

• Meet the Author •

Kelly DiPucchio

Interview conducted by Toni Buzzeo, career media specialist and author (visit www.tonibuzzeo.com).



Kelly DiPucchio was born during the Cenozoic era, “some-time after the age of dinosaurs and before the invention of the cordless phone.” As a child, Kelly loved dinosaurs and sleeping so it came as no surprise to her family and teachers that she grew up to write a book called *Dinosnores*. Kelly attended college at Michigan State University where her favorite subjects included anthropology, creative writing and coffee. She is also the author of *Bed Hogs*, *Liberty’s Journey* and *What’s the Magic Word?* Kelly rewrites history from her home in Michigan, where she lives with her husband and three dino-mite kids.

***Dinosnores* is a story about one of the most popular subjects of elementary school children. But you’re**

an adult! How did you come to write a dinosaur book?

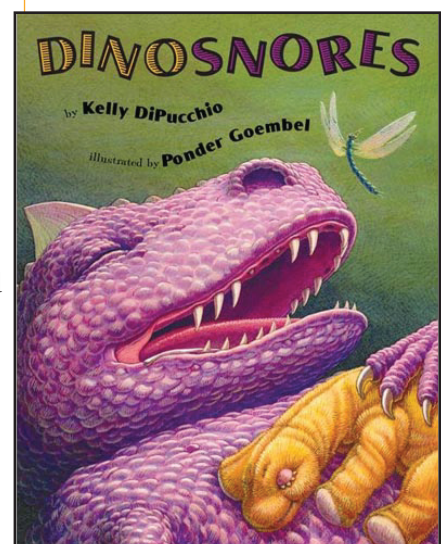
KD: Some people might argue whether or not I’m an adult, but we’ll save that discussion for another time. Actually, *Dinosnores* started with just a title. One night, my oldest daughter said, “Daddy has loud dino-snores!” I immediately thought that “Dinosnores” sounded like a great title for a book. After some quick research, I was very surprised to discover that nobody had ever written a book using that title before. And no, I do not give my daughter a percentage of my royalties for giving me the idea. She gets paid in chicken nuggets and designer jeans.

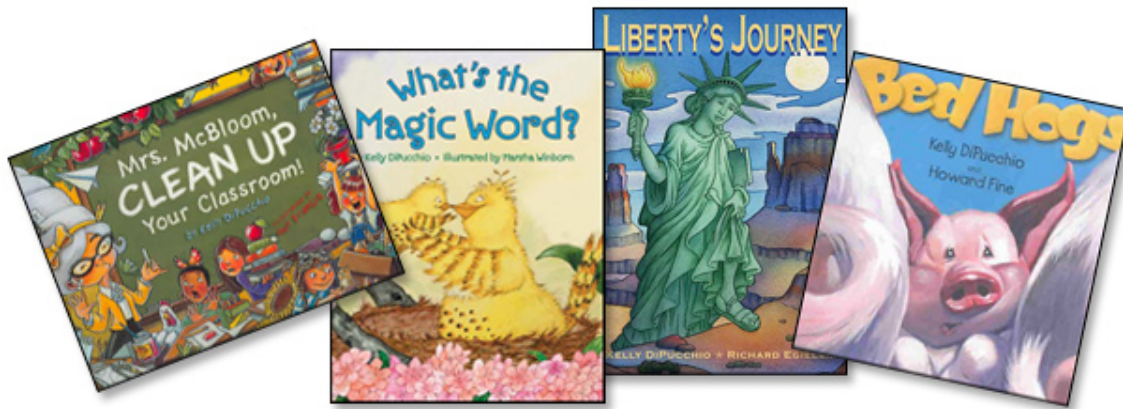
There are many fabulous prehistoric details in your lively text. How much research did you have to do to write this story?

KD: I did do a fair amount of research for this particular picture book, which included playing with little plastic dinosaurs on the floor with my son. When I begin any new fictional story, I often go to the library and create extensive word lists from nonfiction books. I’ve found that these diversified word lists give my creative writing a wonderful jump-start.

Like your picture books *Bed Hogs*, *Liberty’s Journey* and *What’s the Magic Word?*, *Dinosnores* is written in rhymed verse. Why have you chosen to write in rhyme, and what challenges do you face as you do? Do you have forthcoming books written in prose?

KD: In most cases, I don’t “choose” to write a story in rhyme. The rhyme chooses me. When I get a new story idea, I often wait to “hear” the first lines, or snippets of the story in my head. When those lines come to me in rhyme, I usually groan because writing in rhyme can be a real challenge at times. I think the hardest thing about writing in rhyme is revising in rhyme! But when a rhyming story clicks, and everything finally comes together, it can be very exhilarat-





ing, kind of like finishing a *New York Times* crossword puzzle. I do have two forthcoming picture books that were written in prose—*Mrs. McBloom, Clean Up Your Classroom!* and *Grace For President*. I have to say, I really enjoy prose, and I'm much less likely to chew off my fingernails, throw tantrums and sprout gray hairs during the writing process.

The language in *Dinosnores* is a great deal of fun; you seem to specialize in puns, wordplay and alliterative pairings here. Was this a particular pleasure for you in writing this book?

KD: Oooh, I like that! I might use that as an advertising slogan on my business card: “Specializing in Puns, Wordplay and Alliterative Pairings.” It is true that I really love to write and read picture books with multi-layered humor. I think the most successful picture books are those that appeal to both children and adults. When I'm reading picture books to my children, I always appreciate any sophisticated, hidden humor, whether it's in the text or in the illustrations.

***Dinosnores* is a part of the long literary tradition of**

“pourquoi tales.” Did you purposely set out to write a pourquoi tale or was it serendipity?

KD: Non! C'était une coincidence! Hey, my four years of high school French is finally paying off! Seriously, I did not set out to write a “pourquoi tale.” In fact, I'd never heard that term before! As I mentioned, *Dinosnores* started with just a title that I had to build a story around. I thought about dinosaurs and what repercussions might have come about from their loud snoring. That line of thinking led me on a very tumultuous trip back in time that included earthquakes, mudslides and volcanic eruptions. Once I had my

convoluted geological theory in place, the story took off and essentially wrote itself.

How can readers learn more about you and your books?

KD: Well, they could knock on my door and ask me, but I don't recommend that because they're likely to catch me with bedhead and coffee breath. Or they could bribe me for information by sending me ridiculously flattering fan mail and expensive chocolates. (I highly recommend this option.) But probably the easiest way to learn more about me and my books is to visit my Web site, www.kellydipucchio.com.

Books by Kelly DiPucchio

- ***Bed Hogs*** illustrated by Howard Fine. Hyperion, 2004.
- ***Dinosnores*** illustrated by Ponder Goembel. HarperCollins, 2005.
- ***Grace for President***. Hyperion, 2008.
- ***Liberty's Journey*** illustrated by Richard Egielski. Hyperion, 2004.
- ***Monster Makeovers*** illustrated by Leuyen Pham. Hyperion.
- ***Mrs. McBloom, Clean Up Your Classroom*** illustrated by Guy Francis. Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- ***Sipping Spiders through a Straw*** illustrated by Gris Grimly. Scholastic.
- ***What's the Magic Word?*** illustrated by Marsha Winborn. HarperCollins, 2004.