



In Conversation with **COLLEEN AF VENABLE & HONIE BEAM**

adaptor and illustrator of Barbara Park's
Junie B. Jones: The Graphic Novel

ADAPTER!



Photo courtesy of C. Venable



Photo by K.T. Beam

ILLUSTRATOR!

JUNIE B. JONES HAS BEEN A CHAPTER BOOK STAPLE FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS. WERE YOU FANS OF JUNIE B. BEFORE WORKING ON THE GRAPHIC NOVEL?

C: I discovered the series when I was babysitting. It was 1994: I was fourteen, and the book stood out in the pile on the floor since it was VERY well loved with its stained and bent cover. I started reading it as a bedtime story, and after the kids went to sleep, I couldn't stop reading and laughing.

H: I grew up reading Junie B. Jones in the early 2000s! I had a little loft bed that my parents and I would all cram into and take turns reading. It's the first book series I very vividly remember laughing out loud to and being excited to read the next.

JUNIE B. IS KNOWN FOR HER BIG PERSONALITY. IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU LIKE JUNIE B.?

C: It might be easier to say ways I'm NOT like Junie B. I too was always in trouble and always hyper. I completely misunderstood things and took them for fact. I still have my own terms for everything. . . . Maybe the only difference between me and Junie B. is that I can't walk in pat-and-leather shoes. (And have definitely never licked them shiny.)

H: I'm more introverted, but I do have classic Junie B. moments. I have a big imagination—whether that means trouble or adventure—I make up words, and I also love fun outfits. Where Junie B. wears hair bows to school, I had my neckties (my favorite was pink striped with pearls).

COLLEEN, HOW DID YOU APPROACH ADAPTING THIS BELOVED SERIES FOR THE GRAPHIC FORMAT?

So much of it is imagining Honie's visuals and how we can add in all these little Junie B. moments that didn't exist in the original text while staying true to her and the story. Like what would Junie B. be like in a classroom with a wobbly chair? And how exactly does Junie B. pretend to be a horse on the playground? Single lines became full pages of hysterical visuals, honoring Barbara Park all the way. Giving Junie B. the ability to move across the page, in all her silliness, was a delight.

HONIE, HOW DID YOU MAKE SURE JUNIE B.'S SPUNK AND HUMOR CAME ACROSS IN THE ILLUSTRATIONS?

Junie B. is just so expressive in everything she does. That translated to what I call the Big Three: Big expressions! Big movements! Big sound effects! There are a lot of fun visual gags where you can see the moment Junie B. realizes a mistake or an idea clicks without words. She often interacts with the panels by leaning on them or she'll toss something and it, quite literally, flies off the panel—Junie B.'s silliness cannot be contained!

