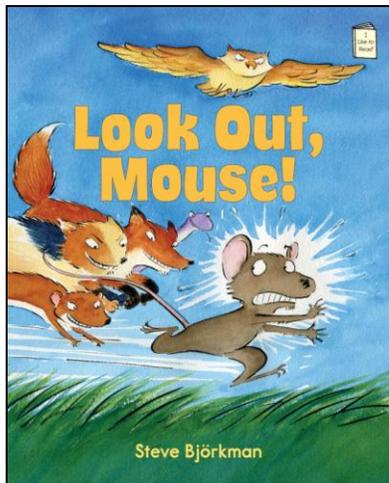


Look Out, Mouse!



An I Like to Read® Book Level E



A conversation with creator Steve Björkman

In his most recent I Like to Read® book, Steve Björkman has created a clever, easy-to-read barnyard story in which young children will enjoy helping and rooting for the mouse to successfully avoid the larger, hungrier animals on the farm.

Ages 4-8 • \$14.95 • 978-0-8234-2953-0 • E-book available

Steve, please tell us about your new book, LOOK OUT, MOUSE!

In LOOK OUT, MOUSE! I wanted to make an easy reader that had some fun, “danger” and drama, salted with humor. I thought about how I could infuse action into the heart of the story.

In the story, Mouse has a thrilling adventure on the farm and narrowly escapes danger. Where did you get your inspiration for this story?

I was driving to my art studio and passing wide fields and countryside on the way. My imagination can go wild in these places. I was thinking about Holiday House and began to wonder if I could write something full of action for the I Like to Read® age group. I thought about mice in the fields and how dangerous a mouse’s life can be. “Look out, mouse!” seemed like a good warning and the beginning of a story. Then I thought it would be fun to contrast the messiness of the farmer’s living with the dangerous world outside. By the time I got to the studio, the story was humming in my head.

What do you hope readers will learn from this story?

The book is not so much a teaching book like *Dinosaurs DON’T, Dinosaurs DO*. This is a story about a generous mouse whose generosity does “pay off” when the horse he feeds at the beginning eventually makes the racket that saves the mouse at the end. I found it fun to make the story switch from “look out, mouse!” to “Look out, house!” The farmer’s mess becomes the mouse’s treasure.

www.HolidayHouse.com



You've had success with writing and illustrating books as well as creating greeting cards. How is your process for creating cards different from or similar to writing and illustrating books?

The two are different because a card is communicating a thought or feeling to a person, while a story can simply be a fun story. Where the two are similar is that I have learned to use words carefully and sparingly, which is helpful for book writing. A book also allows the space to develop a character and get him or her into trouble!

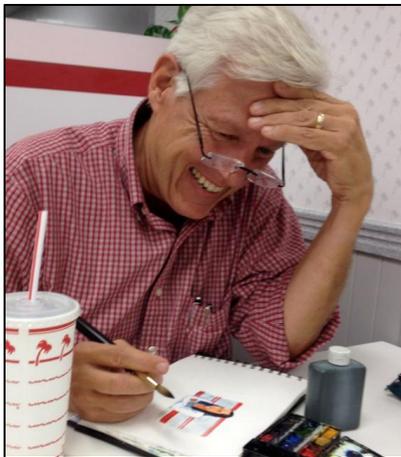
What made you decide to become an author and illustrator?

I first intended to teach high school English but found I was always drawing. I had teachers who encouraged me, even when I got caught drawing during class, and my parents did not get mad when I spilled a bottle of ink on the carpet! I had people teach me to draw in a way that fit me, and when you love doing something and become better and better at it, sometimes that can turn into your job!

What advice would you give to young authors/illustrators?

There are stories all around us. If you want to be a storyteller or illustrator, the best advice I could give is to look a whole lot and imagine "what if?" The imagination is a powerful friend and it seems to work best when you are on a walk, riding a bike or doing something where your mind can wander.

Being an illustrator is in many ways the same thing, except with a pencil! Draw things you see: the dog, a saltshaker, a flower or a bug, or a family member. Draw anything and everything. Look a whole lot and draw, draw, draw just to see what comes out!



STEVE BJÖRKMAN has illustrated more than seventy books for children, including the I Like to Read® book *Dinosaurs DON'T*, *Dinosaurs DO*, named an NCSS-CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People by the National Council for Social Studies and Children's Book Council. Steve lives with his wife in Irvine, California. Visit Steve online at www.stevebjorkman.com.

For more about the I Like to Read® series, visit www.HolidayHouse.com/I-Like-to-Read/

www.HolidayHouse.com

