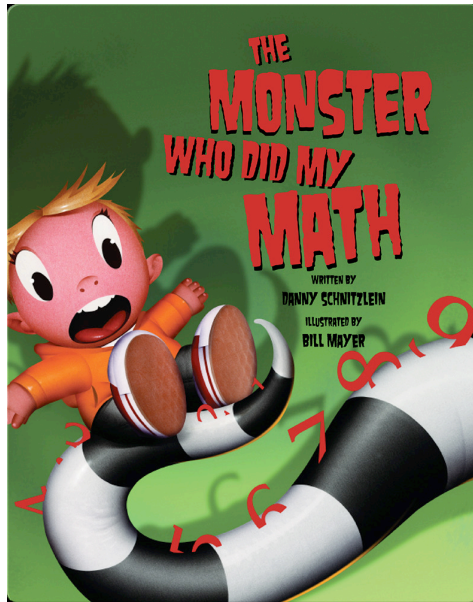


THE MONSTER WHO DID MY MATH
Q and A with author, Danny Schnitzlein



Q: Why did you write The Monster Who Did My Math?

A: Around 4th or 5th grade, I developed a fear of Math because of a thing called “New Math.” I would ask my dad to help with my Math homework and he would get out his calculator and work out the answers. I’d take the answers to school next day and find out my dad got some of them wrong. I thought, “Wow, my dad is a college professor who likes Math, and he can’t even get the right answers. Math is too hard for me.” I shed my fear of Math in college. Most people don’t know that I’m an artist. One day I was making a wood frame for a painting but I had to figure out the outer dimensions before I could saw the wood. I knew the inside dimensions of the frame, so I used Algebra and cross multiplied to find the outer dimensions. I sawed the corners with a mitre saw and the frame fit perfectly! This was an exciting moment in my life. I had used Math to make Art!

Q: Has the book ever been adapted as a play?

A: Yes! Hightower Elementary, in Doraville GA, made a play and invited me to come watch it. This was such a thrill! I especially liked their adaptation because they made the protagonist a girl, which was how I wrote the story.



Q: How was Bill Mayer chosen to illustrate the book?

A: I asked my illustrator friend, Mark Braught, who he would choose and he recommended Bill. Peachtree Publishers agreed. There's an interesting side story that goes along with this. Before I was a published author, my friend Polly gave me the phone number of a friend who had illustrated some children's books. I wrote his name and number in my address book. I called him and he told me what he knew about the children's publishing business. Many years later, after *The Monster Who Ate My Peas* was published, I was paging through my address book and found the name and the phone number of the illustrator I had phoned for advice. It was Bill Mayer! Life moves in mysterious ways sometimes. I really like Bill's description, in the back of the book, of how he created the art for *The Monster Who Did My Math*. "I dipped tranquilized squids into various colored chinks." Of course this is not true. Bill has a hilarious sense of humor, and he's also a world class illustrator.



Q: How is this book similar to and different from *The Monster Who Ate My Peas*?

A: Both books are retellings of the Rumpelstiltskin fairy tale, and the Faust story. I was a big fan of Rumpelstiltskin when I was young. I had one of those records that came with a read-along book, and then a bell would ring when it was time to turn the page. I also studied Faust in Julie Empric's History of Drama class at Eckerd College. I guess those stories were absorbed into my DNA because my first two books draw from the Rumpelstiltskin and Faust stories. As far as differences, *The Monster Who Did My Math* is a little more humorous than *The Monster Who Ate My Peas*, in my opinion. I wrote *The Monster Who Did My Math* for a slightly older reader. The illustration styles are very different too.

