

Holly Jahangiri, Author

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Biography

[Holly Jahangiri](#) is a professional writer with over twenty years' experience in technical writing, freelancing, fiction, poetry, and editing.

Holly was born in Daytona Beach, Florida but grew up in Silver Lake, Ohio – her mother's childhood stomping grounds. Her parents nurtured and instilled in her a sense of wonder, curiosity, imagination, and a lifetime love of learning. Holly's parents were just beginning college when she was born; her earliest bedtime stories were chapters from her mother's college Psychology textbooks. "If I am determined, efficient, and able to multitask," says Jahangiri, "it's because I was raised by a woman who could study, cuddle an infant, and read to her child simultaneously." Her voracious reading habits and her passion for writing were encouraged both at home and at school.

Holly discovered Edgar Allen Poe while listening, surreptitiously, to "Fall of the House of Usher" on CBS Radio Mystery Theater. "I was supposed to be in bed. Instead, I turned on the hi-fi, got sucked into the story, and started getting goosebumps. Some of my fondest memories include reading a leather-bound volume of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories by candlelight, during a snowstorm. We were stuck at my grandparents' house, blocked in by nearly three feet of snow. The power went out, the furnace went out, and I had a cold. I was completely miserable," says Holly, laughing. "I wrapped myself up in a blanket, lit a candle, and started reading these really twisted tales."

Holly began college at age twelve, studying French at [Kent State University](#) "just for fun" during the summer between 6th and 7th Grades.

In the mid-1970s, Holly's family moved back to Daytona Beach. "I thought my parents were going to buy a motel on the beach. I had visions of sitting on the sea wall, selling Puka shell necklaces to the tourists. I quickly learned that people who live there year round go to school and work like everyone else." Holly was bored and used her college credits to enroll as a transfer student in night and summer classes at [Daytona Beach Community College](#), while attending high school at [Father Lopez](#) and, later, [Seabreeze Senior High](#). "Patience never was one of my virtues," says Holly. "The goal was to graduate from college. I liked school – loved school – but at the same time, I wanted to get to the finish line."

Midway through college, Holly moved from Florida to Tulsa, Oklahoma, with her family. There, she attended the [University of Tulsa](#), majoring first in Theatre Arts, but switching to Rhetoric & Writing in her Senior year. "Writing? That was fun. It was also the only thing I had enough credits in to call a 'major.'" Knowing that writers need grist for the mill, Holly dreamed, on alternate weekends, of being an Egyptologist, a Volcanologist, a Veterinarian, a Translator, and a Naval Officer. "Honestly, Systems Engineer wasn't high on the list. I used to tell my dad I'd never work with computers – computers were boring, dull, too much math." He got the last laugh when Holly learned "Aspiring Novelist" wasn't in high demand.

She went to work in the oil and gas industry, in computer operations. Years later, after a brief detour to study Law, she figured out how to meld her passion for writing with a more practical career, and became a technical writer. Holly has written hardware and software documentation for an oil company, an airline, a software company, and a large, well-known computer manufacturer. She has also worked as a teacher; a freelance writer; a contributing magazine editor; a freelance designer for a popular, multiplayer, fantasy role-playing game; a product marketing manager for a national online service provider; and finally, a published author with a novel, a collection of short stories, a poetry anthology, and a children's picture book to her credit.

Holly met and married her husband, J.J., in Tulsa. Together, they have a grown daughter, Katie, and a teenage son, William. On a really good writing day, she claims (tongue-in-cheek) to be channeling the spirits of Edgar Allan Poe, Erma Bombeck, and O. Henry. On a really bad writing day, she claims to have poured every last ounce of her creative ability and energy into childbirth, and points to her two amazing kids to prove it. Regardless of whether it's a good day or a bad day, she's grateful for the love and support of her husband - a patient man who has stood by her side for nearly a quarter of a century.

Holly's first children's picture book, *Trockle* was released in April 2008.

Book Excerpts

Trockle

“Mom,” Stephen said, “there is a monster under my bed.”

“No!” said Mom. “Impossible. I distinctly remember spraying monster repellent under your bed just last week.”

“It must not have worked,” Stephen said. He put his empty glass on the kitchen counter and went into the bathroom to brush his teeth. Mom and Dad followed him.

“Are you sure?” asked Dad. “Are you sure it’s not just lumps and bumps, toys and socks, books and bits of construction paper?”

“It’s not that kind of monster,” replied Stephen. “It’s not a time-to-clean-your-room monster. I got rid of those last week. This is a real monster.” Stephen brushed his teeth until his mouth was full of minty-white foam.

“What’s his name?” asked Mom.

Stephen rinsed the foam from his mouth and answered, “Trockle.”

Hidden Lies and Other Stories

Excerpt from “Dealing with the Demon”:

Some days the dragon wins, thought Kaleigh as the horrible creature contemptuously swatted Alia’s decaying corpse with its massive, scaly tail. The enchanted quartz amulet around Alia’s neck pulsed faintly, relaying its belated distress signal across the land. Kaleigh watched helplessly as the red dragon raised one heavy, clawed foot above Alia’s head and brought it down in a ruthless, crushing blow that shattered and silenced the amulet once and for all. Kaleigh winced reflexively, but realized that the young mage was mercifully well beyond pain’s reach.

Dusk crept through the forest, and the dragon grew bored. It clawed idly at Alia’s broken body, then kicked it aside as it thundered out of the clearing and through the forest in search of livelier prey. Still Kaleigh kept her watchful, silent vigil over Alia. Though powerless to help the golden-haired mage, Kaleigh was nevertheless reluctant to abandon her mangled body to further desecration.

“Ho there! What’s this?” cried a small voice from the dark edge of the forest. Kaleigh looked up, startled. With Alia dead, she was mute; she could not even make the stranger aware of her presence. She knotted her fists in frustration.

‘Help her!’ thought Kaleigh, hoping the urgency of her telepathic message might cross the barriers, which rendered her so useless to her beloved Alia. The impish creature bounded from the dripping, dark bushes and glanced around furtively before raiding the dead

mage's pockets. His pointed ears wriggled gleefully beneath a tangle of unkempt, sandstone and chalk colored hair. He filled his own pockets with Alia's coins, and then hefted her great-sword from her side. The sheer weight of it caused him to topple over her body, face-first into a pocket of warm dragon dung.

"Bah!" he screamed, scrambling to his feet. He spat several times and rubbed his prune-like face vigorously against his shirtsleeve. Kaleigh giggled in spite of herself. The little imp kicked the great-sword and bent to snatch up Alia's golden wand. He shook it vigorously. When nothing came of that, he began a little dance of thrust and parry, using the wand as a fencing foil. His movements, for all they lacked in grace or skill, were theatrical. His features became animated as he battled his imaginary demons. He whirled about suddenly, swinging the wand up and over in a great, sweeping arc. The mischievous imp was totally unprepared for the stunning blast of heat and light as the wand misfired, singeing his hair and his tattered, threadbare clothing. With a terrified yelp, he threw the wand into the bushes and scampered back into the darkened forest.

Kaleigh sighed with dismay and frustration. Alia's corpse was growing — ripe. Time was running out. Without Alia, Kaleigh would lose her last link with this world. She could inhabit another body, as she had done so many times in the past, but this one felt right — Alia was so much a part of her now that Kaleigh had no wish to re-establish that connection anew. The two were bonded-separated by time and space, yet sharing the same thoughts and concerns as deeply as if they were twins. Kaleigh looked at her watch. Only 30 seconds left until their lives would be irrevocably separated.

A Puppy, Not a Guppy

"The message here is that you can choose to be miserable, or you can be resourceful and choose to find something to be happy about. It's also about treating people (and animals) the way you hope they'll turn out – not necessarily the way you expect them to turn out." – Holly Jahangiri

"We can't have a puppy, and that's final," said Irma's mother.

"Puppies are a lot of trouble," added Irma's dad. "They chew on the furniture and tear up house slippers."

"But I'll teach him," said Irma. "I won't let him do those things! I'll take good care of him. You'll see."

"No puppy," said Mom and Dad in unison.

"Irma felt hot tears well up in the corners of her eyes. She was about to cry, and that made her mad. Irma knew she looked like an overripe tomato when she cried, and her cheeks flushed redder with embarrassment.

"You're mean!" Irma ran to her room before Mom could send her there for talking back."

Q and A

Q: How did you get started writing?

A: My mom used to make up writing prompts and pin them to a corkboard in my room. One day, it might be a picture. Another day, a newspaper headline or a word on an index card. It was something to do; my mother had no tolerance for a child whining, "I'm bored!" In middle school, I wrote a long essay. My teacher, Mrs. Thorsten, liked it – she scribbled notes in the margins, but it wasn't the critique I remember, it was the fact that someone - a busy adult, a teacher, someone outside the family who didn't have to read it, let alone like it, liked it. I learned to love the red pen. My teacher took time to critique every one of them. The ability to communicate my thoughts and ideas to someone else, to form pictures in their minds using nothing but words - that was heady, powerful stuff. I was hooked. It wasn't until years later that I really saw writing as a viable career option, though - I had this picture of starving artists and writers, and I knew that I would never be happy in a cold-water flat eating rice and beans. Fortunately, I landed a job as a technical writer, and that allows me to write fiction and keep a roof over my head.

Q: Why do you write?

A: I write for the people who enjoy reading what I write. I hear writers say things like, "I write for myself, because I must..." But if it were just for me, alone - I'd just stick to daydreaming. I write to communicate, to entertain, to teach.

Q: Who are your favorite authors and why?

A: I enjoy a wide variety of authors. Some of my earliest influences included Edgar Allan Poe – whose stories sent goosebumps up my arms and kept me looking over my shoulder while I read by flashlight under the covers. And Erma Bombeck – whose keen sense of humor helped me to realize that it's all grist for the mill – showed me that you can choose to laugh or cry, but laughing's more profitable and doesn't give you a stuffy nose. Then there's Guy de Maupassant and O. Henry – they not only taught me how to wrap up loose ends in a surprising little twist, but probably encouraged my bad habit of wrapping up loose ends too quickly when I get tired of the plot and want to move on. I blame them for the fact that it took me so long to write a novel.

Q: What inspired you to write a children's book?

A: When I wrote *Trockle*, I wasn't thinking about writing a children's picture book. I was just frustrated and I was all out of monster repellent. I'd sprayed the last of it in my son's closet, under his bed, in his toy box. It wasn't enough. I thought it might never be enough, but rather than let him lie there in the dark, worrying about the monster under the bed, I'd write him a story – maybe it would help, but regardless, he'd be reading. He had just started learning to read on his own, so I printed the story, flicked on his light,

and handed it to him. 'Let me know what you think.' A few minutes later, he was out of bed. I think he was five or six at the time, and he was offering me edits. Good ones. I revised the story, printed it off, and handed it back to him. He liked it. He went back to bed, and I never needed another bottle of monster repellent.

Q: Do you have a particular writing process or technique that you use?

A: Not really. I try to listen to the characters in my head, and let them take the lead. It's like a dance, and the author can't force the characters to follow. The author has to learn to watch and listen and record.

Q: How do you feel when you complete a book?

A: Satisfaction, relief, exhaustion – and a brief moment where I think, 'I don't ever want to do this again!' that's almost immediately followed by, 'I can't wait to do this again!'

Reviews

What's That Lurking Under Your Bed? A Great Anxiety Reducing Story

Reviewer: Jewel Sample

What's that lurking under your bed? Have you ever thought it was a ghost or a monster? Did your Mom get out a can of Ghostbuster spray or Monster Repellent? At my house we called the can of spray the "Ghostbuster" because my four year old son believed there were ghosts in the closet or under his bed.

Like most young children Stephen's imagination gets the best of him as he finishes his bedtime snack. He is sure there is a monster under his bed. His Mom reassures him that she had used her reliable monster repellent just the week before, so there are not ANY monsters under his bed. Stephen is sure that this monster was not like the others. He even has a name, Trockle. And he snores! How can Stephen convince his parents this is one REAL MONSTER?

Meanwhile, amidst the dust bunnies, chocolate wrappers, and carpet fuzz Trockle is also getting ready for bed. He too is afraid to go to sleep because he believes there is a BIG monster over his bed. What else can be making the ceiling crack and squeak in the dark? His Mother held his fears as NONSENSE. How can Trockle convince his Mother this is one BIG MONSTER?

Stephen and Trockle can not stop thinking about each other as they are trying to go to sleep. What will they do next? Will they become friends or will Stephen's Mom get rid of Trockle once and for all?

Trockle and Stephen eventually work out their fear of each other with their parents' help and were comforted in knowing that neither the monster under the bed, nor the monster over the bed was going to eat them.

Reviewer recommends Trockle as a wonderful afternoon time story for pre-k through elementary school age children and as great educational tool for parents, grandparents, teachers or counseling professionals to use to help explain nighttime fears due to their vivid imaginations.

Reviewed by Jewel Sample, MS; Award-winning author of Flying Hugs and Kisses, also translated: Besos y Abrazos Al Aire (Spanish edition).

Get your Trockle here!

Reviewer: Karen L. Syed

Being without children, but having more than fifteen years in the childcare industry, I've dealt with more than my fair share of bedtime monster issues. Even on a personal level. That's right, there were monsters under my bed. There may still be, but if so, in our minds we have learned to cohabitate peacefully.

TROCKLE is a really neat story that shows us in clear terms that not all monsters are bad, and that mom's are pretty much all the same no matter what species. Stephen has fears, but he also has a great mom who is will doing to do whatever it takes to ease those fears. Trockle, pretty much has the same issues, and a mom who is just as great.

Kids who fear monsters under the bed can really gain comfort from the soothing and loving words of the story as well as the gentle drawings. I give Stephen's story two thumbs up, and in Trockle's case, an enthusiastic "high three!"

Trockle answers the questions "Who's under the bed?"

Reviewer: Steph

"Trockle" is an engaging children's story that answers the age-old question, "Who's that lurking under the bed?" Jahangiri paints as vivid a picture with her words as Vinyard paints with her colors. Children of all ages will enjoy "Trockle."

Stephen is an everyday little boy who has one last snack and a glass of milk before bed. He brushes his teeth and savors his parent's hugs, but not even his mom's can of monster repellent will convince him that the monster under his bed is gone. His dad tries to tell Stephen the monster is only 'socks and books,' but Stephen knows better. When his parents ask for the monster's name, Stephen has an answer - "Trockle." His parents give him a hug, reassure him he'll be okay, and leave.

Under the bed, shoes and pens start to rustle about. Trockle can't get to sleep. There was a monster over his bed! Trockle's mother tries to tell him there are no monsters over the bed, but Trockle knew better. The monster over the bed made the ceiling squeak and creak. He tried to describe the monster to his mother. Trockle's mother finally admitted to Trockle there wasn't a monster over the bed, but a little boy. In their sleep, both Trockle and Stephen wish each other good night.

Trockle was inspired by the bedtime stories the author would share with her son. The book is richly illustrated by Jordan Vinyard. Her wonderful drawings bring life and heart to Stephen and Trockle. Each character is unique; each page captures the reader's imagination.

The story is well paced and keenly plotted. The opening is one that young readers can identify with - the nerve racking nighttime ritual. Stephen's anxiety is one all children share with him. Haven't we thought there was a monster under the bed? What sparkles about "Trockle" is that now the monster under the bed has a face with real feelings, emotions, and anxieties, just like the rest of us. Jahangiri and Vinyard connect with readers not just on the surface, but in their hearts.

The descriptions in the book are right on the mark. Trockle, while sweet, looks like a monster. He's got one big eye and pimples all over. He loves to eat chocolate from Chaco-Taco wrappers.

Young readers will enjoy reading Trockle on their own. It's the type of book children can share with a giggle and a smile with their friends. For an extra touch, the back cover of the book mirrors the front. Trockle is a sure-fire hit.

Sweet Book for Kids Afraid of "The Monster Under the Bed"

Reviewer: Crystalee Calderwood

Trockle by Holly Jahangiri, published by 4RV Publishing, LLC, is the story of Stephen, a boy afraid of the monster under his bed, and Trockle, the monster afraid of the boy ABOVE his bed. Stephen and Trockle ultimately both learn that there's nothing to be afraid of at bedtime.

This very cute story by Holly Jahangiri is accompanied by delightful illustrations by Jordan Vinyard. Stephen and Trockle both come alive on the page in soft dialogue and soft illustrations. Sure to be a hit among youngsters who are afraid of the "monster under the bed," Trockle is a must have for every home.

Trockle - an adorable approach to monster fears!, September 14, 2008

Reviewer: Brandiwyn

Trockle is the story of a little boy who is convinced that a monster dwells beneath his bed. Monster Repellent and assurances from Mom and Dad do nothing to sway his conviction. He goes to bed in fear. Meanwhile, Trockle, the little monster under his bed, is convinced that something scary is in the bed above him, and shares his fears with his cute monster mother. A paradigm shift and adorable illustrations are intended to ease frightened children into bed. A must have for parents of small children with bedtime fears.

Great Stories!

Reviewer: W. Chen

I read Jahangiri and Zabel's short stories, and I really and truthfully think they are better than a Goosebumps book. To me, their writing is really grim (in a good way). It sends a chill down your spine in a more serious way, unlike Goosebumps books, which is intended for the younger age. Some of the stories may take some thinking to figure out, so it's not just staring at words on a page without really reading but still figuring out what happens in the end, and it's not just writing about the usual stuff. Werewolves, abominable snowmen, vampires, and gooey monsters. To me, it is more chilling and scary because most of the stories actually could happen. Yes, a lot of the things have a highly unlikely chance of happening, but in 'real life', there are people who have brain disorders and stuff. Dealing with the Demon was one of the most interesting ones (I've read about five or six short stories so far), because I can sort of relate to it with myself. They were so interesting I even stayed up after twelve o'clock (literally) to read some when I had a headache. The length of the stories are perfect for maybe a small bedtime story that has an ending, unlike reading one or two chapters at night which leaves you hanging and pondering all night. If you like being scared, or have that feeling (I'm not sure how to explain it, but you may figure out what I mean when you read this), then this is the perfect book for you!

Give the Gift of Storytelling

Reviewer: M. Bruner

Zabel and Jahangiri hit the jackpot with this collection of short stories. You will be engaged from the first sentence and the storylines will take you through an array of emotions. Zabel has a gift of telling stories about real people - most seemingly around her own family situations. The locations she describes seem to be authentic (as most are in Oklahoma and I've never lived anywhere else). Jahangiri writes with a faster pace weaving in mystery and intrigue that will keep you guessing. Every reader will find something that will stimulate their love for reading - romance, mystery, science fiction, adventure and even murder. The only drawback is that I wish the authors had clearly identified who wrote which stories. But that does not stop me from definitely recommending this anthology for the reader that likes to complete one story at a time!

Real People behind Hidden Lies

Reviewer: Steph

Zabel & Jahangiri share a collection of over 20 short stories in this anthology. "Secrets" is the theme that is prevalent throughout the stories in this collection. The anthology opens strong with "Hidden Lies." Zabel's writing style is a little slower paced than Jahangiri's, but her strength lies in her ability to tell stories about real people put in real (and sometimes

extraordinary) circumstances. She has a natural ability to tap into emotions and hold the reader's heart captive. Jahangiri's writing moves a quicker, brisk pace. Her stories are intriguing and enjoyable. I thought this would make a great book to curl up next to your fireplace on a Saturday night with a cup of tea. It's a great escape.

Wonderful collection of short stories

Reviewer: Samantha Poe

From joy to despair, from fear to hope, Hidden Lies and Other Stories runs the gamut in human emotions. Romance, mystery, adventure, science fiction - all is included in this collection of short stories by Vivian Gilbert Zabel and Holly Jahangiri.

With their unparalleled storytelling abilities and deep insights into human nature, the authors have created stories which will stay with the reader long after the book is closed.

Babysitter's Review: A Puppy, Not a Guppy by Holly Jahangiri

(from <http://lisamm.wordpress.com/2009/12/14/babysitters-review-a-puppy-not-a-guppy-by-holly-jahangiri/>)

As a new babysitter, I'm always looking for ways to entertain the neighborhood kids that I sit for. Across the street are 5 year old twins who I watch sometimes. A Puppy, Not a Guppy is a very cute book that I'm sure they will love.

The story is about a little girl named Irma who wants a puppy, but her parents won't let her have one. Her friend has a bunch of pets including a pregnant guppy. When he tells her that he will have to flush the baby guppies down the toilet, she feels bad for them and agrees to take them.

At first she thinks they are boring. They don't do anything. But later she discovers they are not as boring as she thought. She thinks of one of the fish as a slowpoke but with her mom's help decides to name him Lightning, hoping that he'll live up to his name. I don't want to give too much away but I think kids will be excited to learn that a pet guppy is trainable, if you are very patient! Parents will be happy because their kids may want a pet that's easier to take care of.

I think little kids will really like this story because it is cute and funny. Irma seems like a lot of kids I know. She's a little grumpy when her parents won't let her get a puppy, but she doesn't throw a tantrum and that's a good lesson for little kids to learn. My little sister wants a kitten and my parents won't get her one, but unlike Irma she HAS thrown a tantrum (more than one). Maybe guppies would be a good idea for her. She could name one Kitty, ha ha!

The illustrations in the book are very cute- even kids as old as I am will enjoy them, especially the guppies. And at the end of the book there are some fun and surprising fish facts- stuff even I didn't know.

I give this book my official Babysitter Stamp of Approval. In my professional opinion, this is a book for children of all ages!

Guppies are Boring

Reviewer: Beverly Stowe McClure "Author" - See all my reviews

Irma wants a puppy, but her parents tell her all the reasons she can't have one. Irma's friend Jimmy has two dogs, a cat, a parakeet, and sixteen pillbugs. He also has a guppy about to have babies and offers Irma some of the babies when they are born. Irma thinks guppies are boring. She wants a puppy, not a guppy.

However, when Jimmy tells her he'll have to flush the babies down the toilet if no one wants them, Irma can't allow that to happen. Poor little guppies. With her mom's and dad's permission she accepts the guppies, even though they're only dumb fish. And Irma is in for a big surprise.

To learn how to take care of her guppies, Irma reads books and makes some amazing discoveries, not only about fish, but also about people and how their names might affect their feelings about themselves. I also learned neat facts about Irma's "boring" guppies and had fun in the process. Even Jimmy learns a thing or two.

Holly Jahangiri includes a "Learn More" section with a link to a Web site where children can discover all sorts of cool things about fish. The "Fun Facts" section of the book will have young readers, and parents, too, rushing to the pet store for fish of their own. This book would be great in elementary school science classes. I would have loved to use it when I was teaching fifth-grade science.

Ryan Shaw's drawings are just perfect for the story. The expressions on Irma's face, ranging from disappointment to surprise to all smiles, make the story even more fun. And the fish--you have to see them for yourself. A Puppy, Not a Guppy will make a great addition to school libraries, public libraries, and your own private library. A story for all ages.

Great for encouraging interest in science and nature!

Reviewer: Heather Shervey Kephart "Heather Kephart"

I had the pleasure of reviewing A PUPPY NOT A GUPPY on my blog a while back. Here's my review:

Warning: This "ain't no" princess book! A Puppy, Not a Guppy is a delightful yarn that will appeal to both girls and boys alike. I'm not a child psychologist (shocking, I know) but it seems to me that after reading this book children will remember the protagonist Irma's positive example of:

- * Coping skills
- * Determination
- * Imagination
- * Kindness towards the underdog
- * Mastering a challenge
- * Scientific curiosity & experimentation

Irma is a lot like I was as a child. Admittedly, I liked my Barbie dolls. And Ken. And Skipper. And my dollhouse and Barbie Corvette and... you get the picture. But I also liked to hang out by the ditch near our local park and collect tadpoles, knowing that soon they would magically sprout little legs and begin to hop around our garage. The ones that managed to escape the wheels of my dad's Vega hopped their green selves right out the garage door towards a life of adventure, perhaps eventually making their way back home to the ditch. I like to think that they did. But I digress...

It's all about balance. There's nothing wrong with allowing your daughter to devour Cinderella, and there's everything right with buying her books like A Puppy, Not a Guppy that are certain to stoke her natural interest in science and nature.

For anyone who has, knows, or has ever been a child

Reviewer: A. Bender

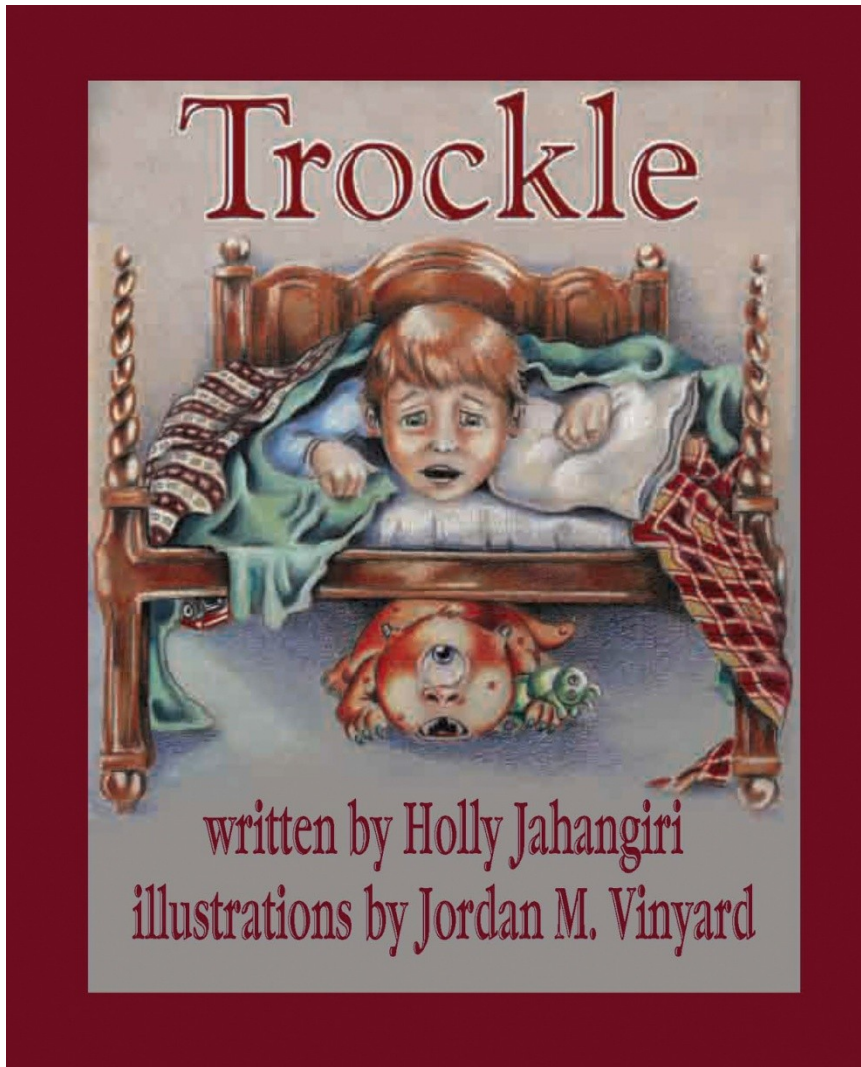
When Irma's friend Jimmy's guppy has babies Irma asks her parents if she can have a few. This is after her parents say no to a puppy. At first Irma is bored by her new finned friends, but soon learns there is more to these guppies than swimming and eating.

What a charming story! And yes, I read this to myself, by myself and enjoyed every minute. Everyone can learn a little something from Irma and her guppies. A Puppy, Not a Guppy is a delightful story and is a recommended read for anyone who has, knows, or has ever been a child.

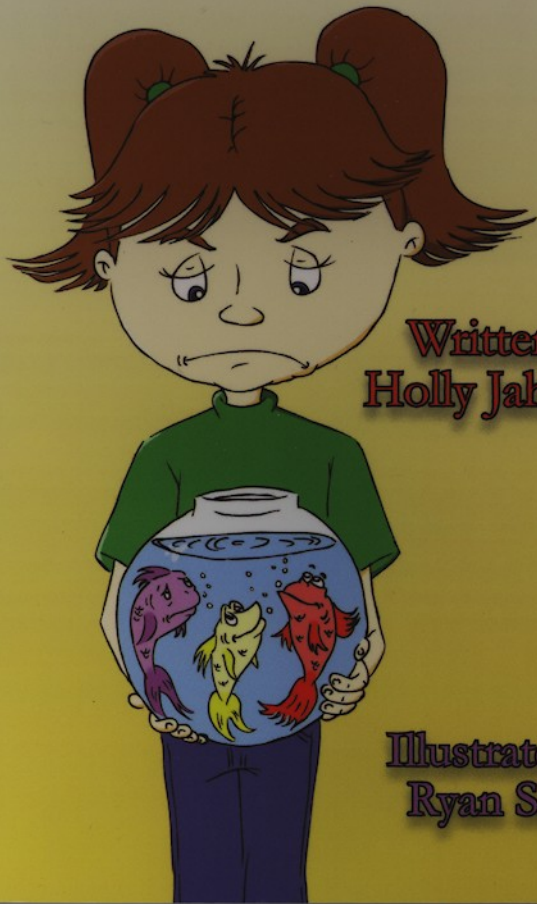
Author Photo



Book Cover Photos



A Puppy, Not a Guppy



Written by
Holly Jahangiri

Illustrated by
Ryan Shaw