
This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.

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

All my books are about people, as far as I can recall. All stories, in one way or another, are about this mystery of being a human being. What are we here for, and what are we doing? What are we supposed to do? How am I supposed to be a kid? How do I be a teenager. How do I be me? I think all stories are about that, and my stories certainly are.

I like people who want to do unusual things — extraordinary things. So, I don't use models of real people. I imagine that I'm the person and try to draw the feeling of what it's like to be that person.

On What Charlie Heard
Charles Ives grew up hearing sounds. His father was a musician who listened to all sounds, and he believed in the democracy of noise — that all sounds are equal. You put them together, and it all can be music.

I decided I'd have to draw the sounds — write the sounds into the pictures to make a noisy book. What Charlie Heard is full of noise. There are noises everywhere; all these sound effects. But when his father dies, the words on the page are, “Suddenly Charlie heard a great silence.” And I wanted the reader to hear that silence.

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers
Philippe is a remarkable man who, ever since he was a kid, wanted to do something extraordinary, and always did. He learned magic. He taught himself to walk on the high wire. I had seen him perform around New York City, and he would tie a rope between two trees and jump up on it, and dance, and walk, and juggle. So then, one day I picked up The New York Times and saw that a young Frenchman had managed to rig a cable between the roofs of the Twin Towers and spend an hour walking, and I recognized him — I knew it was the guy I’d been seeing on the street. But, it wasn’t until September 11, 2001, when the towers went down, that I remembered, again, Phillip's walk and thought this was a story that I wanted to tell.

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers is about the space between these two buildings, and it was the space that really interested Philippe. I thought it was a perfect opportunity to do something I had never done before — having a foldout page. So, suddenly the book opens, and I
wanted you to feel like you were going to fall in. Because the towers were destroyed, it is about that too, even without saying anything more except, “Once there were two towers.”

On Books Provoking Questions
I really think that a good book gets the reader to ask good questions. *The Mountains of Tibet* questions about what happens, really, after you die. What do you think about reincarnation? Do you think it’s something that might really happen? If you had a chance to live your life again as any kind of creature, what kind of creature would you choose and why would you choose that?

One of the reasons I wrote the *Old Country* is I wanted to know what it was like to be a fox. So, I wrote a story about a girl that becomes a fox. I had a hard time at first coming up with a good image for the cover of that book. In my other books I have lots of pictures, but this is a novel, and I only got to make one picture, which is the cover of the book. And that one picture had to tell you something about the story and get you interested and get you intrigued.

With *Wild Boy*, one of the reasons I was drawn to the story was this kid’s wildness, and to be able to draw him as being wild. The first part of the book, where he’s wild, and dancing in the snow, and looking at the moon, and drinking water from the stream were really fun to do, because I wanted to feel what it was like to be that kid.

Trying on Different Lives
One of the wonderful things about making books — and writing — is you get to be different people. You get to find out what it’s like to be someone else. And that’s the great thing about reading, and one of the reasons that we read: you get to live a whole different life by reading about someone in a book; you can live a lot of different lives. And it’s the way to experience another way of being another kind of creature.

Books written and illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein
- CAROLINDA CLATTER!, Roaring Brook Press, 2005
- OLD COUNTRY, THE, Roaring Brook Press, 2005
- SHOLOM’S TREASURE: HOW SHOLOM ALEICHEM BECAME A WRITER (written by Erica Silverman), Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005
- SPARROW JACK, Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2003
- WHAT CHARLIE HEARD, Farrar Straus Giroux, 2002
- FOX EYES, Golden Books, 2001
- QUEEN ESTHER THE MORNING STAR, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2000
- ABSOLUTELY AWFUL ALPHABET, THE, Harcourt, 1999
- NOAH AND THE GREAT FLOOD, Simon & Schuster, 1999
- STOP THOSE PANTS, Harcourt Brace, 1998
- BEHIND THE COUCH, Hyperion, 1996
- BEDTIME, EVERYBODY!, Hyperion, 1996
- GIANT, THE, Hyperion, 1995
• SHADOW OF A FLYING BIRD, THE, Hyperion, 1994
• STORY OF MAY, THE, HarperCollins, 1993
• BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, THE, Dutton, 1989
• WILLIAM, WHERE ARE YOU? Crown, 1989
• SEAL MOTHER, THE, Dial, 1986
• TALES OF PAN, HarperCollins, 1986
• ROOM, THE, HarperCollins, 1985
• ROLL OVER, Crown, 1984
• PRINCE SPARROW, Four Winds, 1984
• ARNOLD OF THE DUCKS, HarperCollins, 1983
• FOLLOW ME!, William Morrow, 1983

Books illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein and written by Elizabeth Levy
• SOMETHING QUEER IN THE WILD WEST, Hyperion Books for Children, 1997
• SOMETHING QUEER AT THE SCARY MOVIE, Hyperion Books for Children, 1995
• SOMETHING QUEER IN THE CAFETERIA, Hyperion Books for Children, 1994
• SOMETHING QUEER IN OUTER SPACE, Hyperion Books for Children, 1993
• SOMETHING QUEER AT THE BIRTHDAY PARTY, Delacorte Press, 1990
• SOMETHING QUEER IN ROCK ‘N’ ROLL, Delacorte Press, 1987
• DRACULA IS A PAIN IN THE NECK, Harper & Row, 1983
• SHADOW NOSE, THE, William Morrow, 1983
• SOMETHING QUEER AT THE HAUNTED SCHOOL, Delacorte Press, 1982
• SOMETHING QUEER AT THE LEMONADE STAND, Delacorte Press, 1982
• SOMETHING QUEER ON VACATION: A MYSTERY, Delacorte Press, 1980
• FRANKENSTEIN MOVED IN ON THE FOURTH FLOOR, Harper & Row, 1979
• SOMETHING QUEER AT THE LIBRARY: A MYSTERY, Delacorte Press, 1977
• SOMETHING QUEER AT THE BALLPARK: A MYSTERY, Delacorte Press, 1975
• SOMETHING QUEER IS GOING ON: A MYSTERY, Delacorte Press, 1973

Other books by Mordicai Gerstein
• I AM ARACHNE: FIFTEEN GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHS (reinterpreted by Elizabeth Spires), Frances Foster Books / Farrar Straus Giroux, 2001
• ALBERT AND THE ANGELS (written by Leslie Norris), Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000
• DAISY’S GARDEN, (illustrated by Susan Yard Harris), Hyperion, 1995
• CATARACT OF LODORE, THE (written by Robert Southey), Dial, 1991
• ANYTIME MAPLESON AND THE HUNGRY BEARS (illustrated by Susan Yard Harris), HarperCollins, 1990

Note: Bibliographies created in 2005.
Many thanks to the folks at Roaring Brook Press, especially Lauren Wohl, Neil Porter and Simon Boughton. Thanks also to Jeanne McDermott, Sabeth Ryan Albert, Victoria Fox and Michael Eisenberg at Farrar Straus and Giroux.

Thanks to Andy Laties and Chris Bluhm for their hospitality and support. Thanks, as well, to Gretta Miller, Aarick Beher, Rich Matheson, MJ Baumann and all at Clotho Advanced Media, Inc for their invaluable, professional help with this production.

Of course, this entire Author Up-close program occurred because of the kindness and generosity of Mordicai Gerstein, who shared his studio, time and energy with me in order to make this production.

This program is a production of TeachingBooks.net LLC and may only be used in accordance with the Subscriber Agreement found on the TeachingBooks website. (www.TeachingBooks.net)

TeachingBooks.net obtained permission to reproduce the cover images from Mordicai Gerstein’s books.

From THE MAN WHO WALKED BETWEEN THE TOWERS by Mordicai Gerstein. Copyright ©2003 Mordicai Gerstein. Published by Roaring Brook Press. All rights reserved. Cover image and internal images used by permission. No material shall be published, re-transmitted, broadcast, modified or adapted (re-written), manipulated, reproduced or otherwise distributed and/or exploited in any way without the prior written authorization of Roaring Brook Press.

From THE WILD BOY by Mordicai Gerstein. Copyright ©1998 Mordicai Gerstein. Published by Farrar Straus Giroux. All rights reserved. Cover image and internal images used by permission. No material shall be published, re-transmitted, broadcast, modified or adapted (re-written), manipulated, reproduced or otherwise distributed and/or exploited in any way without the prior written authorization of Farrar Straus Giroux.

From THE OLD COUNTRY by Mordicai Gerstein. Copyright ©2005 Mordicai Gerstein. Published by Roaring Brook Press. All rights reserved. Cover image used by permission.

From WHAT CHARLIE HEARD by Mordicai Gerstein. Copyright ©2002 Mordicai Gerstein. Published by Farrar Straus Giroux. All rights reserved. Cover image used by permission.

This Movie Transcript is created for educational purposes and may be copied and distributed solely for these purposes for no charge as long as the copyright information remains on all copies.

Questions regarding this production should be directed to: info@teachingbooks.net

Copyright ©2005 TeachingBooks.net LLC. All rights reserved.