



# Brontorina

JAMES HOWE

illustrated by RANDY CECIL

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## *A Note from the Author*

The inspiration for *Brontorina* came from a desire to combine two elements that would not seem to go together, a tendency I've had since my first book about a fuzzy little bunny who happens to be a vampire. I wanted to write about something that would have popular appeal. The first thing that came to mind was dinosaurs, and once I thought *dinosaurs*, I thought *boy book*. Given my history of being somewhat subversive when it comes to gender roles, my next thought was, how do I turn this “boy book” into a “girl book” and blend the two into a book for everyone? When I thought *girl book*, I thought *ballerina*. That was it! A big bulky dinosaur who dreams of being a ballerina, and—most important—has the grace and ability to make her dream come true. All she has to do is overcome the obstacle of her size.

Even though I have written many books about being “different” (or *oneself*, a word I prefer to *different*), I had never written one before about size or body image. I didn't know that's what I was doing as I began to write, but that's what the book turned out to be about. I couldn't be happier because I think that's such an important thing to address, especially with so many children these days having weight issues. Also, something I didn't realize as I began writing was that this is not a book about a character who determines her own fate by sheer willpower. This is a story about the kindness, determination, and intelligence of a whole community of people working together to help one person (or, in this case, dinosaur) to realize her dream.

I am delighted that Randy Cecil is the illustrator of this book. His palette, style, and sly sense of humor are a perfect match for my words, and—as happens with the best illustrators—he has created visually a world I could only see as a sort of half-formed dream as I wrote. I love how he has brought these characters—and Madame Lucille's Dance Academy for Girls and Boys and Dinosaurs—to life!



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