

## Abel's Island *by* William Steig



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**ISBN:** 0606010874

**ISBN13:** 978-0606010870

**Author:** William Steig

**Book title:** Abel's Island

**Publisher:** Demco Media; Turtleback School & Library ed. edition (March 1, 1986)

**Language:** English

**Category:** Animals

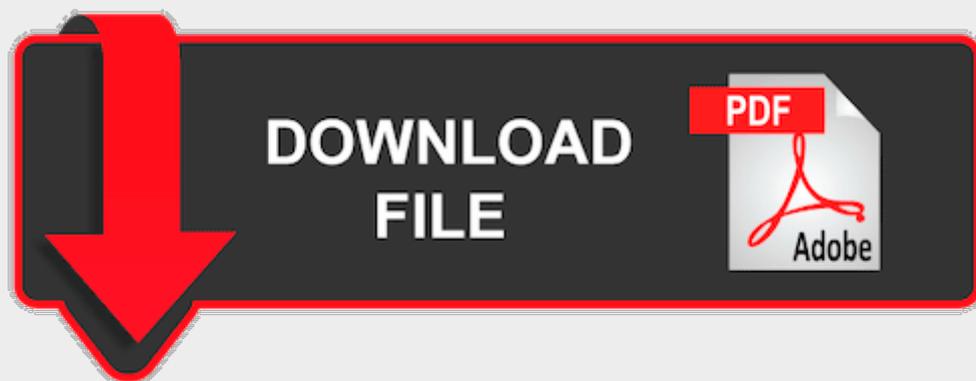
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A wild August torrent sweeps Abel Mouse away from home, family, and familiar world to an uninhabited island where, between efforts to return home, he makes new discoveries about himself and the world.



## Reviews of the *Abel's Island* *by* William Steig

### 1. Dawncrusher

It's been a while since I read a contemplative book meant for all ages. Sad that I had to dig so far back, to one published in 1976. I wish more of this kind, not hung up on swift dialogue and never ending outrageous deeds. This is a mediation on inner-strength that is served as a tale of survival,

but in a rather quiet way. {I deliberately used "rather," as the voice is refined and civilized in that elegant way we associate with old fashioned, and British, narration.}

A lovely picnic turns wet and stormy, and a loving husband, who happens to be mouse, is separated from his beloved because he chases her scarf, blown off by the raging wind. It is unclear if his scarf retrieval is an act of chivalry, or obsessive possessiveness. Possibly both. This one grand gesture winds up marooning this husband for a year, on an island, as he longs to make his way back to his wife mouse.

A re-telling of the Odyssey, it works with charm and none of the literary hang-ups of writers who worry about too much tell (it's mostly that) or lowering the vocabulary to kid-friendly words. The result is a small masterpiece.

## 2. Zeueli

I'll never forget getting this book as a child the very year it first emerged. It was one of my immediate favorites due to Steig's graceful portrait of the posh city-mouse, Abelard, who discovers the depths of loneliness and the heights of bravery and grit as he struggles to survive being marooned on an island following a terrible storm. This book is one of those kid's tales that has a truly haunting, magical quality that endures long after the last page is read. Part of this is due to Steig's sensitive and clever prose, his insight into the childlike hope and fear that lives-on in every human mind, no matter how young or old we are. I think this work features some of his most exceptional illustrations, too. Just marvelous. If you value your kids' brains in this manic world of chaos and crap, buy them books like this and you'll give them a priceless gift that conveys a sense of spirit and soulfulness for a lifetime.

## 3. Ballagar

I started reading this book to my 7 year old who was on a second grade reading level when we started. I would read a passage then gave him read me the same passage. We did that through the whole book. At first he was

reluctant but by the second chapter he couldn't wait to read about Abel's adventures. His teacher texted me the other day and said he is now reading on a third grade reading level. I fully believe his love and fluency of reading increased because of this book.

#### 4. Vit

As a child, the first "book" I remember reading was Steig's "Dominic." When I re-found and re-read the book years later, I realized just how beautiful the story was and decided to buy more of his works. I picked Abel's Island randomly, knowing nothing about the story.

It is perhaps even more beautiful than "Dominic" was. Good enough to make this reader cry a bit (in joy) at the end. The story is about Abel, a distinguished mouse, who gets swept away in a flood and marooned on an island while trying to fetch a scarf that flew off his beloved wife's neck. After a few failed attempts to escape the island, Abel is forced to rely on himself to survive until he can figure out how to get back to his family. He keeps his wife's scarf around his neck to give him strength.

This is a story that will be equally enjoyed by a young child and the parent reading it to him or her; and the themes of love, beauty and strength of character are lessons that can be appreciated by someone of any age.

#### 5. JUST DO IT

This book met all my expectations. It is a chapter book suitable for a five-year-old girl and a seven-year-old boy. The values that it illustrates are very appropriate as they show the importance of persistence, caring for others, and ingenuity. We have only read about 25 percent of this book, and I am hoping to read another "20 minutes" this evening after their dinner. My daughter calls me when they are ready for bed, and "grandma" reads them their before bed story. I have become very close to both of them because of this tradition. I have read other books to them over Skype, such as THE TALE OF DESPARAUX, and I will continue this

process as long as they are interested.

#### 6. Adaly

This was a lot of fun to read with my 8 year old son. He's into survival stories right now, and this was right up his alley. Classic, beautifully written story of a mouse's survival on an island in a river, over the span of one year. William Steig is one of my favorite children's authors.

#### 7. Blackworm

This book is special to me, so when I lent it to someone years ago who did not return it (they thought it was a gift) - I was happy that they and their children got so much from it. I bought this again recently and possibly enjoyed the re-read even more. I would love every person I know to read it. The story is wonderful; imaginative, human, poignant, witty, funny, full of hope. The language is simple yet clever, I feel like a grand, old raconteur is reading to me. What an interesting man W Steig must have been to be a cartoonist for the New Yorker, write these wonderful stories for children and at age 80 write the fabulous Shrek!

8. Found this book just recently after twenty years searching - not knowing the author or remembering the title- only asking about the story- - I had read this story to my Son when he was 8- reviewed it for the teacher - it stood apart-it was really a WOW. When my son had children I wanted to find that book - then while I was going through saved items from his childhood I found the book report. There it was, Abel's Island - like finding a lost wedding ring! I've sent the books to my Grandchildren, with my

message included- ( thank you Amazon)- and I look forward to read it again and again. Now learning the history of William Steig - I am in awe of this man and thankful for his contributions.

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