

*A conversation with author artist*

# Steve Henry

Steve Henry talks about his newest creation, *Here Is Big Bunny*, a delightful urban adventure filled with more than one hundred fifty colorful animal characters.

**Steve, please tell us about your new book, HERE IS BIG BUNNY.**

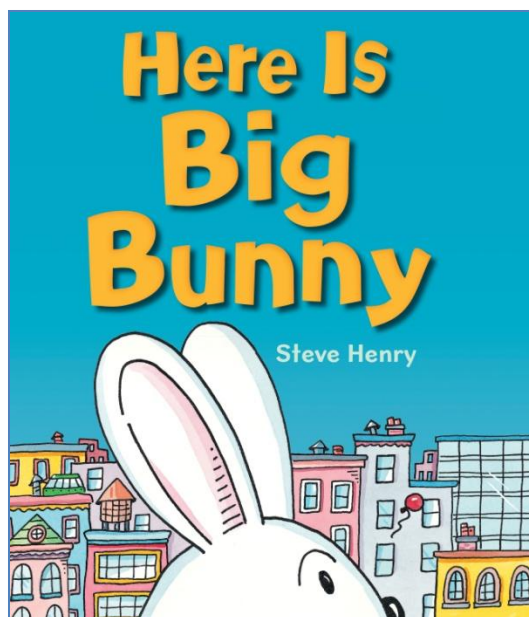
*Here Is Big Bunny* is a book of simple sentences that guide the reader to look at the illustrations to find the hidden element . . . a part of the Big Bunny. It's sort of a game with a fun visual puzzle that is revealed at the end of the story. It's an easy-to-read story with simple illustrations that I hope work to create a fun experience for young readers.

**What inspired you to create this book?**

The idea for the book began at a school reading of another one of my picture books to a group of preschool and kindergarten students. I always like to draw for the children. This time I asked them to help me come up with another animal to make another book about. I would then draw all the animals on a large piece of paper. After a long day of assorted cats, dogs, horses, turtles and a dragon . . . there was a young boy who shyly raised his hand and said, "How about a story about the biggest bunny in the world?" That was the start!

**The setting adds to the imaginative, playful and fun elements of this book. How did you choose a setting for the story?**

It was always challenging to find a good place (the right spot) to reveal the different parts of the Big Bunny. A spot in the illustration where the reader could find it . . . not too easy, but not too hidden. The fun part was taking all of the variables above . . . and drawing it! A busy animal city with loads of animals, in fun settings.



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Settings that were both inside and outside. I enjoyed making the story and art flow from one page to the next . . . just revealing a little more of the bunny each time.

### What do you hope this book will bring to young readers?

I want the readers have an adventurous good time. I hope they will enjoy looking for all the visual clues (the different parts of Big Bunny). I hope the book inspires them to go back and look at the detailed pictures over and over again. All the visuals can help them to eventually read the book themselves. I also hope that they enjoy the little twist at the end!

### What makes this book special to you?

I have always loved to draw. I also love picture books, and drawing for a young audience. If you can tell a story and draw that story . . . you can make a picture book! I love the craft of creating the book, and polishing it over and over until it works. And each book is a new adventure.

*I especially enjoy hearing that a child has learned to read my book independently.*

### What advice would you give readers who might one day want to create picture books?

My advice is first . . . DRAW, DRAW, DRAW. Always keep your audience in mind. Tell a story that you want to tell and the reader would like to be told. Read and look at other picture books, study them, and don't forget the classics. Examine what makes a book a best-seller or a classic. Learn the structure of a picture book. Pay attention to characters, plot, settings, tone, style of the art, all that makes a book good. Try it out. If it isn't working, try again. And again. . . . If you get stuck, move on to another story. Don't give up. And one more thing—always carry a little notebook—you never know what will inspire ideas or when!

### About the Author

**Steve Henry** is a creator. He wears many creative hats, including author and illustrator of children's books. As a kid growing up in Nashville, Tennessee he can't remember not drawing. And he remembers always loving it.

His love of drawing ultimately took him to New York City, where he graduated from Pratt Institute. After trying his creative hand in different arenas, it became clear that drawing animals fascinated him, and so he gravitated toward children's books.

Most of his inspiration comes from living in New York City—as it gives an edge to all of his work. NYC is hectic, loud, funny, sometimes sad, huge, smart, exasperating and comforting. All great sources of creative energy. So as long as Steve Henry can walk the streets or look out his window, he will continue to draw.

### Praise for **HERE IS BIG BUNNY**

“Each page delivers plenty to pore over, inviting kids to make up their own stories-within-the-story, and the revelation of the bunny's identity (a parade is involved) should **elicit some larger-than-life chuckles.**”—*Publishers Weekly*

“Big fun for new readers.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

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