

Q&A with DAVID LaROCHELLE and MIKE WOHNOUTKA

David: Hey, Mike! How would you like to play a game?

Mike: Now? I thought we were going to interview each other about our latest book.

D: We can do that later. Here's the game: go and get something that begins with the letter *T*.

M: If you say so. How about this? It's my TENNIS racket.

D: Terrific job, Mike! Now it's my turn. Give me a letter.

M: Go and get something that begins with the letter . . . *P*.

D: You betcha! And here it is...my LAVENDER LAVA LAMP from the living room.

M: I hate to break the news to you, David, but LAVA LAMP doesn't begin with the letter *P*.

D: Of course it does, Mike! Haven't you read our new book, *Go and Get with Rex*?

M: I have. And if it is finally time for our interview, I have a question. Do you remember how you came up with the idea for this story?

D: I do. We both like to play games. In fact, we're both members of the same game night group. On Friday evenings during the winter, we get together with friends for a potluck dinner and an evening of playing games that we've created ourselves.

M: And then the pandemic hit.

D: That's when we turned to virtual game nights. When it was my turn to create the games, I needed to think of a group game that could be easily played over the internet. The result was an alphabetical scavenger hunt. It was fascinating to see the creative things that people brought back for various letters, such as a ROBOT and TOILET PAPER.

M: We have a very clever group of friends.

D: Later, when I was working on story ideas, I remembered this game and wondered if a wild letter-based scavenger hunt would make a good children's book.

M: Let's hope so.

D: I love playing games, but I love making games even more. My hope is that our book will inspire kids, families, and educators to play their own game of *Go and Get*. Okay, Mike, I've talked long enough. Tell us something interesting about *illustrating* this book.



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M: When I first saw your outline for *Go and Get with Rex*, I thought it was brilliant and instantly knew I wanted to be the illustrator.

D: With a compliment like that, no wonder I love having you illustrate my stories.

M: When I started the sketches for the book, since Rex and the other characters use lots of different modes of transportation, I was definitely inspired by Richard Scarry. He was one of my favorite illustrators as a kid, and I remember poring over his books, especially *Cars and Trucks and Things That Go*. As I began working on the final paintings for *Rex*, the vehicles started to become more and more detailed. I loved this contrast that was happening between these cute characters and the more realistic trucks and other things that go. Here are a couple of my favorite illustrations from *Go and Get with Rex*.

D: Richard Scarry would be proud, Mike.

M: Thank you. Speaking of games, we have another book coming out later in the year that's also based on a game: *Mr. Fox's Game of "No!"* Do you want to say something about it?

D: No!

M: Can you tell us how you came up with the idea for the book?

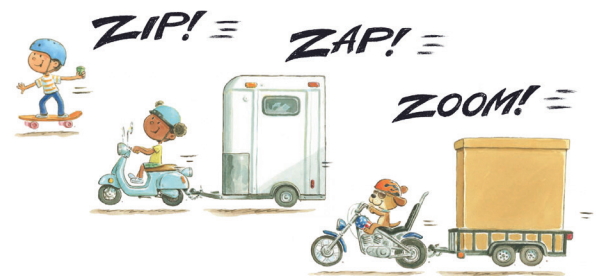
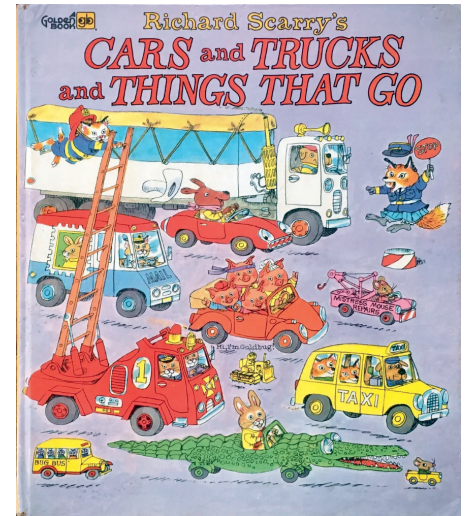
D: No!

M: Can I at least show everyone a sample illustration I painted?

D: No way would I ever stop you from sharing your artwork, Mike.

M: *Mr. Fox* will be the eighth book we've created together over the past ten years. Do you think we'll continue to collaborate on books?

D: No doubt about it!



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