

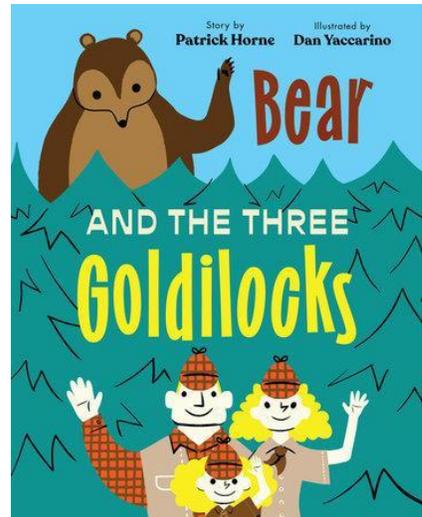


## Bear and the Three Goldilocks

Written by Patrick Horne & illustrated by Dan Yaccarino

**Recommended ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Horn Book\*, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal\*



*This new twist on a traditional tale will have readers roaring with laughter! After a bear stumbles into the campground of Mr. Goldilock, Mrs. Goldilock, and their daughter Goldie, he tries out all sorts of human food and gadgets (including instruments!) while the humans are away. The comedic timing is just perfect when the Goldilocks make it back to camp just as Mama and Papa bear come to get their little one who has been making such a big mess.*

### About the Author

Patrick Horne loves bringing humor to heartfelt stories about the everyday experiences that kids encounter. Patrick lives in Texas, where he teaches fitness at a trilingual charter school. He has three rascally sons and a loving wife. *Bear and the Three Goldilocks* is his first book.

### About the Illustrator

Dan Yaccarino is a beloved author and illustrator known for his bold, energetic style and popular children's books, as well as animated series like *Doug Unplugs*, *Oswald*, and *Willa's Wild Life*. His award-winning work has been featured around the world, translated into many languages, and adapted into toys, musicals, and more, earning him recognition as "an American original."

### Discussion Questions:

- How does changing who tells the story change who we feel sorry for or who we trust?
- What makes a story feel familiar even when it's been mixed up or changed?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Character Perspective Masks

Create a simple Bear or Goldilocks paper mask, then retell one scene in character, explaining how that character feels and why they act the way they do.

#### Activity #2: Split-Story Mini Book

Create a small accordion book showing the story from Goldilocks' view on one side and Bear's view on the other. Focus on how perspective changes the story.



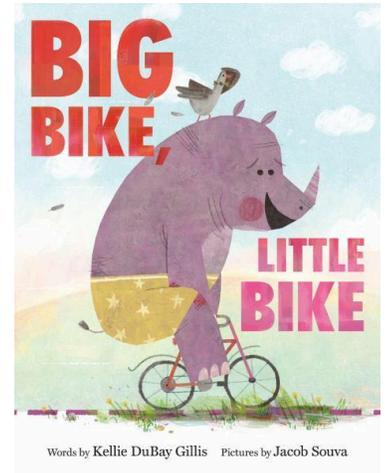
## Big Bike, Little Bike

Written by Kellie DuBay Gillis & illustrated by Jacob Souva

**Recommended ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews

*Big Bike, Little Bike* by Kellie DuBay Gillis uses a simple, playful narrative of a lone bicycle passing through various animal and human owners to explore perspective, sustainability, and the value of reusing and repurposing objects. The book is delightfully accessible for young listeners and beginning readers.



### About the Author

Kellie DuBay Gillis is an environmental scientist who blends her passion for protecting the planet with storytelling. As a young girl, she lived in Michigan where she shared adventures with her sister and neighborhood friends on an old purple tandem bike. As a grown up, she shares adventures with her husband and two kids on another old purple tandem bike that they fixed up like new!

### About the Illustrator

Jacob Souva adores making books for children, and riding bikes! He has illustrated many other picture books as well.

### Discussion Questions:

- What do you think the story teaches us about the power of repurposing and recycling?
- Can something useless or discarded by one person be useful or valuable to someone else?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Bike Movement Song

Sing a simple song while "riding" pretend bikes. Chant these words to the tune of Pat-A-Cake, Pat-A-Cake

***Ride the bike, ride the bike, big or small,***

***Fast and slow, round we go!***

Add motions: big steps, small steps, slow turns, fast spins.

#### Activity #2: "Big or Little" Sorting

Gather objects (blocks, toy animals, lego pieces, things around the house) and have kids place them in two groups: **Big** and **Little**.

Extension: Label objects with simple words "big," "little," "too fast," "just right."



## Big Enough

Written & illustrated by Regina Linke

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly



*A modern folktale with realistic, Chinese brush painting illustrations. Ah-Fu isn't confident that he's big enough to bring the family's ox home from the field. Along the way, he receives lots of advice from animals but ends up finding the confidence to accomplish the task on his own.*

### About the Author-Illustrator

Regina Linke is a Taiwanese American artist specializing in contemporary Chinese gongbi painting, an ancient form of brush painting that depicts narrative subjects in colorful high detail. She writes and illustrates stories that celebrate East Asian folklore and philosophy in an accessible and modern way. She lives with her family in Westerly, Rhode Island.

### Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever felt like you weren't big enough to do something? What was it? Did you try to do it anyway?
- Do you think Ah-Fu should have listened to the other animals or was it good that he ignored their advice?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Read More Like It

*Big Enough* is a Chinese folktale. Ask your librarian for some suggestions on other folktales. Choose one and compare/contrast with *Big Enough*.

#### Activity #2: Be the Leader

Visit the local nature park with an adult and walk along some nature trails. Take turns being the leader. Walk quietly and be sure to look for birds and other creatures along the way. When you are finished, talk about what you heard and saw.



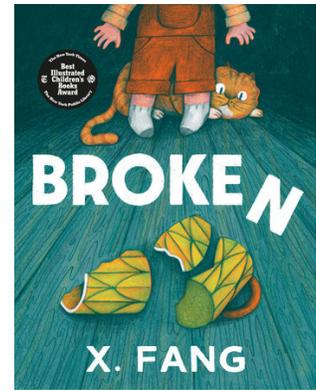
## Broken

Written & illustrated by X. Fang

**Recommended Ages:** 3-7 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews\*, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal\*

*When Mei Mei breaks her Ama's favorite cup, her imagination runs wild—will Ama be furious, yell, or even kick her out? The story follows Mei Mei's feelings of guilt (and some glorious cat side-eye) until they become unbearable and the truth erupts in dramatic fashion. Ama responds with compassion and forgiveness in a story that manages to be both hilarious and heartwarming.*



### About the Author-Illustrator

X. Fang, who also goes by Susan, is a visual artist and maker of books for young readers, including *Dim Sum Palace* and *We Are Definitely Human*. Born in Taichung, Taiwan, raised in Atlanta, Georgia, she now lives in rural Maine with her husband, son and their dog, Pamela.

### Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever accidentally broken something and tried to hide it like Mei Mei? How did that feel?
- What are some things that can be mended or fixed instead of being thrown away?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Repair

Find something from your home or school that needs repair or mending and (with the help of a grown-up) fix it!

#### Activity #2 - Get Close

As Mei Mei feels more and more guilty about Mimi taking the fall for breaking the cup, the illustrations of Mimi get more and more close up. Choose something (or someone) to draw close up like Mimi the cat!

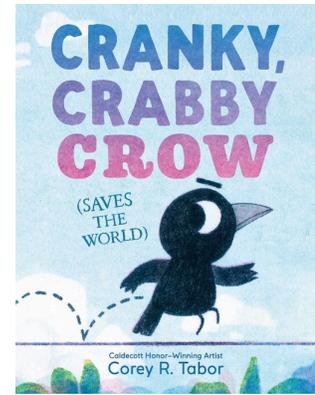


## **Cranky, Crabby Crow (Saves the World)**

Written & illustrated by Corey R. Tabor

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews\*, Publishers Weekly\*, School Library Journal



*Crow's friends—Squirrel, Hummingbird, Rat, Bat, and Cat—can't figure out why he's so crabby, always letting out a sharp "Kaw!" But what they don't see is that Crow is carrying a heavy weight: friendship, happiness, and even the future of the planet are all at stake. This clever tale shows that sometimes a bad mood hides a much bigger mission.*

### **About the Author-Illustrator**

Corey Tabor grew up in Wyoming but currently lives in Tacoma, Washington. He loves books! He has received a Caldecott Honor for *Mel Fell* and has won Geisel Awards for *Fox Has a Problem*, *Fox at Night*, and *Fox the Tiger*.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How can your friends tell when you're in a bad mood?
- What is a secret, and are you good at keeping one?

### **Book Activities**

#### **Activity #1: Secret Den**

Crow has a secret den inside a telephone pole in the book. Use provided materials to make your own [secret den](#).

#### **Activity #2: Asteroid Impact Experiment**

Discover the result of an asteroid hit on the Earth using items such as flour, cocoa powder and ping pong balls. Link to [asteroid impact experiment](#) for a video and explanation.

### **Additional Resources**

[Downloadable activities](#) from the publisher



## Don't Trust Fish

Written by Neil Sharpson & illustrated by Dan Santat

**Recommended Ages:** 3-7 years

**Reviews:** Booklist\*, Kirkus Reviews\*, Publishers Weekly\*, School Library Journal\*, Horn Book

*This wildly funny picture book dives into the totally not suspicious at all world of fish—and reveals why you should NEVER trust them. With absurd “facts” and over-the-top warnings, it's a nature guide gone hilariously wrong. Prepare for belly laughs...and to see for yourself why fish are so fishy and why you should never trust them. Hint: it involves a crab!*



### About the Author

Neil Sharpson is an Irish author and playwright, who has written for theatre since his teens. He transitioned to writing novels in 2017. *Don't Trust Fish* is his debut picture book. Neil lives in Dublin with his wife and their two children.

### About the Illustrator

Dan Santat is the Caldecott Medal-winning and New York Times bestselling author and illustrator of *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend*, *Are We There Yet?*, and *After the Fall* as well as the illustrator of many other picture books, including *Crankenstein* by Samantha Berger. Dan lives in Southern California with his wife, two kids, and various pets.

### Discussion Questions:

- What other types of animals (besides fish!) live in the ocean?
- The end of the story is a bit of a surprise! Why would the crab want to write a story like this?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Design your own fish tank.

Draw a picture of a fish tank complete with plants, fish, and places to hide. Be sure to include a secret tunnel for the fish to find their way to the ocean!

#### Activity #2: Make a fish

With help from a grown-up, cut out a fish shape from cardboard. Wrap the shape with aluminum foil (shiny side out!). Use permanent markers to draw designs on your fish - use stripes or swirls or polka dots. Be creative!

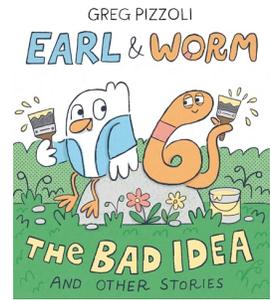


## Earl & Worm: The Bad Idea and Other Stories

Written & illustrated by Greg Pizzoli

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal\*



*Earl and Worm are longtime friends who didn't always see eye to eye. With noisy music, quiet reading, and a few shared moments along the way, award-winning creator Greg Pizzoli tells three funny, heartwarming stories about how opposites become friends.*

### About the Author-Illustrator

Greg Pizzoli is a three-time Theodor Seuss Geisel Award-winning author and illustrator of the *Baloney and Friends* graphic novel series and picture books including *The Watermelon Seed*, *Mister Kitty is Lost*, and *Lucky Duck*. He also writes nonfiction for children, including the New York Times Best Illustrated Book *Tricky Vic*. Greg lives in South Philadelphia with his wife, author and printmaker Kay Healy, and their two daughters.

### Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever had a friend you didn't like at first? What helped you become friends?
- How do you feel when someone copies you?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Magnet Experiment

Friends are like magnets! Some like to stick together while others like to have space. Get two magnets and use this [magnetic attraction](#) worksheet to find out how magnets attract and repel.

#### Activity #2 Write a Poem

Come up with your own two-line ending to the poem:

Roses are red

Violets are blue



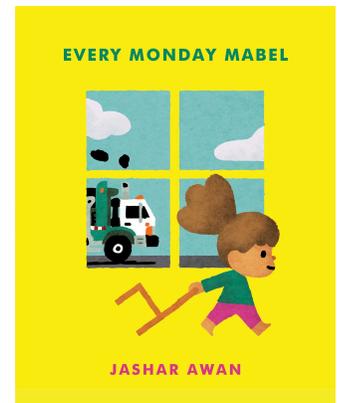
## Every Monday Mabel

Written & illustrated by Jashar Awan

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist\*, School Library Journal\*, Publishers Weekly\*, Kirkus Reviews

*Mabel is thrilled that it's her favorite day - Monday! She wakes up early, drags a chair through the house, and places it just so at the top of the driveway so that she can watch the best thing in the world, the garbage truck! Full of joyful colors and energetic onomatopoeia, Mabel reminds us that it's okay to find joy in the things we love (even if those things are not the same as what everyone else enjoys).*



### About the Author-Illustrator

Growing up outside of Washington, DC, Jashar Awan loved drawing and reading. In fact, he still does. For many years, he drew illustrations for publications such as The New Yorker, The New York Times, American Medical News, and Columbia Journalism Review and debuted as an author-illustrator in 2020. A longtime New Yorker, Jashar moved to Ohio in 2017 with his wife and son, who love drawing and reading, too.

### Discussion Questions:

- What is something that brings you joy?
- What are some things that Mabel does that show that she thinks the garbage truck is the best thing in the world?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Play with shadows

There are multiple large shadows of Mabel and her chair throughout the book. Get a flashlight and see what kinds of shadows you can make with your body and the things around you!

#### Activity #2: Trash or recycling?

Get together some items that you are planning to throw out. Discuss how to tell whether something should be recycled or thrown in the trash. Sort each item into trash or recycling and dispose of it in the appropriate place.

### Additional Resources

[Downloadable activities](#) from the author-illustrator, including a coloring page to thank a sanitation worker!



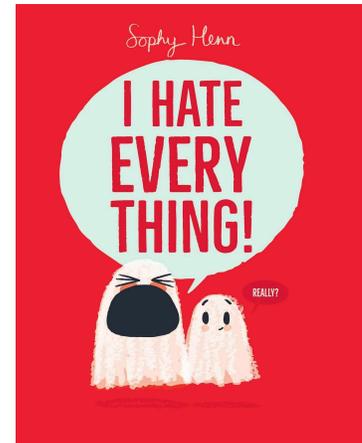
## **I Hate Everything!**

Written & illustrated by Sophy Henn

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Kirkus Reviews, School Library Journal\*

*A ghost is having a very bad day. He feels like he hates EVERYTHING! Lucky for him, he has a good ghost friend to talk it through with. Because if he doesn't really hate sweets or flowers or dressing up, and he definitely doesn't hate his friend, then maybe he doesn't hate everything after all.*



### **About the Author-Illustrator**

Sophy Henn is an award-winning author and illustrator with a master's in illustration from the University of Brighton. She is the creator of much-loved characters Ted and Pom Pom, the *Everything* picture book series, the *Bad Nana*, *Pizazz*, and *Happy Hills* fiction series, and the *Lifesize* non-fiction series. She has won some awards and not won many more, but mainly she is over the moon that she spends her days making books for children of all ages.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What causes big emotions to spill over?
- How do feelings change when someone listens to us?

### **Book Activities**

#### **Activity #1: Colorful Emotions**

Use colored markers, crayons, or paper and have one person share a made-up scenario (such as someone taking your toy). The other person will hold up one of the colors to correspond with how they'd feel and also show on their face their emotional response.

#### **Activity #2: Emotional Learning**

Get an adult helper, paper, and paint! Using paper and paint, divide the page into four sections and make a handprint in each one. Once the paint is dry, draw a different facial expression on each handprint—happy, sad, angry, surprised, or any emotion you'd like to explore. Write the name of each emotion underneath and take a moment to talk about what each feeling looks like and when you might experience it.

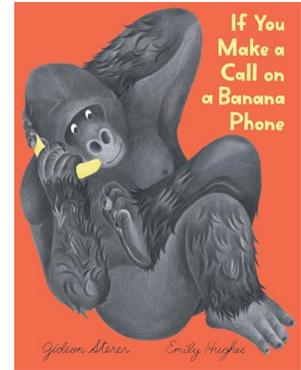


## If You Make a Call on a Banana Phone

Written by Gideon Sterer & illustrated by  
Emily Hughes

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist\*, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly,  
School Library Journal\*



*What happens if you pick up a banana and make a call? From gorilla pals to friends in far-off places, this silly, heartwarming story shows how the most unlikely “phones” can lead to the sweetest friendships, and sparks a fun, imaginative look at cause and effect that kids will love.*

### About the Author

Gideon Sterer is a *New York Times* bestselling author who grew up exploring the woods of upstate New York. Nearby, his parents ran a wildlife discovery center, where he would sneak in after hours and let the animals roam. These days, he lives in Brooklyn and enjoys the full spectrum of dogs. When he's not thinking about dogs, he likes football, pierogies, portals, archery, and strange, in-between places where worlds collide.

### About the Illustrator

Emily Hughes is an author and illustrator who grew up in Hawaii, and now lives and works in the United Kingdom. Her artwork has been widely exhibited and her picture books have received international recognition.

### Discussion Questions:

- If you had a banana phone, who would you call? Why?
- Why is it important to listen and take turns talking?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Animal Self Portrait

If you were an animal, what would you look like? Draw yourself with a tail, horns, stripes, or spots!

#### Activity #2: Banana Message Experiment

What happens when you write a message on a banana - all you need is a banana and a toothpick. Follow these [instructions](#) to find out.

### Additional Resources

[Downloadable activities](#) from the publisher

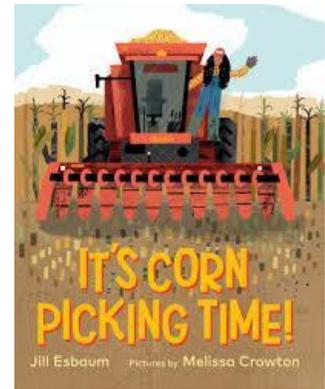


## It's Corn Picking Time!

Written by Jill Esbaum and illustrated by  
Melissa Crowton

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Horn Book Magazine, Kirkus  
Reviews\*, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal



*A fun rhyming text accompanied by bright illustrations about farms, farmers, crops and combines, this book is sure to engage all readers.*

*A great introduction to the agricultural process, with back matter*

*that gives additional explanations of farming, uses of corn, and other tidbits of information.*

### About the Author

Jill Esbaum lives on a farm, on a dusty gravel road, where green walls of rustling corn surround the yard each summer. She and her husband raise corn, soybeans, and hundreds of pigs. Her favourite season is autumn, when she gets to drive a huge, complicated tractor through crackling fields to help with the harvest under a blue, blue sky. And every day she wakes up feeling blessed, knowing how lucky she is to spend part of each day doing what she loves, and loving what she does - writing for kids.

### About the Illustrator

Melissa Crowton is an illustrator originally from Utah where there were a lot of empty roads and open skies to look at while growing up, but not much else. She found traveling by book to be a quite agreeable alternative, and has been living amongst stories ever since. She has illustrated various books for toddlers and young children including the recent picture books *Mousie, I Will Read to You* by Rachael Cole and *Your First Day of Circus School* by Tara Lazar.

### Discussion Questions:

- If you were a farmer, what would you like to grow? What is your favorite vegetable?
- Does your family grow vegetables, buy vegetables at a grocery store, buy them at a farmer's market, or some combination of all three?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Make Cornbread

With a grown-up's help, make cornbread. Use [this recipe](#) or a boxed mix. When it is finished, eat a warm piece with butter and then another piece with honey. Which is your favorite?

#### Activity #2: Go and Grow!

With a grown-up, go to the store and buy a packet of seeds. Plant the seeds and take care of them while they grow!

### Additional Resources

[Downloadable activities](#) from the author

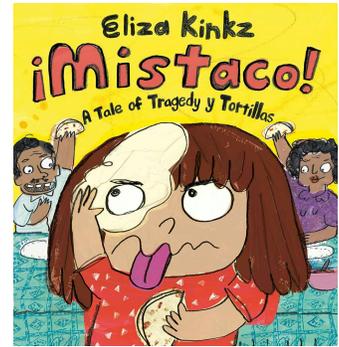


## Mistaco! A Tale of Tragedy y Tortillas

Written & illustrated by Eliza Kinkz

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist\*, Kirkus Reviews\*, Publishers Weekly\*, School Library Journal\*



*Mistaco: A Tale of Tragedy y Tortillas is a delightfully funny and heartfelt picture book that turns the universal experience of making mistakes into something joyful and shared. When Izzy has the worst day ever, her family helps her “eat” her mistakes by folding them into tortillas they call mistacos. With energetic, scrawled illustrations and warm family dynamics, this story celebrates resilience, empathy, and the comfort of shared laughter — all while blending English and Spanish in a natural, inviting way.*

### About the Author-Illustrator

Eliza Kinkz is a Tejana artist and author-illustrator who brings humor, heart, and energetic scribble-style artwork to children’s books. She lives in Austin, Texas, with her family and her “one true love, a huge bowl of queso.” All her ridiculous scribbles burst straight from her heart, which is overflowing with joy....and probably a few crayon pieces.

### Discussion Questions:

- How does Izzy feel when she makes her mistake?
- Have you ever had a day that felt like everything went wrong? How did it make you feel?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Make your own Mistaco

Give each child a paper “tortilla.” On a small white paper, have them draw or describe a mistake. Crumble the paper gently. Place it inside the tortilla and fold it into a mistaco. Decorate the outside and give it a fun name.

#### Activity #2: Finish the Sentence

Kids call out answers:

1. A mistake is when \_\_\_\_\_?
2. When I feel sad, I \_\_\_\_\_.
3. My family helps me by \_\_\_\_\_.

### Additional Resources

[Downloadable activities](#) from the author

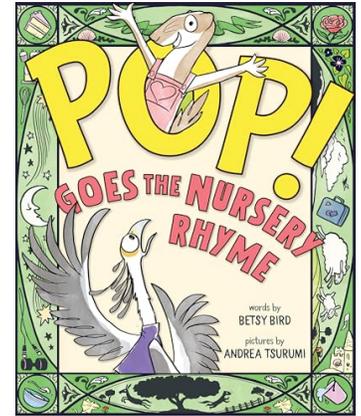


## POP! Goes the Nursery Rhyme

Written by Betsy Bird & illustrated by Andrea Tsurumi

**Recommended Ages:** 3-6 years

**Reviews:** Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly\*, School Library Journal



*(Sung to the tune "All Around the Mulberry Bush)*

*You think you know these nursery rhymes,  
but wait until you read them.*

*You will start chanting along,  
Then... "POP! goes the weasel!"*

*Reading rhymes can bring good times in this funny and interactive book with a silly and sneaky weasel that pops in!*

### About the Author

Betsy Bird is not only an author, but a librarian, reviewer of children's literature, public speaker, and podcaster. She has written picture books, books for adults about picture books (and other children's books), and middle grade books. Betsy lives in Illinois with her two kids, husband, and cats Izzy and Hilo (named after the graphic novel series).

### About the Illustrator

Andrea Tsurumi ("sue-roo-me") is an author, illustrator and cartoonist who studied sequential storytelling at Harvard and illustration at the School of Visual Arts. While working in publishing for several years, Andrea dove into two big loves: indie comics and children's books. Tsurumi is originally from New York, and now lives in Philadelphia.

### Discussion Questions:

- Which nursery rhyme is your favorite?
- How would you react if the weasel interrupted you saying your favorite nursery rhyme?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Pop and Stop Rhyme Time

To prepare, have 6 or more index cards or pieces of paper all the same size. Children will draw pictures on each card of their favorite nursery rhyme character or item from a nursery rhyme. On one of the cards, write the word "POP!" Shuffle the cards and place them face down. Pick a nursery rhyme to say together, pause at the end of each line, and draw a card. If the "POP!" card is drawn, the rhyme stops, a new rhyme is selected, and the cards are again shuffled and turned over. If "POP!" is not drawn, continue the rhyme or repeat it.

#### Activity #2: Hide-and-Sneak

Weasels are known for being sneaky animals. Play hide-and-seek pretending you are a sneaky weasel. If the person looking for you needs a hint, say the word "POP!" while hiding!

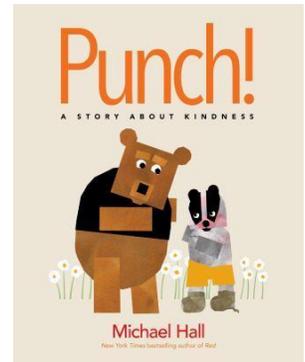


## **Punch! A Story About Kindness**

Written & illustrated by Michael Hall

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist\*, School Library Journal\*, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly



***Punch!** is a story that shows what happens when someone is mean and how others can choose a better way to respond. In the book, Badger hurts others, but instead of being mean back, his friends surprise him by being kind. The fun words and playful pictures make the story exciting to read. It also teaches an important lesson about being understanding, caring, and forgiving—ideas that both kids and grown-ups can enjoy and learn from.*

### **About the Author-Illustrator**

Michael Hall is the author/illustrator of *The New York Times* bestseller, *My Heart Is Like a Zoo*, as well as the critically acclaimed *Perfect Square*, *It's an Orange Aardvark*, *Red: A Crayon's Story*, and *Frankencrayon*. Before becoming a children's author, Michael was an award-winning graphic designer whose work has been widely recognized for its simple and engaging approach. Michael lives with his wife, Debra Kelley, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How was Badger feeling at the beginning of the story? Why was he feeling that way? How did his friends' kindness affect him?
- The words in this book seem to tell a story of revenge. But some words have more than one meaning. And sometimes there is more to a situation than meets the eye. So look at the pictures carefully. What do you see?

### **Book Activities**

#### **Activity #1: Kindness Cards**

Create simple cards with actions like "Help a friend," "Give a hug," or "Say something nice," and pick one to do each day.

#### **Activity #2: Hunting for Homographs**

A homograph is when a word is spelled the same as another word, but has a different meaning. *Punch!* is full of homographs! Find a homograph from the book and act out the two meanings.

Extension: Use a dictionary or ask a grown-up for some other homographs.



## **Ready, Steady, Sloth!**

Written by Justin Anderson & illustrated by Manu Montoya

**Recommended Ages:** 5-8 years

**Reviews:** Horn Book, School Library Journal



*Get ready for the slowest adventure ever! This book follows a mama sloth and her baby as they carefully and very slowly make their way through the rainforest. Along the way, readers learn fun and surprising facts about how sloths live, move, eat, and survive in the wild. It's a great mix of storytelling and nonfiction, with eye catching illustrations and just enough humor to keep kids engaged. Perfect for animal lovers who like their adventures calm and a little sneaky.*

### **About the Author**

Justin Anderson is a zoologist, wildlife filmmaker, and nature writer with a deep passion for animals and the wild places they call home. He has spent years traveling the globe to observe and document incredible wildlife. Anderson brings his love of the natural world to life in children's nonfiction books.

### **About the Illustrator**

Manu Montoya is a Colombian-born artist educated in graphic and art direction whose lively, colorful illustrations bring the world of sloths vividly to life.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What was the most surprising thing you learned about sloths in this book?
- Why do you think being slow is actually helpful for a sloth?

### **Book Activities**

#### **Activity #1: Hanging Sloth Craft**

Provide each child with a sloth cutout. Have them add facial features, then glue long arms onto the sloth so it appears to be hanging from a paper tree branch with green leaves. Encourage children to talk about how sloths live in trees and move slowly while they work.

[Sloth Template](#)

#### **Activity #2: Sloth Sorting Activity**

Set out animal picture cards at a table. Ask children to sort the animals into two groups: animals that move slow like a sloth and animals that move fast. Prompt discussion by asking why they chose each group.

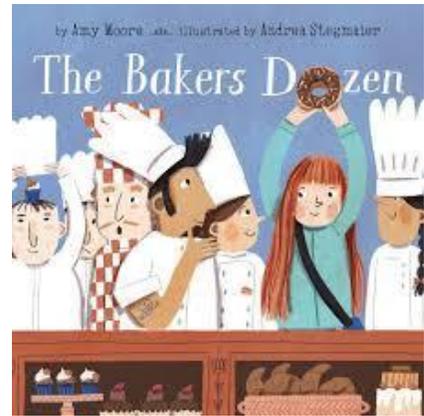


## The Bakers Dozen

Written by Amy Moore & illustrated by Andrea Stegmaier

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Kirkus Reviews



*The work at The Bakers Dozen bakery goes like clockwork--all twelve bakers have a job to do, and the jobs are completed without a hitch. When a new chef shows up looking for a spot on the team, and with a tempting treat too, the bakers insist The Bakers Dozen is "twelve, no more!" Even if the doughnuts do look delicious. Luckily, the new chef knows something surprising about a baker's dozen.*

### About the Author

Amy Moore has been writing since childhood. After earning a degree in Journalism from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, she went on to proofreading and web development jobs while taking Master's courses in Writing and Publishing from Emerson College. In addition to her writing work, Amy runs a children's dance program in her hometown. She lives with her family in Massachusetts.

### About the Illustrator

Andrea Stegmaier is an illustrator and architect from Stuttgart, Germany, who brings a playful mix of digital and traditional art to children's books. She loves drawing everything from animals to buildings, and finds inspiration in her garden and in her adventures with her family.

### Discussion Questions:

- Is there always space to include others? Why or why not?
- How does generosity affect a community?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Bakers Dozen

What objects from your classroom, home, or library can you make a baker's dozen of? Pencils, books, pillows, etc.

#### Activity #2: Design Decadent Donuts

With a grown-up, grab playdoh or clay and make a baker's dozen of donuts. Decorate them in a way that makes you smile!

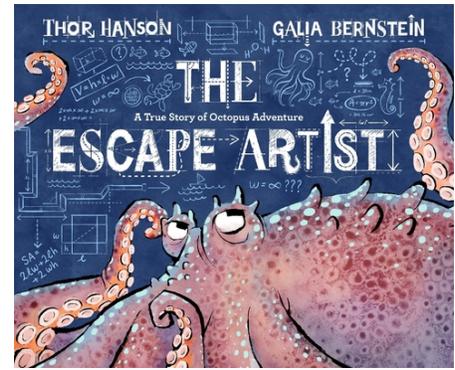


## The Escape Artist: A True Story of Octopus Adventure

Written by Thor Hanson & illustrated by Galia Bernstein

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Kirkus Reviews\*, Booklist, Publishers Weekly\*, School Library Journal



*This true story follows Inky, a remarkably clever octopus who keeps escaping from his tank at a New Zealand aquarium. Told like an adventure, the book highlights Inky's curiosity, intelligence, and problem-solving skills, showing readers just how smart these sea creatures can be. It's a nonfiction story that reads like a daring escape tale.*

### About the Author

Thor Hanson is an award-winning science writer known for making natural history engaging, and fun. With a background in conservation biology, he writes nonfiction that blends science, storytelling, and humor to explore how animals, plants and ecosystems work.

### About the Illustrator

Galia Bernstein is an Israel-born illustrator and author based in Brooklyn, New York. She studied illustration at Parsons School of Design and is known for her vibrant, expressive artwork in children's books.

### Discussion Questions:

- What does Inky's escape show us about octopus intelligence?
- Did this true story change the way you think about animals in aquariums?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Octopus Escape Maze

Create a simple paper maze where an octopus must escape a tank and find the ocean. (Reinforces Inky's problem solving skills and highlights octopus intelligence in a fun, hands-on way).

#### Activity #2: Octopus Suction Cup Craft

Using the octopus template, color the octopus, then add paper circle "suction cups" to the arms using dot stickers or crayons. While crafting, talk about how octopuses use their arms and suction cups to explore, grab, and escape - just like our friend Inky. [Octopus Craft](#)

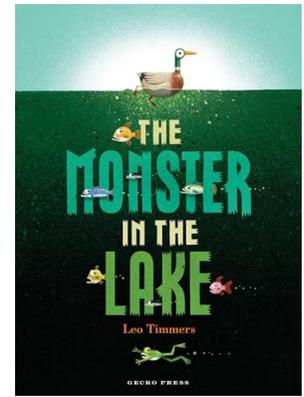


## The Monster in the Lake

Written & illustrated by Leo Timmers

**Recommended Ages:** 4-6 years

**Reviews:** Booklist\*, Kirkus Reviews\*, Publishers Weekly\*, School Library Journal



*Eric the duck does not want to go for a swim because "the monster" could be lurking in the lake. His friends assure him it's just a story, so this duck ducks down to look around. To see the unseen, read *The Monster in the Lake*!*

### About the Author-Illustrator

Leo Timmers, born in Belgium, grew up sharing a studio with his artist father and to this day still uses the art table he was gifted at the age of 11. His picture books have a cinematic look mixed with a blend of humor, emotion and detailed illustrations for both children and adults to enjoy. He lives in Brussels with his wife and two daughters.

### Discussion Questions:

- What is something you are scared to do and why?
- How can you encourage someone else that may be scared to do something with you?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Make a Monster

Using supplies provided, create a silly lurking lake monster. Pick a different number between 0-6 (you can roll a dice if you have one) for how many eyes, teeth, fins, and pieces of clothes your monster will have. Be sure it is your favorite color too!

#### Activity #2: I Don't Spy

Play a game similar to "I Spy." Take a group of objects and place them in a pile in front of the players. Each player, when it is their turn, thinks of one of the objects and covers the pile with a blanket or sheet. They will say, "I DON'T spy with my eye, something..." (describe the object). The other players then try to guess the object.

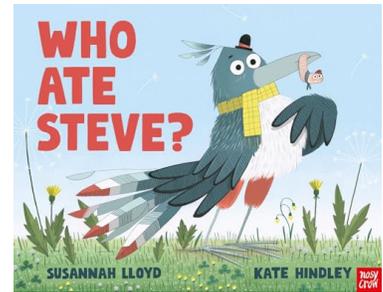


## Who Ate Steve?

Written by Susannah Lloyd & illustrated by  
Kate Hindley

**Recommended Ages:** 4-7 years

**Reviews:** Kirkus Reviews



*Welcome to a wildly entertaining tale all about size! Meet Marcel—he's a bird, and he's very BIG. Then there's Steve. He's a worm, and he's... Wait, we've got a BIG problem: where's Steve?*

### About the Author

Susannah Lloyd has been writing funny stories about animals since she was a child. She is now the author of several picture books and has been published all around the world. She lives with her family in Yorkshire, England.

### About the Illustrator

Kate Hindley has illustrated many award-winning books for children. Her recent books for Nosy Crow include an illustrated edition of *The Wind in the Willows*. She lives with her husband and son in Worcestershire, England.

### Discussion Questions:

- What other big things do you see in the pictures/illustrations? What other small things?
- What should Marcel the bird say to Steve the worm after trying to eat him? What should Steve say to Marcel?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Sizing It All Up

Sort a pile of provided objects by size: big and small. Next, find objects around the room to add to your size sorting piles. Mix and split the piles and see who can sort their pile the fastest. Finally, line the objects up from smallest to biggest.

#### Activity #2: Searching for Steve

Draw a worm on a piece of paper or have a small object to represent Steve. Hide it around the room for the person who is pretending to be Marcel to find.

Or with a group, have "Marcel" close their eyes and one of the players sitting in a circle hides Steve in their hands. Marcel has 3 tries to guess who is hiding Steve.

### Additional Resources

- [Downloadable activities](#) from the author
- Use the QR code on the back of the book to hear it read aloud



## Zip Zap Wickety Wack: A Story About Sharing

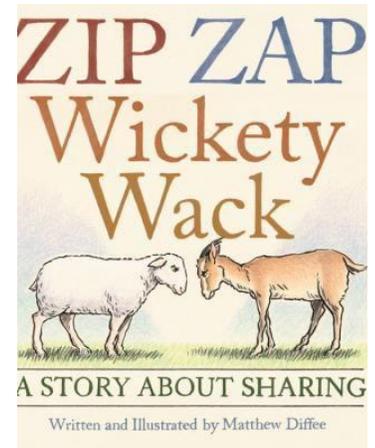
Written & illustrated by Matthew Diffie

**Recommended Ages:** 4-8 years

**Reviews:** Booklist, Kirkus Reviews\*, Publishers Weekly,

School Library Journal

*Zip Zap Wickety Wack is a playful book full of silly sounds, rhythms, and word play. The jokes and exciting pictures make it great to read out loud together and help young kids learn how sounds work in words. This book celebrates the joy of verbal creativity and sharing (even if sharing is sometimes hard).*



### About the Author-Illustrator

Matthew Diffie grew up in Texas, where he passed a bunch of farms on his walk to the school bus every day. This is his debut children's book! He has contributed cartoons for The New Yorker and Texas Monthly magazines.

### Discussion Questions:

- What other animal sounds do you know, other than the animal sounds in this book?
- What kinds of things could you share with your friends?

### Book Activities

#### Activity #1: Make Animal Sounds Together

Read the book aloud and *do the animal sounds* (moo, neigh, baa). After each sound, mimic the sound or make your own funny sound.

Extension: Try *echoing* each other - a grown-up says one sound, child repeats with the same or a different silly version.

#### Activity #2: Make your own Spaceship!

[Make your own spaceship](#) using paper plates, a plastic cup, and markers!