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**PRESS RELEASE**

**If Bugs Could Talk:**

**A Child Becomes a Hero by Communicating with Insects**

A fight between two kids isn't fair if one of them can call upon bumblebees for help in deflecting a classroom bully. And that's only the first lesson readers will learn from *The Eleventh Sense* by K.R. Johnson.

An educator for more than two decades, Johnson believes that all creatures can and do communicate. "We have to suspend our disbelief, and that's the beginning of the process of understanding those who seem threatening or 'different.'" Her main characters, Simon and his younger sister, Kira, both learn to hear the words of stinging insects, a bully, animals, and a mysterious stranger. "Learning to communicate with the creatures around them is life-changing," Johnson points out. "Also, ultimately, it saves their lives ... and paves the way for a sequel or two."

Johnson stands stereotypes on their heads by redefining friends, parents, and grandparents through her characters and their connections to one another. "Things are seldom what they appear to be, especially when you're a child," Johnson muses.

"Everything seems clear, but few things really are. Just because you can do something doesn't mean that you should. In fact, usually the opposite is true. My goal, in writing *The Eleventh Sense*, was to teach readers that taking the easy way out is usually an offense against nature ... and will come back to hurt them in the end."

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Simon's ability to communicate with insects leads him to empathize with bumblebees, and then with the rest of the insect world. Through his interactions with bugs, Simon finds his conscience, and then he begins on the path to being a real hero. "A superhero isn't someone who wears a cape and tights," Johnson asserts. "It's just someone who understands the true difference between right and wrong ... and has probably learned to listen and understand a little bit better than most of us."

*The Eleventh Sense*

By K.R. Johnson

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## **Author Bio**

KR Johnson is an author, and award-winning speaker on topics such as Communication, Creativity, The Pet IQ Test, The Inner Senses (based on her book), and The ABC's of Learning Styles. She is also a twenty year veteran of education with a reputation as a fun and popular teacher specializing in kids with learning differences. She enjoys swimming, performing Improv, music, and hanging out with cool people. She loves her family and friends, and here's a big surprise: animals too. She lives in San Diego, CA, where she is hard at play on her next book.

## Suggested Interview Questions

1. What is the "eleventh sense"?
2. Where did you get the idea of having your main character be able to communicate with insects?
3. In real life, have you ever tried to communicate with insects?
4. If bumblebees could talk now, what do you think they might say to us?
5. Another character in your book can communicate with cats. That's not so unusual, is it?
6. In your book, your main character becomes friends with a bully. How does that happen?
7. You've worked as an educator for many years. Would the technique that Simon used to befriend the bully, Jax, actually work?
8. Your young characters befriend a stranger in the woods. Is that a good idea, and what would you tell children about talking to people they don't know?
9. What do insects symbolize, in your literary world?
10. In real life, what do you think makes a child -- or any person -- a hero?