



BEHIND THE MOUSE

About the Illustrator

Helen Craig was born in London in 1934. She moved to the country with her family just before World War II. Many of the images from this country life have been incorporated into her illustrations in the classic *Angelina Ballerina*™ books. Ms. Craig realized how important books were to her at a very young age: “I would almost enter the pictures and become so absorbed that I would wait -- expecting the figures to move. Now that I am an illustrator myself, I try to make my pictures live for the children who look at them.”

Ms. Craig comes from a very artistic family: her great grandmother, Ellen Terry, was a celebrated actress; her grandfather, Edward Gordon Craig, was a famous stage designer and innovative wood engraver; her father was a film director and her brother is a graphic designer. At the age of 16, Ms. Craig became an apprentice to a commercial photographer in London, only drawing for her own pleasure. She went on to set up her own photographic studio, as well as working as a freelance potter and sculptor.

It was only when her son Ben, was born in 1965 that she experimented with ideas for children’s pictures books. She was inspired by Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*, after buying it for Ben. In 1970, Ms. Craig took her drawings to an editor at Macmillan Books. From then on, her career as a children’s illustrator took off.

Ms. Craig has now worked on over 60 children’s book titles. The most famous are her illustrations for the *Angelina Ballerina* series written by Katharine Holabird.

As a creative consultant to *Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps*, Ms. Craig consults on all aspects of the production, including the designs, scripts and music.