



Q & A with . . .

Joe Tavano, a graphic designer and videotape editor, shares his experiences writing *A Dachshund's Wish*.



🌀 **What inspired *A Dachshund's Wish*?**

I first told the story nearly ten years ago to the publisher of *Traitor Dachshund*, who has been asking me to write it ever since. It involved my dachshund—named Paws—and I related his experiences with the animals he met in the backyard—squirrels, raccoons. And then added some, like the hedgehog, of course.

🌀 **You're a graphic designer working in the television industry. Did that background influence this book?**

Writing a book is a whole different experience but the crossover with my professional work aided my creativity when writing this book. But maybe someday I'll work with *Traitor Dachshund* to make an animated feature based on the book.

🌀 **Would you write another children's book?**

I don't consider myself a writer. I'm basically a big kid. Writing is very hard to do, but I know this book will be a great success because it is a wonderful story with a great message.

🌀 **What did you take from the real-life Paws for this book?**

I think Paws actually told the story; I just wrote the book. Paws taught me to keep my goals clear and simple.

🌀 **Why is *The Great Mae* a cat?**

The Great Mae is modeled on a big orange tabby cat I once had. Paws had a lot of interaction with the cat. And I think the name has a magical feel. Paws sees *The Great Mae* as a cat, but it could be anything. Other animals may see *The Great Mae* completely differently.

🌀 **What would you most like children to take away from this story?**

It's important for children to accept who they are and to accept others as well. Self-respect is key to respecting others. Children need to learn to care about other people and that friends can help each other achieve their hopes and dreams in life.

🌀 **Why write the story with animal characters?**

Because the story is about animals and our interaction with them. The animal experiences are metaphors to which children can relate. Animal characters are non-threatening and are a natural and easy way to convey lessons to children. The story is about our commonality with all living creatures, who feel, yearn and, of course, love.

Sign up for our mailing list to learn about special announcements from *Traitor Dachshund* at www.traitordachshund.com.
A Dachshund's Wish is available everywhere books are sold.

BIOGRAPHY

About the Author

JOE TAVANO created *A Dachshund's Wish* drawing on the reactions of his own dachshund—Paws, of course—to the wild animals he encountered in his suburban backyard. *A Dachshund's Wish* is Tavano's first children's book and a wild departure from his usual activities. A graphic designer and videotape editor, he works in edit suites to create audio and video programming for broadcast and cable television clients such as Nickelodeon, NBC, and Spike TV.

A strong supporter of animal welfare, Tavano designed the 2004–2005 Rescue Dachshund Pin (www.rescuedachshund.com). The Pin is a creative, nationwide rescue-awareness campaign that funds the medical expenses incurred by the Almost Home Dachshund Rescue Society (AHDRS) and its dachshunds in "foster care." Each annual Pin design illustrates the experience of a particular AHDRS rescue dog.

Tavano hopes children learn from Paws that humans and animals share love and dreams. Tavano lives in New York City.



About the Illustrator

Ji Yu earned a degree in fine arts from the Rhode Island School of Design, a master's degree from Hunter College in New York, and has studied in Paris and Rome. *A Dachshund's Wish* is the first book she has illustrated. In developing the pencil and watercolor drawings for this book, Yu revisited her own childhood and tried to see the story through the eyes of a little girl. "I used to look at all the pictures before I read anything, and I tried to imagine what I'd like to see if I read this story as a child." Yu teaches in the art departments of George Washington University and Montgomery College. She and her husband live in Virginia.

