

# PECK, PECK, PECK

## Lucy Cousins shares the story behind the story



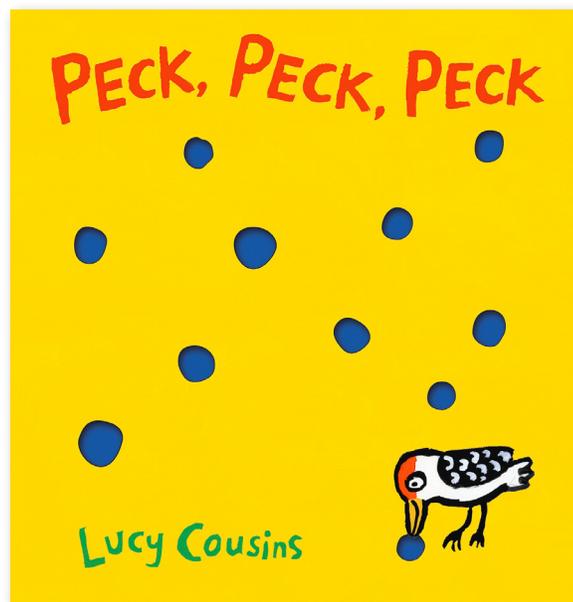
Last year, I decided that I would like to create a book about a bird. I have always loved painting birds, but have never had one as a main character in any of my books. Sitting at my desk and doodling bird pictures wasn't really leading to anything, so I put the kettle on, made some tea, and went to sit in the yard.

A woodpecker flew over and sat on the garden wall. Then, for about fifteen minutes, he hopped around the yard, into a tree, on the shed, on the lawn, and pecked wherever he went.

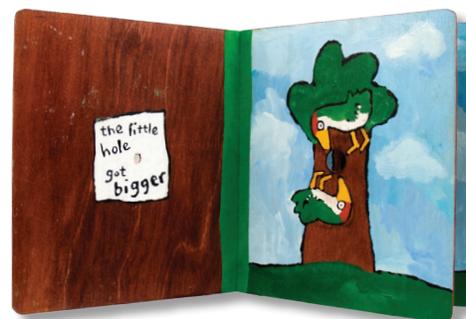
As I watched him, I remembered a project I had done as a student at the Royal College of Art in 1986. Back then, I knew I wanted to create children's books and I made a book with a woodpecker that pecked holes through wooden pages. I always loved the idea behind this book, but apart from the fact that producing a real book made of wood would be completely impractical, the story line didn't really work well.

Twenty-five years later, as I sat thinking about that book, I decided to give woodpeckers another try. The idea that a woodpecker might peck all sorts of things, even the contents of a house, made me very excited. With the potential for some anarchic behavior and many, many holes, I got even more excited.

*Peck, Peck, Peck* posed some technical challenges. Having holes in each page meant that each illustration needed to relate very precisely to both the previous illustration and the following one. Writing in verse seemed like a good way to imitate the rhythm of the peck-peck-pecking and to provide a funny combination of objects to peck. It has been very satisfying to finish a project that I began twenty-five years ago, and I am really pleased with the finished book.



Lucy Cousins's original wooden book



**Lucy Cousins** is the creator of the beloved Maisy series. She is also the author-illustrator of the widely acclaimed *Yummy: Eight Favorite Fairy Tales*, a *New York Times Book Review* Best Illustrated Children's Book of the Year, as well as *I'm the Best* and *Hooray for Fish!* Lucy Cousins lives in Hampshire, England.