

**Holy water, garlic, or a cross? The American Vampirization of the Female, Immigrant Teacher in
*Vampires Don't Wear Polka Dots***

The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids by Debbie Dadey and Marcia Thornton Jones with original illustrations by John Steven Gurney and reissued cover illustrations by Nathan Hale is a children's chapter book series for grades 2-4 readers published by Scholastic. With more than 80 books in the series, including "Super Special" editions, holiday editions, and a spin-off series, The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids is one of Scholastic's top best-selling series of all time with over 30 million copies sold. In each story, the Bailey School kids encounter a character who, based on their observations, might be a mythical or monstrous being. The reader is left guessing whether the character is in fact a mythical being.

The first novel in the series, *Vampires Don't Wear Polka Dots*, was published in 1990 and recently celebrated 25 years in publication. The publishing company Quirk Books recently named Mrs. Jeepers, the Transylvanian teacher who may or may not be a vampire, as one of "the most terrifying teachers of Children's Literature."

Children's books treat vampires in a wide variety of ways. Rather than bloodsucking monsters, vampires in younger children's books are more likely to be reformed vegetarians, or lonely characters seeking companionship and acceptance. Children reading these books enjoy a slightly scary setting while discovering sympathetic characters that they can relate to and appreciate. The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids series introduces young readers to elements of gothic literature while helping them confront anxieties and fears of childhood, and allowing them to grapple with questions of identity. Further, the role of the suspected vampire-teacher, Mrs. Jeepers, a foreigner teaching in an American public-school system, becomes a model for analyzing the construction of gender, the representation of teachers in children's books, and the American response to immigrants.