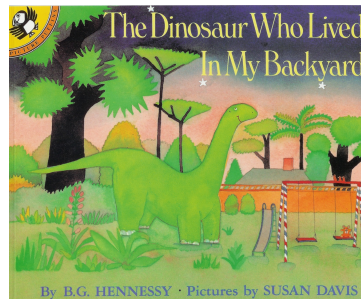
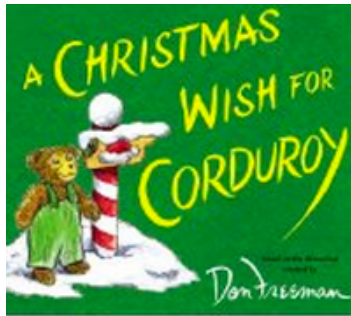


B. G. Hennessy's Q & A

First, let me start out by asking you how many titles you have published.

My thirty-seventh book A CHRISTMAS WISH FOR CORDUROY will be published this fall. I have published additional titles in the educational market, but I'm counting the traditional trade market. My first book THE DINOSAUR WHO LIVED IN MY BACKYARD came out in 1988 and is still in print today.

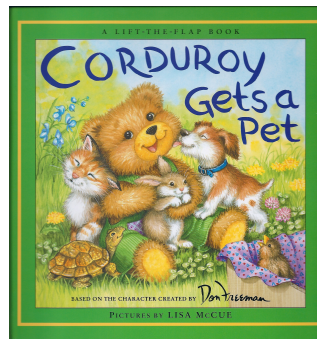
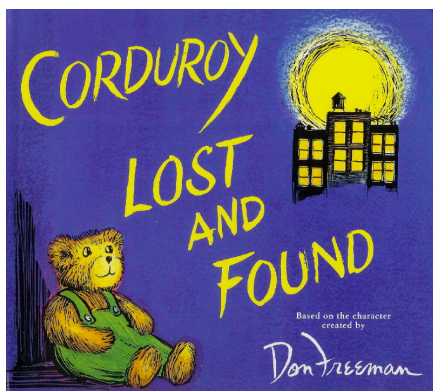


You ghost-write Don Freeman's Corduroy bear series.

Actually, though my Corduroy books are based on Freeman's work, they are not considered "ghost-written." I am credited on the title page as the author. Don Freeman died before any of them were written so he was not involved. I do try to "channel" Don so perhaps he is my "ghost-writer!" Watch this video about my experience with Don and Corduroy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clFqRcYcqAU>

I have written two genres of Corduroy bear books: thirteen lift-the-flap books and two traditional picture books (CORDUROY LOST AND FOUND and A CHRISTMAS WISH FOR CORDUROY).



It was and is, a great honor to continue writing about such a beloved character. Because I had worked with Don, I had an advantage. It was important to keep true to the original books and Don's point of view.

Reviews for CORDUROY LOST AND FOUND:

"Fans of Don Freeman's classic stories will be delighted to discover a new adventure featuring their favorite teddy bear. B.G. Hennessy, the art director of *A Pocket for Corduroy*, brings Corduroy back to children's literature with a story that will enchant children and parents. *Corduroy Lost and Found* will touch the hearts of readers who have waited 30 years for another adventure with their favorite bear." - *Children's Literature*

"Favorite children's book character Corduroy finally gets the sequel he deserves."
TimeOut New York Kids (complete review below)

The good news bear



Corduroy always wanted a home and a friend; now he gets a second act.
By **Gary Drevitch**

In children's publishing, where the bond between character and reader is exceptionally strong, reviving a popular series after the death of the author usually results in a flop (see "Revival style," below). *Corduroy*, by the late Don Freeman, has been a staple for decades in first-grade classrooms everywhere. Nonetheless, this fall, a longtime art director at Viking Books is taking a chance with the publication of *Corduroy Lost and Found*, the overalls-clad bear's first full-length hardcover tale since his creator wrote 1978's *A Pocket for Corduroy*—and until now, the only follow-up to the original 1968 classic.

B.G. Hennessy, who penned the new book, was an obvious choice for this daunting task, having written a popular series of *Corduroy* lift-the-flap books, and having worked with Freeman on *A Pocket for Corduroy*. By staying true to Freeman's formula and wide-eyed spirit, Hennessy largely succeeds.

As *Lost and Found* opens, Corduroy decides he must give his owner-friend Lisa a present for her birthday, so he sneaks out in the middle of the night to find something special. But plans soon go awry, and he finds himself lost on the city streets. "Kids have that shock a lot," Hennessy says. "Everything's fun until you realize you can't find your parents."

Spoiler alert: Corduroy and Lisa are reunited in the end, thanks in part to a newsstand guy right out of central casting, but also due to Lisa's efforts. "She is smart, caring and very independent," Hennessy says. "To me, Lisa has a lot of [Freeman's late wife] Lydia's personality."

For *Lost and Found*, illustrator Jody Wheeler imitated Freeman's original scratchboard technique, and the results adhere impressively to the source material. Another element of Freeman's books that Hennessy included was the inimitable New York setting. "Where else could it possibly be?" she says.

Hennessy drew from her own Long Island childhood, when she would venture into the big city from time to time. "It's just such an exciting place when you see all the stores, all the people," she says. "I wanted to work that feeling into Corduroy's reactions. He's unjaded."

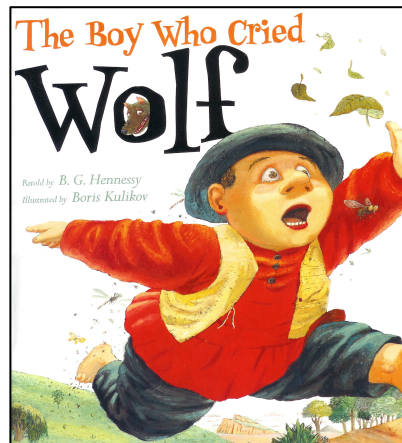
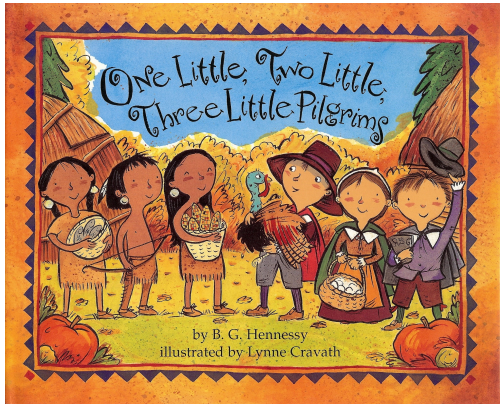
Happily, the illustrations of this otherwise timeless story remain firmly rooted in 1960s New York, with quiet period details, like plastic-frame glasses and *Life* magazines, that make the illustrations jibe visually with previous works (who could forget that old beatnik in the laundromat?).

As for the bear himself, Hennessy insists that he still very much maintains the mark of his creator. "There's a lot of Don in Corduroy, a tremendous amount of enthusiasm, an adventuresome spirit." As she wrote her own book, Hennessy wanted to honor what Freeman had accomplished, rather than reinvent it. Throughout the writing process, she felt keenly aware of Freeman's wholehearted devotion to the beloved bear, which she admired. "Don didn't do anything condescendingly," she says. "He wasn't trying to win any awards. He wrote for the children."

Corduroy Lost and Found will be released September 14 by Penguin Young Readers Group.

How does writing your own stories differ from basing a story on someone else's character? Is it hard to fit a specific type?

When writing a story base on an existing character or story some things are easier, some are harder. Personally, I like taking something existing and doing something new with it. I have based several of my books on nursery rhymes (ONE LITTLE, TWO LITTLE, THREE LITTLE PILGRIMS, THE MISSING TARTS, EENEY, MEENEY, MINEY, MO), and taken the rhymes in a new direction. THE BOY WHO CRIED WOLF is a retelling of an Aesop's fable.



Have you ever been asked to change anything because it varies too much from the "canon?"

Oh, yes! On the Freeman books I work with an editor and an agent who represents the Freeman estate. There are changes in every manuscript, but everyone involved wants each book to be as good as it can. We all work for Corduroy, though.

About the Electronic Age

As far as industry changes go, it is different today. The electronic shift is not impacting traditional picture books as much as older fiction and non-fiction. What is changing is that the competition is greater. There are fewer new authors being published by traditional publishers and more "franchise" or series published. However, no matter what format a book is published in, good writing is always step number one.

Social Media

I try to use social media as a way for my readers to get to know me and what I am interested in, and not as a way to sell my books. I am a great supporter of literacy and am very interested in education. One of my ongoing projects is to expand my contacts on facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and on my website to reach more teachers and librarians.

Website: www.bghennessy.com

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/bghbooks>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BGHennessy>

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/bghaz/>

B. G. Hennessy YouTube

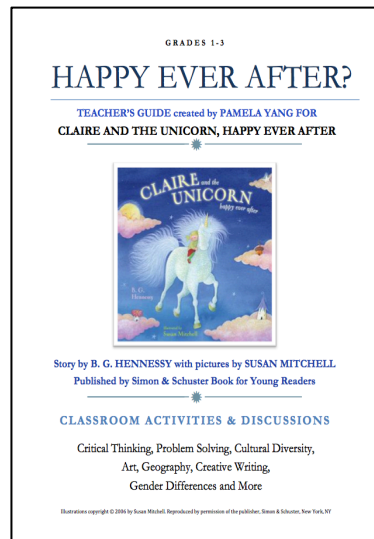
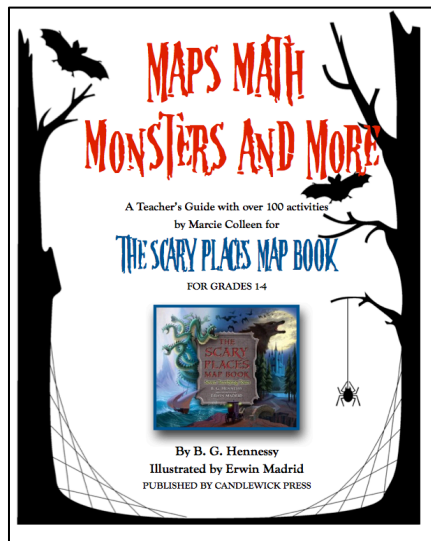
Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC525cJ1Iqli_wjXsXrZqV_A

Amazon Author Page: http://www.amazon.com/B.-G.-Hennessy/e/B001IGQMCU/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1396206786&sr=8-2-ent

Google +: B. G. Hennessy

NEW TEACHER/CLASSROOM PROJECTS

One of my most important projects has been to create new Teacher's Guides and materials on my books that can expand their use in the classroom. They can be found on my website under the "Teachers & Parents" tab: <http://bghennessy.com/?cat=73>



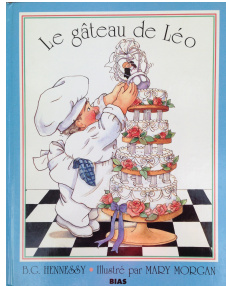
As you noticed, children's book authors and illustrators are a mighty tribe. We do try to support each other. But, as my mother always says, "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all," so I only post about books that I am familiar with.

Copyright

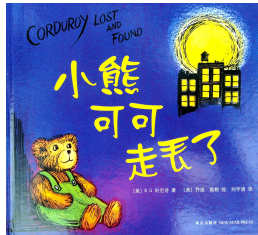
U.S. copyright laws are pretty strict. My work technically is protected once I send it, and probably before. Up until now, I have not have an agent. However, due to the rapid changes and new opportunities in publishing I am currently in the courting stage of finding an agent.

Publishers

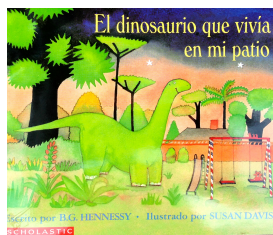
My publishers in the USA are: Viking Children's Books, Simon & Schuster, Candlewick Press and Putnam Books for Young Readers. My books have been published in 10 languages.



French



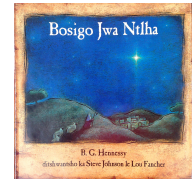
Chinese



Spanish



German

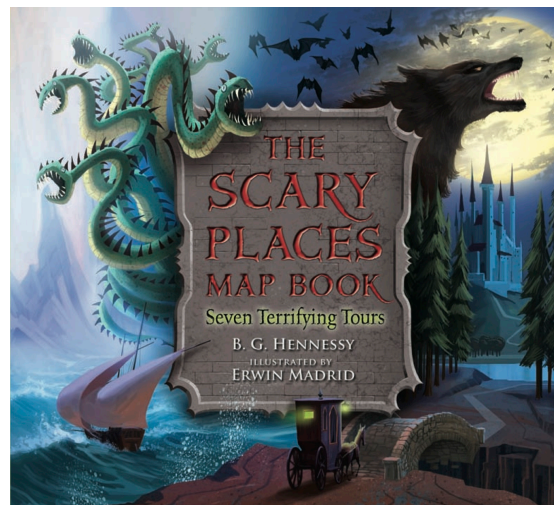
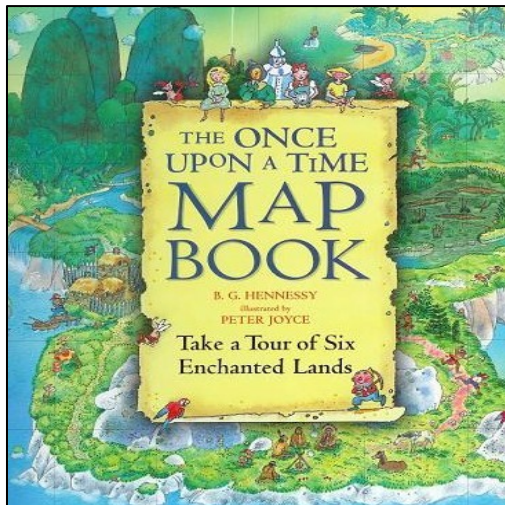


Tswana

What subject or point of view do you feel intrigued you the most and gave you the most room to really get your creative juices flowing?

That's a big question. I ALWAYS think from a child's point of view first. Will they be interested in the subject? The story? The character? When the book is finished I want them to say: "Read it again!" Writing a book is a long process. People are often surprised that it can take years to write a picture book. Every word, every sound, every pause makes a difference. So, I better be in love with my idea before I decide to work on it. We will be together for a long time.

I would say that my most unique concepts is the concept behind THE ONCE UPON A TIME MAP BOOK and the companion THE SCARY PLACES MAP BOOK. Both were big undertakings and seeing the final products is very rewarding.



The relationship between writer and illustrator

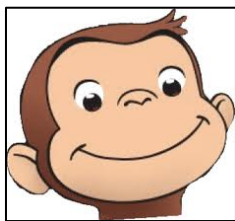
The writer and illustrator of a picture book rarely meet. It is the publisher's job to match a text with the illustrator. I have always thought that I had a tremendous advantage over many writers because of my background. I worked with so many wonderfully talented artists as an art director of children's books at Viking for thirteen years. I worked with Don Freeman, Ezra Jack Keats, James Marshall, Lane Smith, Barbara Cooney, Leo and Diane

Dillon, Alice and Martin Provensen to mention just a few. There was no better way to learn about what makes a good picture book. I learned from each and every book. Atha Tehon, the art director at Dial Books for Young Readers, was my first boss and mentor. I was very fortunate to have learned from the best.

Who do I write for?

This is my favorite question. Since most of my books are read-a-louds, first and most importantly, I write for the child who is being read to. Second up is the reader. How does the text sound when it is read out loud. Is it clear? Smooth? Fun? Rhythm is critical. Third on my list is the illustrator. Have I written something that will be interesting to them? One of the great lessons of being involved in publishing was that there are many well-written stories that are not at all visually interesting.

I often speak at schools and this is how I explain it.



#1. I write for Curious George. Is my story interesting enough for him to sit still to listen?

#2. I write for a reader like Homer Simpson. I can't choose my reader, so I must make sure the words and rhythm are clear and no matter who is reader the book *sounds* right.

#3. I write for Harold and his Purple Crayon, my illustrator. Will my story make an illustrator say: "I need to illustrate that book!"

The top 5 books in my children's home library:

The Tall Book of Mother Goose Rhymes

Goodnight Moon, Brown

Where the Wild Things Are, Sendak

The Illustrated Treasury of Children's Literature/ Martignoni

A Little House of Your Own, de Regniers

My favorite adult book?

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

What am I reading now?

I just finished *NOTHING DAUNTED, The Journey of Two Society Girls in the West*, by Dorothy Wickenden

My advice for young writers or illustrators:

Read. Read. Read. *Know the field and the books you want to write.*

And

Write. Write. Write. *Find you writer "mentors."*

OR

Draw. Draw. Draw. *Find the illustrators you admire.*

If you are serious about becoming a writer or illustrator:

Join SCBWI (The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and learn about the process and the industry.) *Knowing the ins and outs of how to write for the market can save you lots of time and effort. Do your homework!*

AUTHOR PHOTOS:



