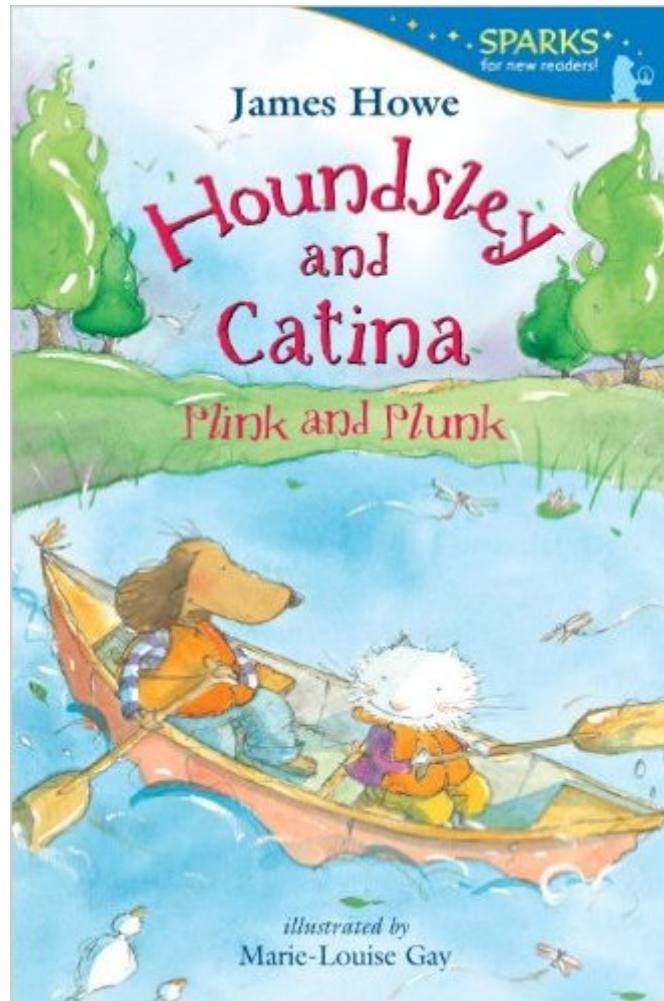


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# Houndsley And Catina Plink And Plunk: Candlewick Sparks



## Synopsis

Houndsley loves to canoe. Catina loves to ride bikes. But when Houndsley takes Catina out canoeing, she chatters the whole time, drowning out the sounds Houndsley loves, like the call of birds or the plink and plunk of the paddles. And when Catina wants to go biking, Houndsley balks at going, even though Bert says he wants to come along. What is wrong with Catina? And what is wrong with Houndsley? Luckily, with Bert's help, they discover that the things you're afraid of are easier to do with a good friend or two at your side.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 480L (What's this?)

Series: Candlewick Sparks

Paperback: 48 pages

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Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.1 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #230,204 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Water Sports #402 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Chapter Books & Readers > Intermediate Readers #792 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Cats

Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

I first heard about Houndsley and Catina in the best possible way. The way that's even better than librarian recommendations, blog reviews, or advanced reader galleys. A year or so ago I was sitting at my reference desk, minding my own business, when a child that couldn't have been much more than six years of age came up to me. "Do you have Houndsley and Catina?" Part of my training is meant to encourage me to avoid the blank-stare. The blank-stare is death to any reference question. I covered up my confusion with a perky, "Let's see!" and then desperately started searching the catalog. To my amazement we did indeed have something called "Houndsley and

Catina" in the collection. More amazing still, it appeared to be by that James Howe fellow. You know the guy who wrote all those "Bunnicula" books then turned around and started doing awesome YA novels as well like "Totally Joe"? Now he was doing early readers? I gave the now ecstatic girl one copy, then snatched the other from the shelf and started reading it on the sly. You know how sometimes something brilliant falls through the cracks? Yeah. That was definitely the case here. Within seconds I was enthralled, then depressed. How had I missed this? It was small comfort when the book won the E.B. White Readaloud Award later that year. I still wished I'd known enough to read it and recommend it and review it when it was first available. Now I have that chance again.

Houndsley and Catina have continued their small, quiet adventures unabated and the fourth of these "Plink and Plunk" manages to use the easy reader format to cover issues like acceptance and masking your real feelings for the sake of your friends (to the detriment of everyone). Heavy stuff in a nearly weightless little package. Houndsley has a bit of a difficulty. He would very much like to go canoeing on this simply beautiful day but his friend Bert is unavailable. That leaves Houndsley's best friend, Catina, who is a wonderful person but a jabberjaws when it comes to canoeing. While Houndsley would prefer to just sit and enjoy the "plink" and "plunk" of the canoe oars, Catina insists on talking nonstop, until some bumpy water renders her eerily silent. Later, Houndsley receives a bike from his cousin and at Catina's urging joins her on a bike ride. The trouble? He doesn't know how to ride a two-wheeler. Fortunately Catina and Bert teach Houndsley and Catina confesses that the reason she speaks without cease when she's canoeing is because she's nervous and doesn't know how to swim. Houndsley and Bert (who is apparently good at everything) teach her as well, and in the end the three friends go canoeing at last in sweet and utter silence.

If you are unfamiliar with the format of a Houndsley and Catina book then the first chapter of this title is going to confuse you. Often an early reader contains short little chapters that are self-contained stories. "Frog and Toad" books do this a lot. In this book, however, the first chapter ends on a mystery. Houndsley and Catina have just experienced some rough water and her stream of blather has come to an abrupt cease. Why? Chapter Two immediately switches scenes, and if you didn't know that the story was going to solve the mystery later on you might get the feeling that James Howe had the attention span of . . . well . . . of Catina. Instead, parents who are reading this book to their children (or are having the books read to them) can ask what the kids think after that initial chapter. Why do you think Catina got so quiet? Are there clues in the illustrations? Spoiler Alert: yep.

From book one, the pairing of Marie-Louise Gay and James Howe was inspired. I saw both Ms. Gay and Mr. Howe speak at an American Booksellers Association dinner where they accepted their E.B. White Readaloud Award. From the audience where I sat it seemed to me that Ms. Gay was Catina-esque.

She had a lovely French-Canadian accent and beautiful flowy clothes. James Howe was quieter and less prone to effusion, but pitch perfect in his choice of words. They are very much a kind of Houndsley and Catina of their own. Howe provides the heart and the simple touching phrasing. Gay brings, on her end, sweet watercolors that capably convey both the tone and the feel of the book in full. Ms. Gay knows her way around a paintbrush, and if you've seen her work on books like "Please, Louise!" or "Stella, Princess of the Sky" then you will know what I am talking about. On top of all that is the fact that the clothing choices in this book are inspired. Catina is prone to delicate little fabrics that contain full swirls of color. Even her bike helmet (tangerine with tiny holes at the top for her ears) is decorative. Houndsley, in comparison, is perfectly comfortable working in his garden in an old undershirt and some beat up workpants. They are what they wear, without ever really overdoing it. I'm so pleased to finally, belatedly, get around to reviewing one of the books in this series. It's a review that is long overdue. Finding good easy readers is a chore for a lot of parents. You want something simple, but meaningful. Quiet, but also fun. Howe and Gay provide with each and every book they do. And this fourth in the series constitutes the perfect spring or summer read. Everything you want in an easy reader. Everything you need in a book.

My 4.5-year-old son, husband and I love the Houndsley and Catina series! The stories highlight compassion and love in friendship as well as the simple pleasures of everyday life. A lot goes on in the stories (playing, creating, surprises, and spontaneity), which helps keep youngsters engaged. In the "Plink and Plunk" book, the story beautifully illustrates difficulties/fears (that is, bike riding and swimming) being confronted with friends' understanding and compassion. After we read the story for the first time, my son said "That's a pretty story." I applaud Howe's engaging writing style. And the illustrations parallel the tales' beauty.

My eight year-old daughter loves Houndsley and Catina! They are lovely books with sweet characters who truly care about each other. They are absolutely delightful!

I picked up a Houndsley and Catina book at the library by chance and loved it, as did my daughter. They are well written and are about the relationships between friends. Love them! This particular book is about trying and learning how to do new things, and getting past fears.

What a wonderful book! I read this to my 5 yr old and my 7 yr old listened as well. So refreshing to see a book with some real substance and one that demonstrates such love and compassion for

ones' friends. My 7 year old has been very frustrated that she has not been able to master riding a bike. This was a lovely story about understanding others' fears and limitations and how to be a good friend.

My boys love this book! Great for my 1st grader to read to my 2 year old! Houndsley and Catina are wonderful characters! Charming!

I loved the story, however my nephew didn't :( I am trying find a series that he will fall in love with and in turn love reading

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