



A Conversation with **Brian Rock** author of *Which Animal is Fastest?* and *The Deductive Detective*

What was your inspiration for writing this book?

I just wanted to challenge my own assumptions. I had always heard that the cheetah was the fastest animal, but I wanted to check and see if that was really true. As I did my research, I realized that was only part of the story.

How did you approach the research?

We authors are so lucky in the internet age. Everything is right at your fingertips. But we must resist the urge to believe everything we find. So, as I searched online for fast animals, I would take whatever information I found and cross check it against verified scientific journals and websites.

Was there a fact that you found fascinating?

I was completely blown away by the peacock mantis shrimp. The fact that its claws release faster than the speed of sound just amaze me. I

was able to watch videos of the animal in action and it was still difficult to believe!

What do you hope kids gain from reading this book?

I hope kids learn an appreciation and respect for all God's creatures. Nature is so diverse and beautiful, and everything shines in its own way. Also, I wanted kids to learn to challenge assumptions and realize that there is more than one way to look at things, even things that everybody says is true.

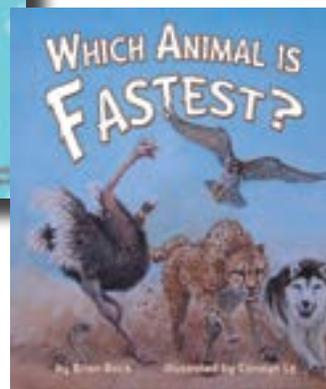
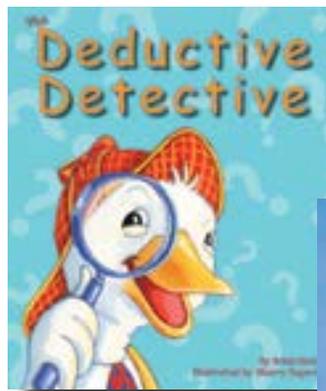
When did you become interested in writing?

I've been writing since I was old enough to hold a no.2 pencil. I used to write jokes, poems and stories on long car trips and rainy days. I guess

I've never grown out of that.

What was your incentive to write "The Deductive Detective," your first book with Arbordale?

My daughter LOVES ducks, so I wanted to cre-



ate a story with a duck as a main character. For some reason, the idea of deductive duck came to mind, and I immediately thought of this as a detective story.

What is the most frequently asked question you encounter as an author?

Adults always want to know how I was able to get a publishing deal. The answer is one word: persistence.

Children want to know where I get my ideas.

I tell them they come from God.

When you stare at a blank sheet of paper, there is no one, two, three instruction guide for creating. It comes from outside of you. Like Winnie the Pooh says, "Poetry and Hums aren't things which you get they're things which get you. And all you can do is go where they can find you." So every time I sit down to write, I begin with a simple prayer for guidance, inspiration and some good poetry or hums.

When are you most creative?

I'm usually most creative when its least convenient at 3 in the morning, when I'm driving in traffic, when I'm supposed to be paying attention in a meeting. There's something about having your mind focused on something non-creative that seems to open the floodgates for creativity. It's like chasing a butterfly. The more you chase it, the more it flutters just out of reach, but when you stand still it will some-

times come and land on your shoulder.

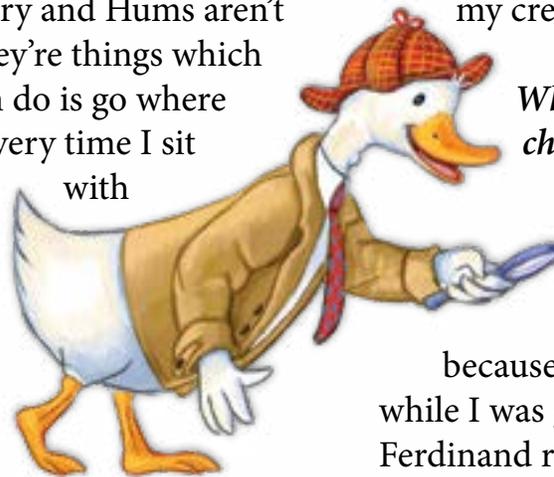
Do you have any advice about encouraging creativity for parents?



Pay attention to what your child enjoys doing and encourage them to develop their talents in that area. I always wanted to write, but I was persuaded to major in "serious" subjects in college. It set my writing back by years.

What is most rewarding or challenging about writing children's books?

The most rewarding thing is reading my books to children. I love to see their smiles and hear their laughter and know that they've enjoyed my creative efforts. It's pure joy!



What was your favorite book as a child?

I liked *Ferdinand the Bull* by Munro Leaf. I always felt a little different from other kids, maybe because my family moved every other year while I was growing up. But something about Ferdinand resonated with me. I liked the way he preferred to sit and be calm, almost meditative while his friends where off butting heads. Like Ferdinand, I prefer inner peace over drama.

To continue this conversation or learn more about Arbordale Publishing contact us:

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