Kevin Henkes

"I remember drawing at a very early age. I loved it. And my parents and teachers told me I was good at it - that made me love it all the more."
Biographical Information

- Born in 1960 in Racine, WI
- Went to U. of Wisconsin, Madison
- At 19 he went to NY to try to get his work published
- 2 years later his first book was published - *All Alone*
- Has published many more since then, most all are for children
- Currently lives and works in Madison
Author and Illustrator

★ Henkes writes and illustrates most of his works
★ His media of choice is watercolor paints and a black pen, but he also uses acrylics
★ He is most famous for his mice characters
★ Won the Caldecott in 2005 for Kitten’s First Full Moon
★ Won the Elizabeth Burr Award (best author illustrator in WI) in 1993 for Words of Stone
★ Won the ABBY Award for Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse in 1997 and many, many more…
Novels

- Henkes has also written novels for young adults including:
  - Olive’s Ocean (A Newberry Honor)
  - Sun and Spoon
  - The Birthday Room
  - Words of Stone
  - The Zebra Wall
  - Protecting Marie
  - Two Under Par
Kevin Henkes is most known for his mice characters and their adventures.
Chrysanthemum

Chrysanthemum loves her name, but after she goes to school and the other kids make fun of her, she is not so fond of it. In the end, it all works out and Chrysanthemum and all of the other students are happy once more.

“The range of expression and emotion Henkes conveys in his pen and-ink and watercolor illustrations are ‘absolutely perfect.’ The impressionistic floral backdrops and patterning reinforce the story's lighthearted, yet tender theme. This sensitive story will strike a chord with young children, particularly those who also have difficult or unfamiliar names.”

-McGarth, J.
Lilly’s Big Day

“Parents will chuckle when they see Lilly's exhausted parents, early morning coffee in hand, listening patiently as Lilly lectures them on her wedding responsibilities. Children will like the word balloons that sometimes take the character's dialogue just a bit further. The comforting, joyful ending is a satisfying end to Lilly's central conflict. Parents and kids will be pleased to know that Lilly will manage to find her way without compromising adult decisions.” -Dawn Friedman (Common Sense Media)
Lilly’s Purple, Plastic Purse

“Inspiration for the story struck several years ago when Henkes was on a book tour, waiting in an airport. He believes he was in Boise, Idaho, when he spotted a girl with a pocketbook just like Lilly's.” - Alice Cary
“Broaching a serious topic, Henkes explains Wemberly's fears in a way children can relate to; he finds the sensitive spots that traumatize most children and deftly relates them with a touch of humor in his text and illustrations. And it's his humor and eye for detail that make this serious story fun…” - Stephanie Swilley
Julius: The Baby of the World

- “I recommend this book to people who have a baby brother or a new baby. The author tells about Julius and Lilly’s relationship. They don’t really get along. You can learn a lot about how important relationships are between brothers and sisters.” -A’Shey V. Student in 4th Grade
“Henkes uses a new style with *Kitten's First Full Moon*. In black and white with muted grays, the pictures are reminiscent of a classic 1940's film. This nostalgic atmosphere, combined with the simplicity and subtle emotional power of the story, make for a charming and memorable tale.”

-Marigny Dupuy (Common Sense Literature)
Kitten (cont.)

I saw someone from afar say,
When she saw it, she thought
There’s a little bit of milk in the sky
But she wanted it.
SHHHH

- This is an example of Henkes’ work with Acrylics. SHHHH follows a child around the house before everyone wakes up.
Work With Other Illustrators

The Biggest Boy

Illustrated by Nancy Tafuri

Illustrated by Laura Dronzek, his wife.
Interview with Henkes

• **What is the one book that has most influenced you throughout your life?**
  
  One of the many books that influenced me was *Is This You?* by Ruth Krauss, illustrated by Crockett Johnson. I loved it as a child. It is essentially a guide to making a book of one's own. Now, looking back as a published writer and illustrator, it seems interesting and logical that this book was a favorite of mine.

• **What are some of your favorite children's books by other authors?**
  
  Other children's books I admire include:
  
  - *Harry the Dirty Dog* by George Zion, illustrated by Margaret Bloy Graham
  - *Ellen's Lion* by Crockett Johnson
  - *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
  - *Amos and Boris* by William Steig
  - *Milo's Hat Trick* by John Agee
  - The George and Martha books by James Marshall

• **Who are some of your favorite authors for adults?**
  
  Adult writers whose work I admire include Alice Munro, William Trevor, Cormac McCarthy and Richard Ford to name just a few.
All Titles By Henkes

• All Alone (first book-1981)
• Bailey Goes Camping (1985)
• The Biggest Boy (1995), illustrated by Nancy Tafuri
• The Birthday Room (1999)
• Chester’s Way (1988)
• Chrysanthemum (1991)
• Circle Dogs (1998), illustrated by Dan Yaccarino
• Clean Enough (1982)
• Good-bye, Curtis (1995), illustrated by Marisabina Russo
• Grandpa & Bo (1986)
• Jessica (1989)
• Julius's Candy Corn (2003)
• Julius, The Baby of the World (1990)
• Kitten's First Full Moon (2004)
• Lilly's Chocolate Heart (2004)
• Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse (1996)
• Margaret & Taylor (1983)
• Olive's Ocean (2003), 2004 Newbery Honor Book
• Oh! (1999), illustrated by Laura Dronzek
• Once Around the Block, illustrated by Victoria Chess
• Owen (1993), 1994 Caldecott Honor Book

• Owen's Marshmallow Chick (2002)
• Protecting Marie (1995)
• Return to Sender (1984)
• Sheila Rae, the Brave (1987)
• Sheila Rae's Peppermint Stick (2001)
• Shhhh (1989)
• Sun & Spoon (1997)
• Two Under Par (1987)
• A Weekend with Wendell (1986)
• Wemberly Worried (2000)
• Wemberly's Ice-Cream Star (2003)
• Words of Stone (1992)
• The Zebra Wall (1988)
Bibliography

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- Friedman, Dawn, Common Sense Media
- Swilley, Stephanie, Children’s Book Page
- Cary, Alice. Children’s Book Page
- A’Shev V. Student in 4th Grade
  [http://www.spaghettibookclub.org/review.php3?review_id=5388](http://www.spaghettibookclub.org/review.php3?review_id=5388)
- Barnes & Noble Interview