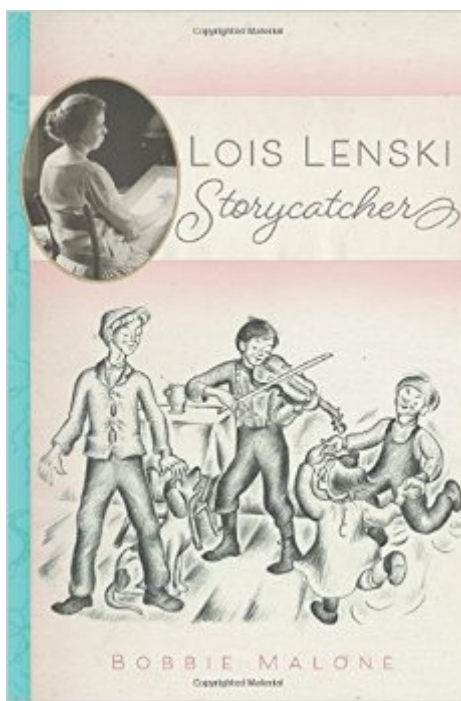


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# Lois Lenski: Storycatcher



## Synopsis

For generations of children, including a young Oprah Winfrey, opening a Lois Lenski book has meant opening a world. This was just what the author wanted: to help children see beyond the rim of their own world. • In *Lois Lenski: Storycatcher*, historian and educator Bobbie Malone takes us into Lenski's own world to tell the story of how a girl from a small Ohio town became a beloved literary icon. Author and illustrator of the Newbery Award-winning *Strawberry Girl* and numerous other tales of children from America's diverse regions and cultures, Lenski spent five decades creating stories for young readers. *Lois Lenski: Storycatcher* follows her development as a writer and as an artist, and it traces the evolution of her passionate belief in the power of empathy conveyed in children's books. Understanding that youngsters responded instinctively to narratives rich in reality, Lenski turned her extensive study of hardworking families into books that accurately and movingly depicted the lives of the children of sharecroppers, coal miners, and migrant field workers. From *Bayou Suzette* to *Blue Ridge Billy*, *Corn-Farm Boy* to *Houseboat Girl*, and *Boom Town Boy* to *Texas Tomboy*, Lenski's books mirrored the cultural energy and concerns of the time. This first full-length biography tells how Lenski traveled throughout the country, gathering the stories that brought to life in words and pictures whole worlds that had for so long been invisible in children's literature. In the process, her work became a source of delight, inspiration, and insight for generations of readers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a young girl, I loved reading Lois Lenski's books. Even then, I knew I wanted to be a writer. But

living on a Midwestern farm and attending a small rural school meant that my world was limited. Lenski's books took me to places and time periods that I couldn't visit and introduced me to ideas that challenged me and made me think. I'm sure that her lucid style, engaging characters, and intriguing plots played a role in making me the writer I have become. In *Lois Lenski: Storycatcher*, historian and educator Bobbie Malone has given us the first book-length biography of the Newbery Award-winning author/illustrator who enchanted us when we were children. Deeply researched, meticulously documented, and generously illustrated, the biography follows Lenski from her family life in the Ohio village parsonage where she grew up, to Ohio State, where she pursued her early love of drawing and volunteer work with children, graduating with a teaching certificate in 1915. And then to New York that "cultural smorgasbord" that fed her imagination and fueled her professional ambition and Europe. And then back to America in 1921, where she married Arthur Covey, a muralist with whom she'd studied in New York. A widower with a daughter, twelve, and a son, four, Covey promised to respect his wife's need for creative time but assumed (as did most men at this time) that her attention to home and family would come first. Their move to a 1790s farmhouse in rural Connecticut and the birth of their son Stephen complicated Lenski's efforts to create a space in her busy family life for drawing and writing. But through the mid-1920s, she persevered in her work as a children's illustrator (chiefly, the Betsy Tacey series, by Maud Hart Lovelace).

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