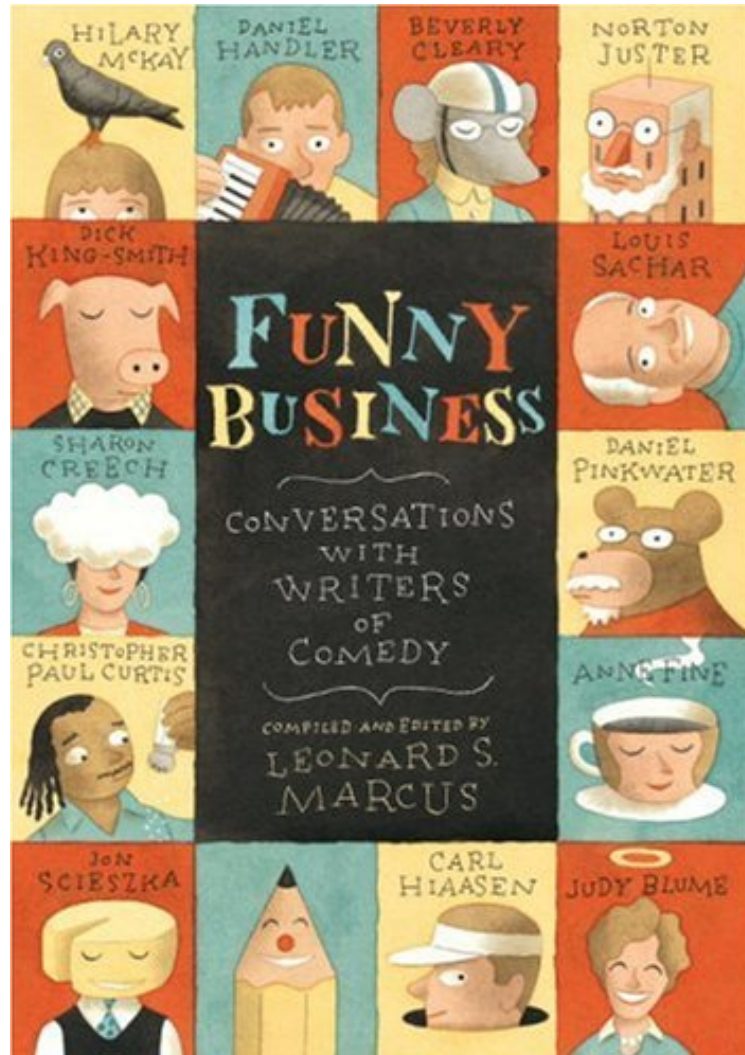


## Funny Business: Conversations with Writers of Comedy

Various

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**Various : Funny Business: Conversations with Writers of Comedy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Funny Business: Conversations with Writers of Comedy:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Light on the Business, Low on the FunnyBy frank silversteinThese are much fluffier interviews than I'd have liked. Doesn't really ask the hard questions and let's the interview subjects blather on about random stuff. Still, you get some insight into the specific writers and if there's someone you really admire, it might be worthwhile to get the book so you can see what they've got to say.0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Makes you laughBy ShaunaThis book was a delight to read and add to my collection of books.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable compilationBy Socratic ParentFunny Business: Conversations with Writers of Comedy, compiled and edited by Leonard S. Marcus, surveys a dozen beloved authors

of young adult literature, focusing on humor as a common theme: Judy Blume (*Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*), Beverly Cleary (*Beezus and Ramona*), Sharon Creech (*Walk Two Moons*), Christopher Paul Curtis (*Bud, Not Buddy*), Anne Fine (*Alias Madame Doubtfire*), Daniel Handler (*Lemony Snicket*), Carl Hiaasen (*Hoot*), Norton Juster (*The Phantom Tollbooth*), Dick King-Smith (*Babe*), Hilary McKay (*Casson Family* and *Conroy Sisters* books), Louis Sachar (*Holes*), and Jon Scieszka (*The Stinky Cheese Man*). Marcus's own skill and wit as an interviewer and author shine through from his dedication to "Thing One and Thing Two" to his shortest chapter, which is nothing more than an amusing e-mail from Daniel Pinkwater declining to be interviewed. Each author comes alive through personal history and insights in his or her own voice. Photographs, manuscript pages, correspondence, and short passages from well-known books interspersed throughout the interviews add visual appeal and interest to the text. There are a handful of mildly profane responses—one from Hiaasen, one from Juster, and several from Scieszka. Overall, however, the content is appropriate for middle grade readers and will also appeal to anyone interested in writing, publishing, or simply understanding what it is that makes people laugh. Marcus explores the subtleties of humor with each author, discovering many underlying truths. Anne Fine tells Marcus, "The pain of being aware of what is going on around you is often what galvanizes a person to wit and humor." She also notes that "in Shakespeare the jester is always the one who's given license to say whatever he wishes." All who love any one of these authors and everyone who appreciates quality young adult literature are sure to enjoy this thought-provoking compilation. Laurie A. Gray Reprinted from the *Christian Library Journal* (Vo. XIV, No. 5, October 2010); used with permission.

What makes funny FUNNY? An esteemed anthologist interviews thirteen favorite children's authors — and asks them to share their trade secrets. **DO YOU EVER MAKE YOURSELF LAUGH WHILE YOU ARE WRITING?** "A joke isn't a joke if you need to explain it," notes Leonard S. Marcus. "Even so, the hidden clockwork of comedy . . . has long been considered one of the great riddles of life." There are many kinds of humor, but capturing their essence on paper is a remarkably difficult (and often undervalued) skill. So how do authors create books that not only stand the tests of time but also make us laugh? In thirteen fascinating interviews, well-loved writers of humorous books for children discuss an array of topics, from their sources of inspiration to the ways they began writing, from their revision processes to childhood anecdotes to the value they place on comedy in their work and lives. Beautifully designed and thoughtfully edited, this collection is bound to tickle the fancy of children and adults alike.

About the Author Leonard S. Marcus is one of the world's most respected writers about children's literature. His essays, interviews, and reviews appear in the *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW* and many other publications, and he has a regular column for *PARENTING* magazine. Among his numerous books are *THE WAND IN THE WORD: CONVERSATIONS WITH WRITERS OF FANTASY* and *MINDERS OF MAKE-BELIEVE: IDEALISTS, ENTREPRENEURS, AND THE SHAPING OF AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE*. He lives in Brooklyn.