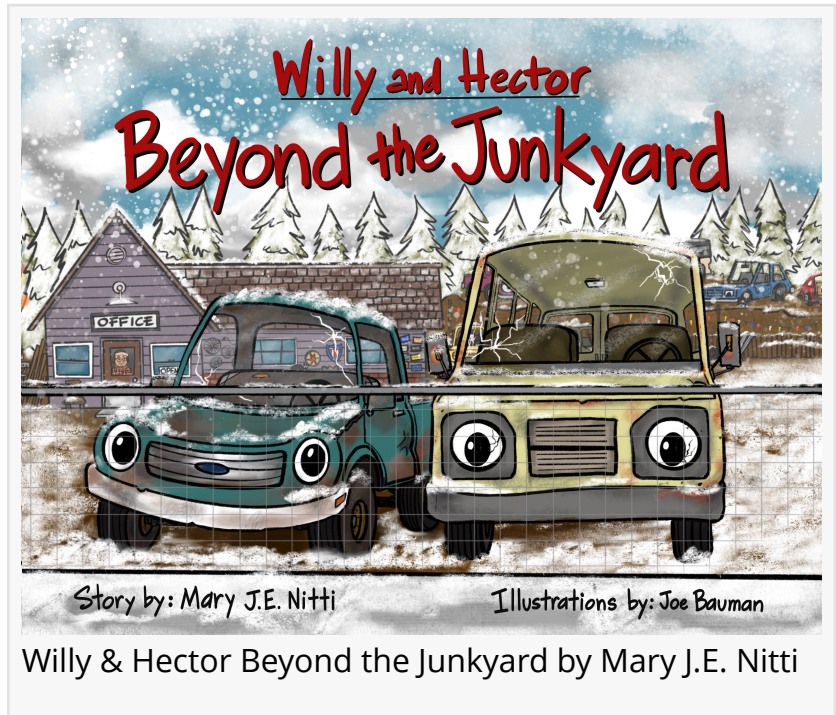


Willy & Hector Beyond the Junkyard Inspires Young Readers with Hope, Friendship, and Second Chances

Children's author Mary J.E. Nitti and illustrator Joe Bauman release a heartwarming new picture book with DartFrog Books

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, November 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [DartFrog Books](#) is proud to announce the release of [Willy & Hector Beyond the Junkyard](#) by [Mary J.E. Nitti](#), with illustrations by Joe Bauman. This beautifully crafted picture book invites readers into a snowy auto junkyard, where two unlikely friends—a rusted pickup named Willy and a sleepy old minivan named Hector—dream about what lies beyond their fenced-in world.



As Willy longs to find purpose again and Hector prefers to nap the days away, their friendship and courage are tested when opportunity—and danger—finally arrive at the junkyard gates.

“

Mary J.E. Nitti's engaging story will appeal to any kid who has loved the movie 'Cars' and the thought that vehicles can hold personalities and be animated.”

Midwest Book Review

Willy & Hector Beyond the Junkyard has already received praise from Midwest Book Review, which called it “an engaging story... Many underlying messages about hope, dreams, adaptation, and new experiences will delight read-aloud adults seeking examples of all these themes.” The review noted the book's appeal for “car-crazy kids who look for stories that embed reflections on life experiences, values, and new opportunities.”

This is Nitti's second book. Her debut, *Ooo* (2017), was a

board book illustrated by Beth Georgen Geib. Her next project, Adalee, a new board book also illustrated by Joe Bauman, is currently in production with DartFrog Books and scheduled for release in 2026.

“Children’s stories help us see possibility in the everyday,” said DartFrog founder, Gordon McClellan. “Willy & Hector reminds readers of all ages that even when life feels rusty or still, we’re never too old—or too worn—to dream again.”

About the Author

Mary J.E. Nitti is a children’s author whose stories combine imagination, humor, and heart. She has a passion for crafting tales that encourage empathy, resilience, and wonder in young readers.

About the Illustrator

Joe Bauman is a visual artist known for his expressive, character-driven illustrations. His artwork captures the whimsy and warmth of childhood while bringing emotional depth to every page.

About DartFrog Books

DartFrog Books publishes exceptional independently authored books through its curated hybrid and traditional programs. DartFrog titles are selected for exposure to over one million readers and 100,000+ book clubs through its exclusive partnership with Bookclubs.com. Learn more at www.DartFrogBooks.com

Willy & Hector Beyond the Junkyard is available now on Amazon

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