

*A conversation with author and illustrator*  
**Will Hillenbrand**



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*The fourth in the Bear and Mole series, ALL FOR A DIME! follows Bear, Mole and their new friend, Skunk, as they try to sell their goods on market day. When Mole and Skunk don't have much success, they end up selling to each other, passing the same dime back and forth. Will Hillenbrand, acclaimed author and illustrator, discusses this delightful new picture book.*

**Will, ALL FOR A DIME! A Bear and Mole story is your fourth in the Bear and Mole series. Tell us about it.**

In this story our animal friends find out what it's like to try to sell something. Who knows? They may even get rich! I created a new character just for this story. And she is a little stinker! These friends have all made something special for Market Day. They can't wait to see how well they do. For some reason, Skunk and Mole don't have a lot of success at first. Only until they play musical chairs do they find out the success to their day.

**In ALL FOR A DIME!, Bear, Mole and Skunk head to the market to sell some goods. When Mole and Skunk are unsuccessful in selling, they end up passing the same dime back and forth. What was your inspiration behind this story?**

The idea for this story happened a long time ago. My brother, Pete, and I used to . . . well, we didn't sell lemonade but we drew on t-shirts for the neighborhood kids. I don't know if we made a lot of money but we had a lot of fun. So did the neighborhood kids.

**What do you hope young readers will learn from this story?**

There's a lot of power in a friendship. And when we do things together, whether they're successful or not, it's always best when we're together with friends—friends who accept us for who we are and love us for what we are and what we do no matter how different we may be from them.

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### When did you know you wanted to become an author and illustrator?

Long ago when I grew up, I thought if I could be a fire truck that would be the best thing in the world! I didn't know there were authors and illustrators. I did know there was a person named Virginia Lee Burton who made books about Mike Mulligan and books called *Maybelle the Cable Car* and *Katy and the Big Snow*. I thought if I could be anything, I'd want to be a fire truck (I knew I was not going to be a professional football player).

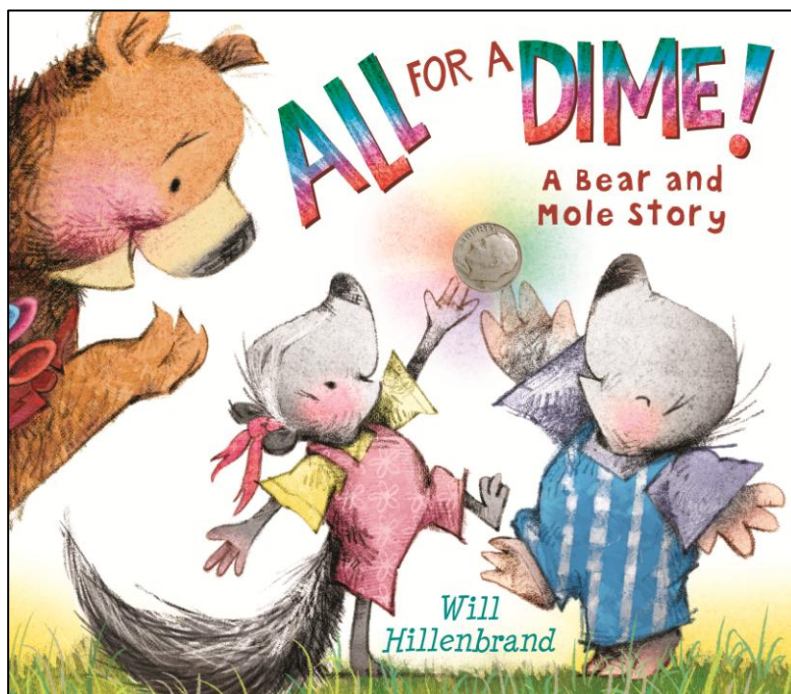
It was, however, when I went to the Art Academy in Cincinnati for college that I decided I was interested in finding out what it might be like to be an author and illustrator of children's books. Wanting to be an author and illustrator and becoming one took a little while for me. And I'm still trying to get better.

### If you could give any advice to young authors and illustrators, what would it be?

In *Off We Go!*, the third book in the Bear and Mole series, Mole is learning to ride a two-wheeler. You might have done that yourself and might recall a few bumps along the way. And that you had to try again and again and again to master the thing that was difficult, like balance in this case. You never get better at anything when you stop trying.

My mother told me I was born with a pencil in my hand because I've always loved drawing. And I've never stopped. I've gotten better because I try to get better at doing this every day. I do that because I absolutely love to draw and make stories for my favorite people. And those people are you.

For me, life isn't about how much money you've made. Maybe you only make a little. Well, maybe there's more than one way to be rich. In this story, I think we see our friends finding that to be true. This book reminds us that making your own fun with friends is the good life!



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