

## Simon's Cat Lands a Book Deal

**Illustrator Simon Tofield's little YouTube video became a hit, and begat a publishing career.**

*By Nikki Batalis*

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Illustrator-animator Simon Tofield with his cat creation. Photo credit: Chris Gavin

Anyone with a cat knows that the minute you sit down to start working on something, like reading e-mail or paying bills, is when your previously snoozing cat decides he **MUST** have your attention.

English illustrator Simon Tofield experienced this feline phenomenon as well: He was trying to learn how to use the Flash animation program on his computer when his kitten, Hugh, began pestering him for food. Tofield used illustrations of Hugh's persistent batting in a video he created, "Cat Man Do" (Watch it below). He had intended the hilarious short — in which a cat paws, kneads, cajoles and annoys his sleeping owner for food — to be for his own amusement. But when a colleague saw it, he posted it on YouTube, where it gathered 60,000 hits in the first 48 hours!

More funny videos followed: "Fly Guy" and "Let Me In" are two of my favorites; the newest video is "Hot Spot." And now, more than 25 million fans later, Tofield's collection of wonderfully droll black-and-white cat cartoons have been compiled in a book, logically titled "Simon's Cat." (Grand Central Publishing, \$12.99).

The cartoons show Tofield's keen eye for cat behavior; his cat is, by turns, mischievous, aloof, clever, deceitful — but always very, very funny. His artwork is expressive and specific enough that no words are needed to explain the humor.

Tofield says that Hugh, a British shorthair now 2 years old, is the main inspiration for his artwork, but that "Simon's Cat" also includes the quirks of his other felines, Jess and Maisie.

Here's to more funny stuff from Hugh, Jess and Maisie — oh, yes, and from Simon, too.

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