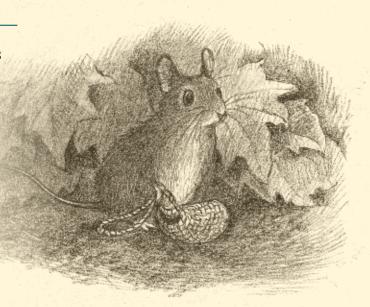
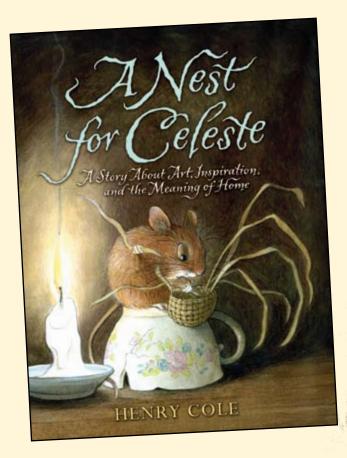
"I have long been an admirer of Henry Cole's contribution to children's literature. With this first novel, he weaves a tale that, in addition to his delightful illustrations, has all the best ingredients—a sense of history, time-honored themes, and just the right amount of imagination."

—Julie Andrews





ABOUT THE BOOK

Set in the early 1800s on a plantation in the bayou country of Louisiana, A Nest for Celeste is a heartwarming fantasy starring a small, orphaned field mouse named Celeste who is in search of a home to call her own. Intertwined with Celeste's story is that of the famous bird illustrator John James Audubon and his assistant, Joseph, who are guests at the plantation. Beautifully illustrated with the flora and fauna of the area, Henry Cole's novel brings Celeste and her friends to life in this story about art, inspiration, and the meaning of home.

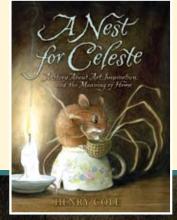


Art © 2010 by Henry Cole

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How can you "read" the illustrations in the novel? Do you read them in the same way that you read the words? How do the illustrations and text complement each other?
- 2. What clues from the drawings and text suggest that this story is not happening in the twenty-first century? Where and when do Celeste's adventures take place?
- **3.** Why is having a home important to Celeste? What feelings does she associate with having a home? Do you feel this way about your home? Why or why not?
- **4.** What is a naturalist? Who are the naturalists in the story? How do you feel about the techniques Mr. Audubon uses to make a portrait of a bird? What is Celeste's alternative method?
- **5.** Who are Celeste's true friends? Do you think Celeste is a true friend to others? Give examples from the story to support your answers. What do you think is the most important quality of a true friend?
- **6.** Who are the bullies in the novel? Have you ever had problems with a bully, either in school or in your neighborhood? What have you done to combat bullies? What does Celeste do?
- 7. Why do you think Joseph is kind to Celeste? If Celeste's first temporary home had been in Eliza's shoe instead of Joseph's boot, do you think the story would have had a happy ending?

- **8.** Celeste poses a real dilemma about friendship: She wonders whether it is worthwhile to spend the time and effort to make a friend if, in the end, the friend might go away. What do you think?
- **9.** Compare and contrast Lafayette and Trixie. Do you find Lafayette amusing? Are you fearful of Trixie? How does Trixie's fate influence the end of the story?
- **10.** In chapter four, Illianna says, "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself." Do you agree or disagree? Could Celeste have accomplished everything that she does without help? Explain.
- 11. Celeste's vantage point changes once she starts traveling in Joseph's hat brim and flying in her gondola. How does Celeste's change in perspective alter the way she thinks about her life and her friends?
- 12. In chapter sixteen, Cornelius exclaims, "Being in this cage is a nightmare!" How do you feel about putting animals in cages? Do you think captivity is unfair to animals, or is it a necessary consequence of collecting animals for study and for the protection of species? Discuss your ideas with your classmates and family.



Art © 2010 by Henry Cole

CREATIVE WRITING AND ARTS ACTIVITIES

- 1. Class Naturalist Book. Assign pairs of students a plant or animal from the novel to research and write a short informational report about. Then have student pairs create life-size drawings or paintings of their research subjects. The goal is to make each illustration scientifically recognizable, so help students distinguish the most important characteristics of their plant or animal, keeping size and proportion in mind. Attach the student reports to the reverse side of the illustrations and then bind the pages together in a class naturalist book.
- **2. Animal Tales and Friendship.** Ask students to select their favorite animal to be the main character in a short story about friendship. Encourage students to illustrate their compositions, telling part of the story through the art itself.
- 3. Weaving Is Your Bag. Celeste is a skilled basket weaver. Help students research woven baskets from around the world, especially those made by Native Americans, the Gullah, and people in Africa. From what materials are baskets woven, and what sizes and shapes are created? What are the uses of baskets? Are the weavers usually men, women, or both? Demonstrate for your students the basic elements of weaving, and help them weave a basket or place mat out of strips of paper cut from magazines.
- 4. Home Sweet Home. Finding a safe and secure home is important to Celeste. Have students use graph paper to draw a floor plan of their ideal home. They can furnish their homes either by cutting out pictures of appliances and furnishings from magazines or by drawing their own. What does each student feel is the most important element of his or her home?



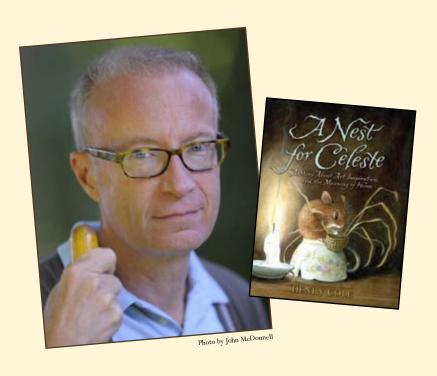
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

- 1. Biological Illustrators. Using library and internet resources, share with your students the bird prints of John James Audubon as well as information about his life and accomplishments. Who were other famous animal illustrators? When and where did they live, and what media did they use? What are botanical and horticultural drawings? Who was Pierre-Joseph Redouté? Why are accurate flora and fauna illustrations significant? Why were they popular before the twentieth century? Ask students to find an illustration of the specimen they chose to paint or draw in the earlier activity and compare it to their own.
- 2. Paths to Extinction. Celeste encounters a huge cloud of passenger pigeons and mistakes them for an approaching storm. What are passenger pigeons? What is extinction? How do animals become extinct? Help students research passenger pigeons and other extinct animals. Discuss with your students the scientific and environmental implications of extinction.
- **3. Spoon Bread Feast.** Plan a midday buffet for your class featuring some of the southern foods mentioned in *A Nest for Celeste*, such as various nuts, hardtack, succotash, okra, sugarcane products, rice, smoked meats, sausages, squash, or spoon bread. Have students research the working and social lives of people living on a southern plantation. What are cotillions and gavottes? What was Mr. Audubon's role on the plantation that provided him room and board? Was such a role common?
- 4. Bayou Country. Using maps and videos, introduce students to the geography of Louisiana, particularly near the mouth of the Mississippi River. What are bayous, and where are they located? What is the climate of this region? What animals and plants are found in southern Louisiana? Joseph and Mr. Audubon travel to New Orleans. What are some of the geographical challenges of living in New Orleans? What are levees, and why was Hurricane Katrina so devastating to this region?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Henry Cole is the talented illustrator of more than fifty books for children, frequently collaborating with such beloved authors as Pamela Duncan Edwards and Margie Palatini. He illustrated the New York Times bestseller The Leprechaun's Gold and the Book Sense Pick Bad Boys, and he wrote and illustrated On Meadowview Street, which received a Green Earth Book Award Honor. A Nest for Celeste is Henry Cole's first novel. Please visit him online at www.henrycole.net.

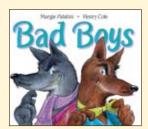




Art © 2010 by Henry Cole

PICTURE BOOKS ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLE

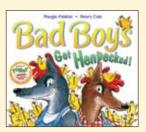
Selected Titles Published by Katherine Tegen Books



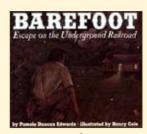
Bad Boys by Margie Palatini



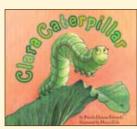
Bad Boys Get Cookie! by Margie Palatini



Bad Boys Get Henpecked! by Margie Palatini



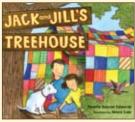
Barefoot by Pamela Duncan Edwards



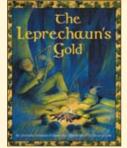
Clara Caterpillar by Pamela Duncan Edwards



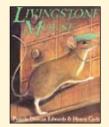
Four Famished Foxes and Fosdyke by Pamela Duncan Edwards



Jack and Jill's Treehouse by Pamela Duncan Edwards



The Leprechaun's Gold by Pamela Duncan Edwards



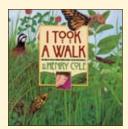
Livingstone Mouse by Pamela Duncan Edwards



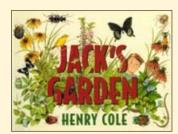
Some Smug Slug by Pamela Duncan Edwards

PICTURE BOOKS WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLE

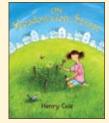
Selected Titles Published by Greenwillow Books



I Took a Walk



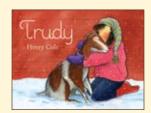
Jack's Garden



On Meadowview Street



On the Way to the Beach



Trudy



For exclusive information on your favorite authors and artists, visit www.authortracker.com.

To order, please contact your HarperCollins sales representative, call 1-800-C-HARPER, or fax your order to 1-800-822-4090. Availability subject to change.

Teaching guide created by Linda Z. Hamilton, Ph.D., Leawood, Kansas.