

STEPHANIE CALMENSON

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Q & A: The author answers often-asked questions

How many books have you written? I've written over 100 books including picture books, poetry, non-fiction books about dogs and nature, and with my friend and colleague Joanna Cole, anthologies and chapter books.

How did you become a children's book writer?

Growing up, I had no idea I would become a writer. I've always loved working with children so I became an early childhood teacher. When that job ended because of budget cuts, I got a job as secretary to a children's book publisher. I became an editor, then Editorial Director of the Parents Magazine's Read-Aloud Book Club. When that job ended because of company reorganization, I became a full time writer. Mine is clearly a "one door closes, another door opens" story, guided by a love of children and language.

Did your experience as a teacher help you as a writer?

Absolutely! My days as a teacher reading to students are my guide. When I have a new idea I ask myself, will this be a book my students would like to hear? Will the book teach them something? Will it make them laugh? Will it comfort them, help them feel valued? Will the language grab them? When I answer yes to enough of these questions, I begin to write.

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DINNER AT THE PANDA PALACE *30 years in print!* "...Only after many rereadings will little ones get their fill." -- *Publishers Weekly*. "...sprightly story in rhyme incorporates a counting lesson.....The theme of hospitality closes the story on a warm, satisfying note."..." -- *Booklist*. "Everyone happily feasts on Dinner at the Panda Palace." -- *Horn Book*

OLLIE'S SCHOOL DAY: A Yes-and-No Book Calmenson, a former kindergarten teacher, savvily encourages the youngest listeners to chime in and be part of the reading process... Readers are sure to catch the pattern and relish shouting out the answers...after they finish giggling...Will this be a popular and raucous first-day-of-school favorite? YES! -- *Kirkus starred review*.

MAY I PET YOUR DOG? The How-to Guide for KIDS Meeting DOGS (and DOGS Meeting KIDS) "Required reading for every dog lover!" – Lisa Von Drasek, Bank Street College; "Dachshund Harry leads the youngest readers through every step of kid-meets-dog etiquette... What is perhaps most engaging about the book is the direct address from dog to child." -- *Horn Book, starred review* *Horn Book Fanfare*  ALSC Notable Video

DOZENS OF DACHSHUNDS "How do you combine counting, dachshunds, and adorableness in one book? You do it with vivid illustrations, rhyming language, and a parade of costumed pups... " -- *Booklist*. "Dachshunds descend in a parade that celebrates their adorableness... A parade of charm." -- *Kirkus*

OUR PRINCIPAL IS A FROG (Book 1 of 8) "This laugh-out-loud riff on The Frog Prince will trigger children's imaginations..." -- *Booklist*..." "...poised to grab the attention of distracted children who might be busy on their devices instead of sitting with a book... a book that almost seems to have animated sound effects. -- *The New York Journal of Books*

THE ADVENTURES OF ALLIE AND AMY: THE BEST FRIEND PLAN (Book 1 of 4) "The humorous plot will appeal to emerging and reluctant readers, while the accessible text will help them gain confidence in navigating the story on their own..." -- *SLJ*