# A conversation

## R.L. Stine

## **Questions & Answers**

Goosebumps

### Q: Why do you think Goosebumps has endured for more than twenty years?

A: I am totally amazed by this. I feel so privileged to be able to scare so many generations of kids. I think the series continues because everyone likes a good scare.

### Q: What inspired you to call the series Goosebumps?

A: I was stumped. I couldn't think of a name for the series. Then I saw an ad for a TV station that was showing horror movies. The ad said, "It's Goosebumps week on Channel 11." There it was! I knew that had to be the title.

## Q: What is the most surprising thing that has happened to you in the last 20+ years as a result of the popularity of Goosebumps?

A: Everything that has happened to me has been amazing and surprising. I got the chance to do things that I dreamed of when I was a kid: I got to travel around the world; I had my own Goosebumps attraction at DisneyWorld; I've been on TV and had three TV series. I got to throw out the first pitch at Yankee Stadium (actually I let my son do that). I met some of my all-time heroes, including Ray Bradbury. I have a movie based on my books. But the biggest thrill was and continues to be meeting and hearing from so many kids who enjoy my books.

## Q: TIME.com listed your Twitter feed (@RL\_Stine) as one of the "140 Best Twitter Feeds" out there. What do you enjoy most about Twitter/social media?

A: Twitter is fun because it lets me stay in touch with all my original readers who grew up with my books. I love hearing from readers instantly on Twitter. And I love being able to tell them about the things I'm doing and thinking about instantly.

### Q: What is your favorite TV episode?

A: My favorite TV episode was The Haunted Mask. Surprisingly, it was the first Goosebumps show Scholastic Media ever made. I think it's very scary, the mask is horrifying, and the actress playing Carly-Beth was just perfect.

### Q: Are you surprised the TV show has been on for so many years?

A: I'm so happy the TV shows are still available today. I think the show continues to gather viewers because everyone likes to laugh and scream in horror—especially when they know they're safe in their own living room.

### Q: Your recent series Goosebumps HorrorLand was set in a scary theme park. Do you have a favorite theme-park ride?

A: Here's the truth. I love theme parks but I'm a real chicken on rides. I'd rather invent scary rides for my books than go on them for real.

### Q: What is it about ventriloquist dummies?

A: I've always thought dummies were scary. There's something about those dead wooden eyes staring at you and then suddenly coming to life. Creepy!

### Q: Slappy is a villain that the fans love to fear. What makes him so popular?

A: Face it—all of us would like to be a little mean and a little rude sometimes. Slappy is mean and rude ALL the time. I think that's why the fans love him. Slappy plays a big part in the Goosebumps Movie.

### Q: Do you own a ventriloquist's dummy? If so, has it ever insulted, chased, or attacked you?

A: I do own a ventriloquist's dummy. It looks just like me! So far, it hasn't ever chased me or attacked me. But you know, people have told me that dogs always sense ghosts and evil things before humans do. Well, my dog, Minnie, who is normally a very quiet, calm dog, is absolutely terrified of the dummy. She barks at it and shivers with fear whenever she sees him! So now I can't help wondering if she knows something about the dummy that I don't know.

# A CONVERSATION

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### Q: Goosebumps books are often called a "safe scare." What does that mean?

A: They're scary but never too scary. Kids know they can read them and have creepy adventures, but they'll never go too far. They give you shivers but not nightmares.

### Q: What kind of feedback/comments do you get from kids about Goosebumps?

A: I get tons of mail and email from readers every week. It's one of my favorite things about being an author. Sometimes kids send me story ideas. Believe it or not, their ideas are a lot scarier and more gruesome than my ideas!

### Q: What advice do you have for readers who hope to write their own books someday?

A: My advice is to read as much as you can, and to try and write something, anything, every day. Think of it this way—when you write, you are a writer!

### Q: Why did you decide to write scary books?

A: I always liked scary movies and books. When I was about eight or nine, I started reading scary horror comic books. They were called Vault of Horror and Tales from the Crypt. And my brother and I went to every scary movie. We didn't get scared—we always LAUGHED!

### Q: What scares you? Do you have any phobias?

A: I have one phobia—I can't jump into water. I have to step into a swimming pool; I can't jump or dive in. My nephews think it's a riot that a scary guy like me is afraid to jump into a pool!

### Q: Do kids come to your house for Halloween? What do you give out?

A: Kids come to my apartment in New York City because I have a skeleton and a cupful of eyeballs and a lot of creepy stuff. I always give out copies of my books along with the candy bars.

## Q: Goosebumps hundreds of millions of books in print worldwide. When did you first realize that Goosebumps was going to be such a huge success? How did you celebrate?

A: I was in my hometown of Columbus, Ohio, driving to a bookstore for a book signing. I remember I was stuck in a huge traffic jam and I was really worried I would be late and was growing more and more annoyed at all the traffic. When we finally approached the bookstore, I realized that the traffic jam was caused by all the people who were coming to see ME! It was my first traffic jam! I celebrated by signing hundreds of books!

### Q: What's the weirdest fan letter you've ever received?

A: It's the weirdest and also my favorite. Here goes:

"Dear R.L. Stine. I have read 40 of your books and I think they are really boring."

### Q: Goosebumps is now a movie starring Jack Black as "R.L. Stine". How does it feel to have someone play YOU in a movie?

A: It feels very strange. Jack is a sinister version of me. I think he's hilarious in the movie. Every time I see him onscreen, he makes me laugh.

### Q: Are you excited to have a Goosebumps movie after all of this time?

It's a thrill to have my books and characters in a major motion picture. Just as it's a thrill that readers still enjoy the Goosebumps books today.

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