It's so important — write what you love to write, what you really want to write. Yes, you have to write things for school and it's very important to try to find ways to connect to what it is you have to write so you can enjoy it and be motivated to write it. But when you're just writing for yourself, don't listen to thoughts like, "Oh, I shouldn't be writing this because this isn't real writing."

TEACHINGBOOKS: What do you like to tell teachers?

JAMES HOWE: One of the things that I talk with teachers about a lot is the imagination. And I acknowledge how hard it is in classrooms today to find the time and the room to let their students daydream and imagine and to have space to just let what's going to come out come out and not be so focused on results. It is so crucial, especially for kids today who do not play that kind of make-believe, getting lost in their daydreams, their fantasies, acting them out.

Kids are now much more attached to technology, to TVs, to computers, to their iPods and their video games and all the rest of it. And then when they're in school, they're so driven to produce results that there's very little room for play. I just try to bring home the message of how important that is, while acknowledging how difficult it is to encourage it. But if there's any way to open up your kids' dreaminess, their passions, their imagination, their sense of humor, their voices, so that whatever it is that's inside there can come out, that would be so great. That's what I try to get across.

TEACHINGBOOKS: Overall, what are you hoping to accomplish with your books?

JAMES HOWE: I want my books to open the minds, the thinking — but most importantly — the hearts of my readers. That might seem like an odd thing to say for someone who's known for writing books that are funny. Laughter is very important to me, too. But the most important thing for me is to help my readers be more compassionate human beings toward themselves and toward other people. And sometimes, that's done through humor; because I think when we can laugh we can loosen up and be more open. In a nutshell, 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
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