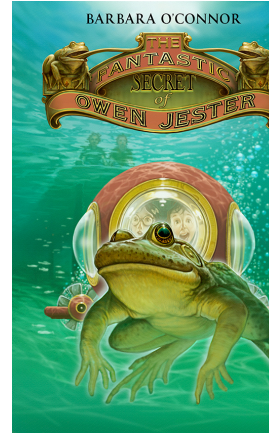


Dear Reader:

I'm glad you're reading my book [THE FANTASTIC SECRET OF OWEN JESTER](#).

When I was your age, one of my favorite things to do was to play in the woods and in creeks. I loved to catch the critters that lived there: salamanders and tadpoles and minnows and crawfish and frogs. One time I was determined to catch the biggest, greenest, slimiest bullfrog I had ever seen in my life. I made a trap out of a bird cage! I actually caught that frog in the bird cage. I kept it in a big plastic tub for a few days and then I let it go. I remember watching it swim away, pushing its froggy legs through the water, and thinking how happy he must have been to not be in that plastic tub anymore.



That bullfrog became Tooley Graham, the bullfrog in my book.

I loved to read when I was your age. I wasn't always able to go to a library. But I was lucky that a bookmobile came to my neighborhood every few weeks. I would race to the corner and wait for it to arrive. Then I would climb inside and search for books. The children's books were always on the bottom shelves, so I had to crawl along the dirty floor on my hands and knees. I usually chose stories that had animals in them, especially dogs.



I also loved to write when I was young, but I never dreamed I would grow up to write books for children! I hope you're enjoying THE FANTASTIC SECRET OF OWEN JESTER. But I hope you didn't have to crawl on a dirty floor to find it.

With warmest wishes,

[Barbara O'Connor](#)