



## The Rumpoles and The Barleys

Karen Hunt

*Once there was a family of mice who lived in the attic of the old Rumpole mansion on the edge of Dilbury town...*

Welcome to the attic world of Eustace and Prunella, two little mice very much like brothers and sister everywhere. When the naughty pair are sent to their room for misbehaving, they sneak out of their bedroom window and land in a farm wagon full of ...(well, that's a secret you will have to discover for yourself when you turn the pages.)

And thus begins an adventure that will include new friends and a valuable lesson in thankfulness.



## A Picnic with The Barleys

Karen Hunt

*It was a glorious, sunshiny day, just right for a picnic in the country...*

The merry adventures of Eustace and Prunella Rumpole continue as the Rumpole family of mice venture out from their cozy attic home atop the old Rumpole mansion to picnic by the river with their country friends, the Barleys.

Prunella's prized pink parasol soon plays an important and dramatic part in this unforgettable story about giving and forgiving.

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By Karen Hunt  
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## Suggested Interview Questions for Karen Hunt

The Rumpoles and The Barleys series and other children's books:

When did you first know you wanted to be a writer and an artist?

The mice in the Rumpoles and the Barleys stories are so much like real children! Were you inspired by children that you know?

What adventures are in store next for the Rumpoles and the Barleys children?

How do you balance being a single mother, a writer and illustrator and a public speaker and the creator of a literacy program?

I hear you are working on a book about your childhood. Can you tell us a little bit about it?

How did your childhood adventures of traveling the world with your family influence your later decisions in life?

You write fiction. Do you think that a story that is fiction has as much truth and merit as a story that is nonfiction?

Why do you think it's so important for us as human beings to tell stories?

What is the biggest challenge you have faced as an artist and a writer?

What's the best letter from a fan of your books that you have ever received?

## Karen Hunt's work with Incarcerated Youth and the WORDPOWER Literacy Program:

Why did you decide to teach young people in prison?

What was it like meeting and getting to know young people who had committed terrible crimes and what did you learn from the experience?

What was the biggest challenge you faced when you decided to teach incarcerated youth?

How did you deal with getting to know young people and then having to say good-bye to them...many times knowing they were going to prison for the rest of their lives?

How did you reconcile the fact that these were children who had committed heinous crimes and yet you came to love them and believe in them?

What was the most inspiring thing that happened while you were teaching incarcerated youth?

WORDPOWER is a literacy program for youth in schools. After having worked with incarcerated youth, why did you decide to start WORDPOWER?

What does the term literacy mean in education today?

How is literacy the key to learning?

Why do you think that teenagers display such arrogance and how did they get so much power in our society?

Besides arrogance, youth display apathy towards learning. Why do you think this is and what can we do to change it?

How do you think that we as a society are failing our children in education?

What do you most love about teenagers?

## Karen Hunt



**For an interview or speaking engagements please contact  
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### Youth:

Readings from her books and tales from her childhood, relating to thankfulness, courage and forgiveness

WORDPOWER seminars and creative writing workshops.

### Adults and Women's Groups:

WORDPOWER seminars, and creative writing workshops, helping people to improve communication skills and to heal from past painful experiences

"A World of Possibilities:" Inspirational, funny and poignant tales of her childhood traveling the world and her adulthood teaching incarcerated youth. With these stories she illustrates 1) why it is important to pass family stories down through generations 2) the two most important lessons she learned from her parents: Stand Firm in the Face of Adversity and Your Word is Your Honor 3) with faith, all things are possible.

## Lesson Plan Suggestions for The Rumpoles and The Barleys

Student Grade: Pre-K, K, and 1<sup>st</sup>

Read the story

Discussion:

Have the students ever felt unthankful?

What do the students think about Eustace and Prunella disobeying their parents and climbing out the window?

Have the students every disobeyed their parents? Doing what?

What did Eustace and Prunella fall into when they jumped out the window?

What was the bad thing that happened because Eustace and Prunella disobeyed?

Even though Eustace and Prunella disobeyed, what was the good lesson that they learned?

Do the students have to do things during the day that they don't like to do...such as brush their teeth, eat their vegetables and go to bed at the right time?

What do the students think would happen if they stopped doing those things?

Have the students name some things to be thankful for. Make a list of the things on the board.

Have the students say the Bible verse together at the end of the book. Have them memorize it.

## Lesson Plan Suggestions for A Picnic with The Barleys

Student Grade: Pre-K, K, and 1<sup>st</sup>

Read the story

Discussion:

Have the students ever felt mean and spiteful towards someone?

What did Papa Rumpole say to Eustace and Prunella that they shouldn't ever do?

When Prunella let out a dreadful cry, what had she found out was missing?

When Eustace looked for the parasol, what important decision did he make at the edge of the bog?

What was the bad thing that happened to Cordelia because she took the parasol?

Have the students ever taken anything that didn't belong to them?

How did they feel about it?

Why did everyone congratulate Dagwood at the end of the story?

What important decision did Prunella make at the end of the story and what did she do to Cordelia as a result?

Why did Papa Barley tell Prunella and Cordilia that "it is also brave to say 'sorry' and to 'forgive'?"

Who is each student's favorite character in the story?

Have the students name some things to be courageous about. Make a list of the things on the board.

Have the students say the Bible verse together at the end of the book. Have them memorize it.



## About Karen Hunt

I grew up in a Christian family and was taught that my most important goal in life was to fulfill my God-given purpose. When I was ten, my dad, Dave Hunt, quit his career in business to become a writer. As a result, I had more than my fair share of adventures as we traveled the world in a powder blue VW van, searching for inspiration for his books. Here are some of my adventures in a nutshell:

I rode an Arabian horse across the deserts of Egypt, climbed the Great Pyramid and sailed down the Nile to the Valley of the Kings.

I got lost on the wild moors of Scotland, slept in tent cabins in Russia and swam in the Black Sea.

I drank the most delicious mint tea with a rug merchant in Marrakesh and petted reindeer on the northernmost tip of Norway.

I escaped out of Syria into Turkey just hours before the borders closed, due to the 6 Day War, celebrating my 11th birthday in Ankara.

I “smuggled” Bibles into Romania and Russia, my parents praying at each border crossing that God would blind the eyes of the guards. It’s an absolute fact that the guards opened every other suitcase and searched every inch of the car, inside and out—once even checking inside the tires with a special device and tearing the lining out of my mom’s purse—but never did they open the big brown suitcase containing the Bibles.

The best adventure of all was living in a real 17th century castle in Switzerland, complete with turrets and towers, winding staircases and a dungeon. I attended the village school and was terrorized by my teacher, Madame Petriquin, a ferocious old lady who rode a bike to school and wore big black boots every day. Her favorite forms of discipline were shin kicks and ear-twists. After school my sister, brothers and I were chased home through the winding cobbled streets by some of the rougher village children who were convinced that we came from the “Wild West” and so they wanted to fight us. We became fierce sprinters and experts at jumping over the lowest part of the castle wall to safety. Peeking over the top of the wall, we made faces back at them, as they dared not enter the castle grounds. In the biggest castle tower lived its owner, the ancient and mysterious Madame Franco...but more on her later.

All of these amazing adventures inspired my over-active imagination and I spent hours sprawled on the floor in my room, drawing pictures and writing stories. When I grew up I fulfilled my God-given purpose and started writing and illustrating children’s books. I lived for eight years between London and a little village in Slovenia and illustrated four of the first multi-cultural books ever published in Great Britain. Eventually, I moved back to Los Angeles and published fourteen more children’s books.

About thirteen years ago, I developed a creative writing program in public schools called WORDPOWER. In 1995, I took my program into Central Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles and started teaching a group of girls who were all High Risk Offenders, being tried for serious crimes and facing life sentences. I had never sat down face to face with tough, gang kids and was impressed at the depth and honesty of their

writing. Other wonderful writers soon followed, from award-winning journalists, screenwriters and authors, to young writers just out of college, to school teachers. In 1999, we formed InsideOUT Writers, a creative writing program for incarcerated and at-risk youth. From then until 2006, I was honored to be its President.

In 2006 I stepped down as President of InsideOUT Writers in order to return to my writing. I have since further developed WORDPOWER, an inter-active literacy program which I teach, along with the WORDPOWER team of Word Masters, in schools, youth centers and after-school programs.

I'm the proud mother of three incredible children, Katya, Harrison and Max—my greatest inspirations. Katya is at UCLA Law School, Harrison is in High School and wants to be a writer, Max is in Middle School and wants to be an actor. Life is exciting!

An important part of my life's journey has been training in martial arts, boxing and kick-boxing. Besides holding a second degree black belt in Tang Soo Do, I am accomplished in Okinawan weapons and Eskrima.

#### Media and Awards

##### Print:

*Los Angeles Times*, *Daily News*, *LA Weekly* magazine, *the Writers' Guild* magazine, and more.

##### Television interviews and documentaries:

Seeds of Peace, NBC

Gangsta Girlz, A&E

Oxygen Media, Pure Oxygen

##### Awards:

Child Welfare League of America's National Award for Excellence in Community Collaboration for Children, Youth & Families

Athena Award, sponsored by ELLE magazine and given to an inspiring entrepreneurial businesswoman

LA County Probation Department Dedicated Services Award

Soroptimists Woman of Distinction Award

Distinguished Community Award from the Tarzana Encino Medical Center



Chateau d'Echendens, Switzerland, where I lived as a child.