



Arthur Geisert

TeachingBooks Movie Transcript

Arthur Geisert interviewed in his studio in Galina, Illinois in May 2001.

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Because this is a transcript of an edited movie, it should not be used as an assessment of Mr. Geisert's writing. Many of the sentences found here were edited, and all editing decisions are the sole responsibility of TeachingBooks.net.

On Etching

The techniques I use for the illustrations for all the books are copper-plate etchings. The technique hasn't been changed for about 500 years. I did a book called *The Etcher's Studio*, which sort of explains the process. [I find that] the seriousness, almost stodginess of etching, makes the humor funnier.

On Nursery Crimes

I've written a near tragedy, but it ends well and everybody lives happily ever after and the bad guy gets his. These are motivated pigs. If you run a salvage yard, build a house out of a caboose, a bus, and a boxcar, with a slide, and raise giant pumpkins, and have all the energy to raise trees and then cut them into shaped turkeys, this is a motivated family.

[Reading from pages 18–19 of *Nursery Crimes*, Houghton Mifflin, 2001] “The children work like beavers. Meanwhile, Jambo and Marva devised a plan. They hollowed out some pumpkins.”

Exploring Small Town USA Books by Bonnie & Arthur Geisert

[These books] give a pretty accurate portrayal of a lot of small-town life in the United States today. And they were so much fun to do. [I liked] the idea that Bonnie would write the text, that I would do the illustrations, and that these secondary stories, these vignettes, would be in the book but not discussed very much in the text.

The little vignettes in the new town books are so interwoven that sometimes I get confused. When I was doing them, I maintained large charts to know what was going on, and the interrelationships of all the various things going on.

[An aside while explaining the chart]. Spring eight pages, summer four, because it is short in a mountain town. And all the books start in a different season....

The text sort of acts like a counterpoint to the pictures. And it's not important that you see everything, because there is so much going on. It's just ordinary things that you would take notice of from time to time by actually living in a place.... And that's the kind of feel that I wanted to convey.

On *Oink*

Oink was a popular little book; popular enough that we did the sequel, which is *Oink Oink*. Now, *Oink Oink* wasn't as popular as *Oink*, because if *Oink Oink* had been as popular as *Oink*, we had a trilogy planned. There would have been *Oink*, *Oink Oink*, and *Oink Oink Oink*. But *Oink* was popular enough to be translated into several foreign languages. Now, the German word for "Oink," coincidentally, is "Oink." And a double coincidence, the Spanish word for "Oink" is "Oink," which, in my mind, makes me the only author in the history of the world that can read his or her entire book in three languages simultaneously.

Books by Arthur Geisert

- OOPS, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2006
- LIGHTS OUT, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2005
- PIGAROONS, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2004
- MYSTERY, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2003
- GIANT BALL OF STRING, THE, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2002
- PRAIRIE SUMMER (written by Bonnie Geisert), Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2002
- DESERT TOWN (written by Bonnie Geisert), Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2001
- NURSERY CRIMES, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2001
- MOUNTAIN TOWN (written by Bonnie Geisert), Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 2000
- RIVER TOWN (written by Bonnie Geisert), Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1999
- PRAIRIE TOWN (written by Bonnie Geisert), Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1998
- ETCHER'S STUDIO, THE, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1997
- ROMAN NUMERALS I TO MM, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1996
- HAYSTACK (written by Bonnie Geisert), Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1995
- AFTER THE FLOOD, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1994
- OINK OINK, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1993
- PIGS FROM 1 TO 10, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1992
- AESOP & COMPANY, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1991
- OINK, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1991
- ARK, THE, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1988
- PIGS FROM A TO Z, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1986
- PA'S BALLOON AND OTHER PIG TALES, Walter Lorraine Books / Houghton Mifflin, 1984

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