

LETTERS TO ALAN SHUE

AUTHOR OF

PAT THE GNAT/ AND HER STITCHED WITCH HAT

From

Scioto Elementary 3rd Graders

October 23, 2013

On October 23, 2013 Mrs. Dixon read Alan's story, *Pat the Gnat*. It was about Pat's magic stitched witch hat and what she and the kid gnats did on Halloween after the local candy store and costume shop burned down.

After hearing the story, the 3rd grade students made illustrations for it and wrote Alan some letters.

Questions & Answers

Alan compiled the students' questions and wrote responses. Click on a question below to see Alan's response and which students asked the question.

DO YOU LIKE HALLOWEEN?

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE STORY FOR PAT THE GNAT?

WHEN DID YOU WRITE IT AND HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART?

WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING AN AUTHOR?

HOW DID YOU BECOME ONE?

WHEN DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN BUGS?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF BUG?

HOW MANY BOOKS HAVE YOU WRITTEN?

ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE MORE BOOKS?

WILL THERE BE A SEQUEL TO PAT THE GNAT?

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

HOW DID PAT'S MAGIC RAGS TURN INTO ARMY PANTS AND STUFF LIKE THAT?

HOW DO YOU WRITE STORIES SO LONG?
HOW DO YOU GET ALL THOSE RHYMES?
DOES ANYONE HELP YOU MAKE YOUR BOOKS?
HOW DO YOU ILLUSTRATE BOOKS?
WHEN DID YOU START TO WRITE BOOKS?
WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT WRITING?
HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU WRITE?
IS IT EASY OR HARD TO WRITE A BOOK?

Questions from Scioto Elementary 3rd Grade Class

Below are many of the questions the students asked about **Pat the Gnat / And Her Stitched Witch Hat**. Some students asked the same or similar questions. Next to each question are the names of the students who asked it.

DO YOU LIKE HALLOWEEN?

Audrey

Things creepy, crawly, spooky, hairy, make Halloween seem very scary.
I muse on brews infused by gnats, tell tales of magic stitched witch hats.
I quiver, shiver, filled with fright. My pen shakes when I try to write.
I jump at just the slightest touch. Yikes! Yes, I like it very much!

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HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE STORY FOR PAT THE GNAT?

Haley, Lukas, Ben,
Sophia, Hayden, Aiden,
Kyla, Coy, Aidan, Chloe,
Karli, Ainsleigh, Olivia,
Madison, Chuckie,
Christopher

WHEN DID YOU WRITE IT AND HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART?

I know you'll think it strange and weird: one Halloween, Pat just appeared.
She flew in with her broom and hat, and told me we must have a chat.

I wrote down every word she said. She rubbed her hat, then off she sped.
How long it took, I'd have to think. It seemed not much more than a wink.

My favorite part - I'd like to tell - but Pat has cast me with a spell.
If I should say - I've heard from Pat - I'll turn into a zombie gnat!

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WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING AN AUTHOR?

Jake, Chloe

HOW DID YOU BECOME ONE?

For me, an author's life's inviting - I'm someone who likes books and writing. What makes it even more worthwhile, is when kids read my books and smile.

My life as author wasn't planned. I sat around with pen in hand. I thought up stories, then I wrote. I fed the bad ones to a goat. The good ones I kept on my shelf. I published *Chee the Flea* myself. I plan to publish several more. I hope you'll see them at a store.

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WHEN DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN BUGS?

Sophia

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TYPE OF BUG?

My interest started long ago, exactly when, I just don't know. One day I lay down in some dirt, and bugs crawled up my pants and shirt. Mosquitoes, ants, gnats, fleas and bees - they covered me from neck to knees. I watched them as they formed long lines. I noticed that they carried signs. Some, clad in plaid, had sad-faced looks, their signs said: "We should be in books!" "I'll write about you all someday," I said, "if you'll be on your way." As they were leaving, one by one, they told me stories just for fun. I wrote them down all word for word. I hope you like the ones you've heard.

My favorite bug - which type excites me? It's any bug that doesn't bite me!

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HOW MANY BOOKS HAVE YOU WRITTEN?

Hayden, Kayleigh,
Madison, Nick, Chase,
Robert, Kaiden, Hunter,
Kysen, Coleton

ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE MORE BOOKS?

WILL THERE BE A SEQUEL TO PAT THE GNAT?

If all my stories were in stores, you couldn't fit inside the doors.
The bugs would fill up all the shelves, to read tall tales about themselves.
They'd bring their friends in swarms, you see. There'd be no room for you or me.

I'd like to make a book each year, and bring you all some Christmas cheer.
On Christmas Eve, with lights aglow, you'd hear a bug yell, "Ho Ho Ho."
He'd bring a new bug book to read. Then off into the night he'd speed.

A sequel, hmm, for *Pat the Gnat* - I guess I'll have to think on that.
Now how about if Pat got fat and couldn't fit inside her flat?
On Halloween the gnats would riot, they'd put her on a zombie diet.
She'd eat their brains, it sounds quite gory - no trick-or-treating in that story!
Would that plot work? Don't think I'll try it - I'm not sure even gnats would buy it.

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WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Jake

I live inside my head a lot. I wait there for a funny thought.
Sometimes I'm in there half the day. I pluck out words with which to play.
I write them down when I have time. It's kind of weird - they always rhyme.

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HOW DID PAT'S MAGIC RAGS TURN INTO ARMY PANTS AND STUFF LIKE THAT?

Matthew

Pat's magic rags are smart indeed. They know what kind of clothes bugs need. The magic that within them lies, results in perfect styles and size. "The hardest treats," rags say to me, "are circus outfits for a flea."

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HOW DO YOU WRITE STORIES SO LONG?

Isaiah, Rhealyn, Hayden,
Hope

HOW DO YOU GET ALL THOSE RHYMES?

My story's length just all depends, on how it starts and how it ends. The tension in the plot must climb, and all the words must fit and rhyme.

Between my finger and my thumb - my pen is where the rhymes come from. My pen's not smart - how can it think? My secret - I use rhyming ink!

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DOES ANYONE HELP YOU MAKE YOUR BOOKS?

Nick, Star

HOW DO YOU ILLUSTRATE BOOKS?

I write the words and in my brain, cool pictures drop down, just like rain. I tell them to the person who ... will make my pictures all come true. My illustrator quickly fetches ... her pens and then makes detailed sketches. She fills them in with colors bright, until I say, "They look just right!"

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WHEN DID YOU START TO WRITE BOOKS?

Haley, Jake, Lukas,
Hayden, Alanna, Paige,
Hailey

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT WRITING?

HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU WRITE?

IS IT EASY OR HARD TO WRITE A BOOK?

The first time I wrote something cool, was back in elementary school.
Now you can guess without more hints, that I've been writing ever since.

As I've grown up I've come to find, I like how words fly through my mind.
Some words, like birds, will come and perch. Some fly away and make me search.
The best ones always make me smile. I let them nest and stay awhile.
Some tell of bugs with silly looks. I turn them into silly books.

To write a book is sometimes hard. There's things against which you must guard.
Don't make your tales too long by half. Be sure to make your readers laugh.
And writing endings is not easy. Mine often tend to turn out cheesy.

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