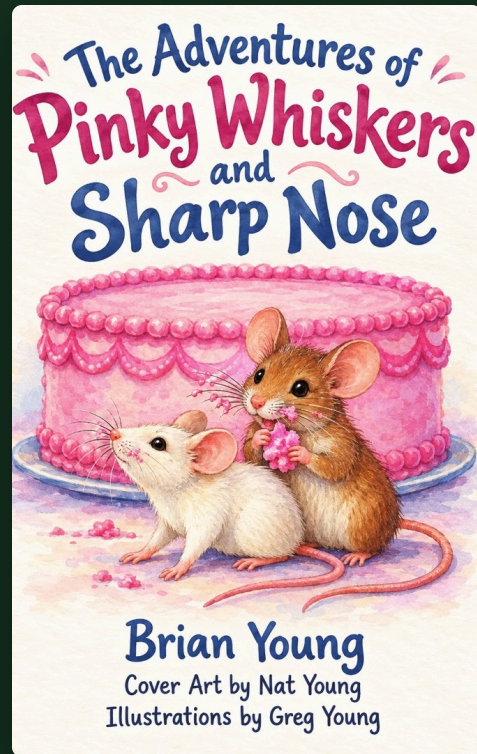


The Adventures of Pinky Whiskers and Sharp Nose

Everything you need for a family read-aloud, a library storytime, or a reading club: a reading plan, icebreakers, a mouse quiz, questions, games, snacks, trivia, and a letter from the author



ILLUSTRATED BY GREG
YOUNG

AUTHOR

Brian Young

BASED ON

Stories by William Laursen

GOOD FOR

Family read-alouds, library storytimes, parent-child and classroom reading clubs

AGES

4 to 8 as a read-aloud; about grades 2 to 4 to read alone

PLANS

One big read, or a chapter a night for eleven nights

Free to print and share. Cheese not included.

Hello, Reading Club

Hi. I'm Brian, and I did not make this book up by myself.

My great-grandfather, William Laursen, told stories about a family of mice. I wrote this one down in 2000 for my own kids, Kaylie, Owen, and Kara.

If you are reading this out loud to a small person, you have the best job in the book. Do the cow's voice. Do the scream when the miner's wife finds mice in her cake. Stop before Sharp Nose looks into the crate and let everyone guess what's inside.

And if the kid on your lap is a little bit Sharp Nose, I understand. It mostly works out.

Send me a drawing or a question at hello@brianyoungauthor.com. I answer every message, and I do short video visits with clubs when I can.

Brian

The book in sixty seconds (no spoilers)

Sharp Nose is a young mouse who can smell a piece of cheese from half a mile away. That nose keeps her family fed, and it keeps getting her into trouble, which is why Mother, Father, and Sharp Nose are floating down a river on a boat made of twigs with a maple leaf for a sail, looking for a new home. Mother is about to have a baby. The chipmunks have promised that the mining camp downriver has excellent crumbs.

The baby arrives, gets a name he will never live down, and turns out to be the careful one. Then the family is on the move again, past an owl, a cheese factory, a very large cat, a snake, and a family of rabbits, looking for one place in the whole world where a mouse can be safe.

How to use this kit

Pick a plan (one big read or a chapter a night), print the pages you want, and skip anything that doesn't fit your group. The questions are written so a grown-up can read them straight to a five-year-old; older kids can read them to the grown-ups. Pages marked as handouts can be copied for everyone.

FOR THE GROWN-UPS: WHAT'S IN THE BOOK

Nobody dies in this book, and every chase ends at home, but it does not pretend mice have an easy life. Miners chase Sharp Nose with tools in Chapter 2. Father tells the children plainly that humans will kill a mouse if they can, and that eating the poison means “you will die” (Chapter 3). An owl nearly carries Pinky Whiskers off in Chapter 4. A barn cat chases the children twice (Chapters 7 and 8); Pinky sprains his leg, the cat ends up under a fallen shelf and then gets a door slammed on its face, and it is sent back to the barn. A snake strikes at Mother in Chapter 10 and is snatched by a hawk. The hardest stretch for sensitive listeners is the end of Chapter 10, when Mother is very sick, collapses, and the chapter ends with her life in doubt. She is recovering by the second page of Chapter 11 and back with the family a day later. If you have a worrier on your lap, say so before you start Chapter 10. Also worth knowing: there is a stern father, two groundings, and a mother who cries and asks where she went wrong (Chapter 6), which makes for a good talk. The family prays for safety a few times, briefly. Language is clean; Father says “I’m not an idiot” once, and Sharp Nose calls her brother a baby more than he would like.

Pick Your Plan

One big read

About 25,000 words is roughly three hours out loud, so this is a rainy Saturday with breaks, or a weekend for a kid reading alone. Then meet for 45 to 60 minutes: an icebreaker (5 min), the Which Mouse Are You? quiz (10 min), five or six questions you pick from the three lists (20 min), one game, then trivia and a snack (15 min).

A chapter a night

Eleven chapters, eleven nights. The short chapters take under ten minutes out loud; the cake chapter and the cheese factory chapters run closer to twenty. Ask the question after you close the book, not before, and accept “I don’t know” as a fine answer at bedtime.

NIGHT	CHAPTER	ONE THING TO TALK ABOUT
1	The River	Why did the family have to leave the cabin?
2	The Mining Camp	What would you name the baby?
3	Baby Takes the Cake	Was the cake worth it?
4	On the Move	Who was the bravest mouse in the field?
5	Every Mouse’s Dream	Would you have asked the cow?
6	The Expedition	Why is Mother crying?
7	Nice Kitty	Should Pinky have told on his sister?

NIGHT	CHAPTER	ONE THING TO TALK ABOUT
8	The Escape	How did Sharp Nose trick the cat?
9	On the Road Again	What would you pack for a sleepover in a rabbit hole?
10	Search for Paradise	Is Mother going to be okay? (Yes. Say so.)
11	Home Sweet Home	What job would you want at the cottage?

READING IT OUT LOUD

Give the cow a slow voice and the cat none at all (the cat never speaks, which is scarier). Let the listener do the “POUNCE!” in Chapter 6 and the “Gotcha!” in Chapter 3. When Sharp Nose sniffs the air, stop and ask what she smells before you turn the page.

Icebreakers

Mouse Names 5 MIN

Sharp Nose was named for her nose, and Pinky Whiskers was named for a cake. Everyone picks a mouse name from something they do or love (Fast Feet, Giggle Ears, Book Nose, Puddle Jumper) and says, “My mouse name is _____ because _____.” Use the mouse names for the rest of the meeting. Grown-ups too.

Pounce or Hide 5 MIN

Pinky Whiskers has two favorite moves. When the leader says “Pounce!” everyone jumps as high as they can. When the leader says “Cat!” everyone freezes and hides behind their hands. When the leader says “Cheese!” everyone sniffs the air. Mix them up and go faster. Last one to get confused is Sharp Nose for the day.

Would You Rather 5 TO 10 MIN

- Ride on a leaf boat, or sleep over in a rabbit hole?
- Eat a whole pink cake, or a whole wheel of cheese?
- Have the best nose in the world, or know the best hiding spot in the world?
- Talk to a cow, or talk to a bunny?
- Be the big sister who leads the way, or the little brother who keeps everyone out of trouble?

Which Mouse Are You?

Name: _____ Date: _____

A grown-up can read these out loud. Circle A or B for each one, then count your letters.

1. You smell something delicious coming from the kitchen. You: A. Follow your nose right now. B. Ask first, and wait for the crumbs.

2. Your grown-up says, “Stay close.” You: A. Stay close for about a minute. B. Hold their hand the whole way.

3. There is a mystery box in the corner, and something inside it is breathing. You: A. Climb up and look in. B. Say “Let’s get out of here,” and mean it.

4. Your favorite game is: A. Exploring somewhere new. B. Hide and seek, and you already know the best spot.

5. Your little brother or sister wants to do something silly. You say: A. “Stick with me, and you’ll be just fine.” B. “I’ll come, but only to keep you out of trouble.”

6. The best thing in the whole world is: A. Cheese. Fresh. Right now. B. Being home, safe, with everybody.

My letters: A _____ B _____

Mostly A: You are Sharp Nose. You go first, you smell everything, and you have never once been bored. Your friends have the best stories because of you. Watch out for the crate at the end of the hall, and remember what Pinky said: your nose isn’t the curse, your curiosity is.

Mostly B: You are Pinky Whiskers. You notice the breathing in the box. You stand guard at the door even when your voice shakes. You tell the truth even when it’s your sister’s truth. Everybody needs a Pinky Whiskers, and the book says so: without him, Sharp Nose might never have made it home.

A tie? You are Father. Part explorer, part map-maker. He admits he was “quite the troublemaker” when he was young (Chapter 7), and now he draws the whole factory on a piece of cheesecloth. You will probably still refuse to ask the cow for directions. Ask the cow.

Talk About It: Chapters 1 to 4

The family floats down the river, builds a home inside a mess hall wall, welcomes a baby, eats a pink cake they should not have touched, and runs for their lives across a dark field.

- 1 Sharp Nose got her name because of her nose. If your name came from something you are good at, what would it be?
- 2 The family had to leave the cabin because Sharp Nose went into the pantry in the daytime. Was that fair to Mother and Father? Was it fair to Sharp Nose?
- 3 Father builds beds, a sofa, curtains, and a cradle out of sticks, straw, and bits of cloth. If you had to build a new house out of what's in your yard, what would you make first?
- 4 Sharp Nose climbs into the mining cart even though Father said to stay away from the humans. Why do you think she did it anyway?
- 5 When Sharp Nose comes home dirty, she says, "Trouble? Me?" What should she have said?
- 6 The baby got his name from pink frosting. If you got your name from the messiest thing you ever did, what would it be?
- 7 Father says the rules come from love. What is one rule at your house that keeps you safe?
- 8 In the dark field, Pinky says, "I'm scared," and Sharp Nose says it's an adventure. Which one would you say? Which one is telling the truth?

Talk About It: Chapters 5 to 8

The cheese factory: every mouse's dream, a kind cow, a map on cheesecloth, a barn cat asleep in a crate, and the night Sharp Nose cannot hold out any longer.

- 1 Father won't ask the cow for directions. Mother does. Who was right? Would you have asked?
- 2 A whole factory full of cheese. What is your "cheese," the thing that would be hardest for you to stay away from?
- 3 Pinky says Sharp Nose's curiosity is the curse, not her nose. What does curiosity mean? Is it good, bad, or both?
- 4 Mother cries when the kids sneak out. How do you think the kids felt when they saw her crying? What could they do to make it better?
- 5 Father draws a map of the factory on cheesecloth. If you drew a map of your house, what would you mark as safe and what would you mark as dangerous?
- 6 Pinky says, "I have a bad feeling about this room." Have you ever had a bad feeling about something? What did you do?

- 7 Pinky tells Father the truth about the cheese, and Sharp Nose gets in trouble. Was Pinky a tattletale or a good brother? Can you be both?
- 8 Sharp Nose yells, “It’s ME you want!” to pull the cat away from her hurt brother. She caused the problem, and then she was brave. Can both things be true at the same time?

No, your curiosity is the curse. Your nose just makes you more curious.

PINKY WHISKERS, CHAPTER 6

Talk About It: Chapters 9 to 11

Mountains, a sleepover with seven bunnies, a snake in the grass, a very sick Mother, and a cottage in the forest where no cats are allowed.

- 1 Sharp Nose gets the job of watching the back of the line. Why do you think Father trusts her with that job now?
- 2 The rabbits let four strangers sleep over and share their breakfast. Would your family do that? What would you share?
- 3 Pinky holds Mother’s hand when she is sick. What is something small you can do when someone in your family isn’t feeling well?
- 4 Father’s scary story gets interrupted by a real snake. Was that funny, scary, or both? Finish Father’s story for him.
- 5 At the cottage, everyone has a job. Mother tells bedtime stories and Father collects food. What job would you want?
- 6 The cottage has no cats, no owls, and no snakes. Do you think Sharp Nose will still find trouble there? What kind?
- 7 The book says this is a story of “unconditional love.” What does it mean to love someone no matter what they do?
- 8 If you could add one more chapter, what adventure would Pinky Whiskers and Sharp Nose have next?

Games and Activities

The sniff test

Put five smells in paper cups under a cloth: cheese, orange peel, cinnamon, a flower, a bar of soap. (Skip nuts if anyone has an allergy.) Eyes closed, one sniff each, guess. Whoever gets the most is Sharp Nose for the rest of the meeting.

Build a twig boat

Chapter 1 gives you the plans: twigs tied together with twine (orange if you can find it), one stick for a mast, a giant leaf for a sail. Float it in a sink, a tub, or a puddle. Does it hold a toy mouse? Does the sail work? Race them.

Cheese tasting

Father found Swiss, parmesan, mozzarella, brie, gorgonzola, American, and cheddar in the factory (Chapter 5), and he liked yellow cheese best. Taste three or four and rank them from “cutting-room scraps” to “worth getting grounded for.” Nobody has to try the gorgonzola.

Mouse-house craft

Take a shoebox, straw or shredded paper, leaves, and scraps of cloth. Build what Father built: beds, a sofa, curtains, and a cradle. House rule: only materials a mouse could carry. Cheesecloth curtains get extra credit.

Act it out

Pick a scene: Mother and the cow (Chapter 5), the pink cake (Chapter 3), or the cat and the wall (Chapter 7). One person narrates from the book. Everyone else takes a part and does the sound effects: the scream, the crash, the “POUNCE!” The cat gets no lines, only glowing eyes.

Kindness challenge

The cow, the rabbits, and Lulu all helped a family that could not help itself. For one week, do one Lulu-sized kindness a day: small, and for someone who didn’t ask. Keep a list on the fridge and read it at your next meeting.

Snacks that fit the book

- **Pinky Whiskers cake.** Anything with pink frosting. Rule: you must get some on your whiskers.
- **The cutting-room floor.** Cheese cubes in one bowl. Father’s rule: only eat what’s on the floor.
- **Miners’ crumbs.** Crackers, bread crusts, and cheese, served messy. Dirt floor optional.
- **Rabbit-hole breakfast.** Carrots and greens, with dip. Sharp Nose was polite about it.
- **Roasted cheese.** Father’s campfire snack (Chapter 10): cheese toast in mouse-sized squares.

My Mouse Adventure

Draw your own mouse adventure in the box. Where does your mouse go? What does it smell? Who helps? Then finish the three sentences below. A grown-up can write the words for you.

[illegible]

Mouse Hunt Trivia

Fifteen questions. Play as teams, or go around the circle. Little kids can answer with a grown-up partner. Answers are on the next page, so no peeking.

1. What is the family's boat made of? Name two things.
2. Why did the family have to leave the cabin by the lake?
3. How far away can Sharp Nose smell a piece of cheese?
4. Who told the family about the mining camp?
5. Where does Father find the family's first new home?
6. What did Sharp Nose climb into at the mine?
7. What color was the cake, and who picked the baby's name?
8. What two things did the miners set out the morning after the cake?
9. What animal attacked the family in the field at night, and what did Father throw at it?
10. Who told Mother how to get into the cheese factory?
11. What did Father draw his map on?
12. Describe the barn cat. Two details.
13. How did Sharp Nose stop the cat in the cheese room?
14. How many bunnies were in the rabbit family?
15. What is the name of the woman at the cottage, and what is the name of the family's new mouse neighbor?

BONUS ROUND (ONE POINT EACH)

What is Pinky Whiskers' favorite game? · What did Father fill the cradle with? · What animal grabbed the snake? · What was Mother's job at the cottage?

Answers

1. Twigs tied with orange twine, a stick for a mast, and a giant maple leaf for a sail.
 2. Sharp Nose got into the woodsman's pantry in the daytime, and the woodsman's wife saw her on the fresh bread.
 3. Half a mile.
 4. Chipmunks by the lake.
 5. An empty squirrel hole behind the fire pit in the mess hall.
 6. An empty mining cart on the tracks.
 7. Pink. Mother named him Pinky Whiskers.
 8. Traps with cheese on them, and poison.
 9. An owl. Father threw a pebble.
 10. A cow in the pasture.
 11. A piece of cheesecloth.
 12. Gray with black stripes like a tiger, fat but quick, yellow eyes, the meanest barn cat on the farm.
 13. She pushed a block of cheese off the shelf while the cat stood on it, and the whole shelf tipped over on the cat.
 14. Seven, plus a mother and father rabbit.
 15. Lulu owns the cottage. Squeaker is the neighbor.
- Bonus:** Hide and seek. · Soft cotton from a willow by the river. · A hawk. · Telling bedtime stories.

Who's who and where's where

NAME	WHO OR WHAT IT IS
Sharp Nose	Big sister. A nose that finds cheese half a mile away, and trouble closer.
Pinky Whiskers	Little brother, named for the pink cake. Careful, funny, best hider.
Mother	Patient and practical. Asks the cow. Ends up telling bedtime stories.
Father	Builds beds, cradles, and maps. Throws the pebble. Won't ask directions.
The cow	Black and white, polite, and the reason the family got into the factory.
The barn cat	Gray with black stripes, fat but quick, yellow eyes. Never says a word.
The rabbits	Two parents and seven bunnies in a surprisingly fancy hole. Great hosts.
Squeaker	The friendly neighbor mouse who explains how the cottage works.
Lulu	The old woman with kind eyes who owns the cottage. No cats allowed.
The lake cabin	Where Sharp Nose was born. The woodsman's pantry was the problem.
The mining camp	Huts around a mess hall with a dirt floor. Great crumbs. Home number two.
The cheese factory	Cement building in a green valley, full of cheese. Home number three.
Lulu's cottage	Deep in the forest. A room for each family, a school, jobs for all. Home.

Listen, Read, Connect



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When your reader is older

Brian also writes the Sophia Sprite series for ages ten and up, a YA fantasy that begins with *Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret*. It has a Book Club Kit of its own.

A small favor

If your family or club liked the book, a short review on Amazon or Goodreads helps other families find it. A sentence or two is plenty. Reviews from kids, typed up by a grown-up, are the best kind.

SAY HELLO

Send a photo of your club, your twig boats, your mouse houses, or a page from *My Mouse Adventure* to hello@brianyoungauthor.com. Free short virtual visits are available for clubs, classrooms, and libraries as my schedule allows. I read every message. Brian

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