Laugh Out Loud

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For Aubrey Poole and Jenny Bak.

—JP

For all the teachers who make reading fun!

—CG

Chapter 1

Dream Big!

Hi, my name is Jimmy and you're reading one of my books!

Well, actually, it's *your* book. Or the library's. Or maybe it's your friend's or your cousin's or your sister's and they lent it to you, which means they're sort of like a library (which is totally awesome, by the way).

The point is, I, Jimmy, published this book. That's right. I made it at my own book-making company called...ta-da: JIMMY!


JIMMY
FRESH IDEAS
Plot twists and turns

I have to tell you: seeing that JIMMY logo on the cover of this book is pretty cool.

You want to go back and look at it again?

Go ahead. I'll wait.

(While you're checking it out, I'll hum something from *Echo* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, one of my favorite books about the power of music!)

You're back? Great!

For me, that little JIMMY thingy is my dream come true.

I don't know this for sure, but I think the most important thing in the world is for kids to have dreams.

What's yours?

You do dream, don't you? And not just when you're sleeping. I'm talking about a BIG, wide-awake, I'll-do-whatever-it-takes-to-make-it-happen kind of dream. Something like winning the Olympics, finding the cure for a scary disease, stopping your little brother from gumming up the Xbox controller with peanut butter again, or running your own book company.

Fact is that ever since I was a little kid (yeah, yeah—soooo long ago, right?) I've loved books.



You ever hear that saying, "Do what you love, love what you do"? Well, that's exactly why I wanted to start my own book company.

I know how crazy that sounds. Laugh-out-loud nutso. At least that's what all the grown-ups in my life kept telling me.

"That sounds crazy," said my uncle Herman.

"Laugh-out-loud nutso," added Aunt Irene.

"Run a book company? You?" said this bald guy named Jeff. "You're just a middle schooler! You won't stand a chance, kid. I'll crush you like a cockroach—just like I crushed all the other, *older* cockroaches who came before you!"

(Jeff, I think, runs his own book company.)

But like I said, a kid has to have a dream before any of his dreams can come true.

So here's how everything happened; how an ordinary kid like me got his own publishing company. It's so exciting, I could write a book about it.

So guess what?

I did!

Chapter 2

My Marvelous Visitors

Okay, here's how my book company got started.

Late one summer night, I went walking with my dog, Quixote, which, by the way is pronounced KEY-HO-TAY. That's right. I named him after the lead character from the classic Spanish novel *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. (Don't ask me how to pronounce *his* last name. I'm still trying to learn how to say *¿Dónde está el baño?*) It's all about this guy who is an epic dreamer and fights windmills. He's kind of a weird dude.

Anyway, we weren't too far from our house in

San Jose, California, and I was reading *The Marvels* by Brian Selznick.

Yep. I love books so much I can walk and read at the same time.

Unless there is an open manhole. Or a curb. Curbs are tough.

Anyway, have you read *The Marvels*? The first half is told completely in pencil drawings: Crashing waves are about to sink the *Kraken*, a whaling ship, where our hero, Billy Marvel, is putting on a show for the sailors.

Man, I was totally lost in Mr. Selznick's amazing tale.

So lost, I didn't notice the creepy clump of trees Quixote and I had just wandered into.



We kept walking deeper and deeper into the darkness, because I kept falling deeper and deeper into Brian Selznick's swirling tale of adventure.

Hey, when I'm into a book, I crawl in all the way!

On the illustrated pages, lightning flashed and thunder boomed. Billy was about to be swept overboard as the ship sank!

I could hear the wooden beams of the *Kraken* creaking and groaning as the waves pounded its sides.

Splinters and wood chips showered down all around me.

(Yeah, actual wood stuff falling from the sky was a little weird. Even for a guy who totally lives in his imagination like me.)

Then the crackling and snapping grew louder. It sounded like trees were exploding all around me! Seconds later, the splintering sounds were blasted away by the humongous rumbling THWUMP and WARBLE of unearthly engines.

The darkness was replaced by a dusty shaft of bright white light.

I finally looked up from my book. Quixote looked

up, too. Then he whimpered and tucked his tail between his legs.

Because the two of us were standing right where the hovering alien spaceship wanted to land.

