

# Bonnie Kelso

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**Bonnie Kelso** is a former Smithsonian exhibit designer turned children's book author and illustrator. She is drawn to funny stories that entertain and educate. Her debut picture book, *NUDI GILL* (2023, Gnome Road Publishing), features a curious snorkeler who almost steps on a nudibranch, sparking a lively conversation about the fascinating life of these colorful but fierce sea creatures. The story tackles the theme of ocean conservation and stewardship in a humorous and non-preachy way.

Bonnie holds a Bachelor's of Fine Art from the Rhode Island School of Design. She often conducts live and online art workshops in the Las Vegas area and beyond. She is the proud recipient of many Nevada Arts Council grants and is on their roster of teaching artists for schools and communities.

She was selected as the 2021 winner for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) Karen Cushman Late Bloomers Award for her historical chapter book, *JOHNNY BELL BAKER AND THE COAL MINE*. She volunteers for her regional SCBWI Nevada chapter as the Illustrator Coordinator.

An artist and muralist, Bonnie's work can be seen on a parking garage, in a library, in a community center, on banners and at other public places around Southern Nevada.

Bonnie has traveled around the world twice! She is an avid outdoors enthusiast and can often be found wandering about the desert with her family in Las Vegas, NV.

**Picture Books:**

*Quinn's Closet Monsters*, contributor and cover illustration. An anthology published by Make-A-Wish Foundation, ©2021.

*Nudi Gill*, author and illustrator. Gnome Road Publishing, April 4, 2023.

*In A Cave*, illustrator. Written by Heather Kinser. Gnome Road Publishing, October 3, 2023.

*Gnomes and UnGnomes*, illustrator. The Writers Loft Press. November 2023.

*Sea Smiles*, author and illustrator. Gnome Road Publishing, February 13, 2024.

### **Awards and Honors:**

2023 Library of Congress Center for the Book Award, “Nudi Gill: Poison Powerhouse of the Sea.”

2022 PBParty Finalist

2021 Winner of the SCBWI NV Fall Illustration Contest juried by Peter Brown.

2021 Winner of the SCBWI Karen Cushman Late Bloomer Award for “Johnny Bell Baker and the Coal Mine,” a historical fiction chapter book.

2020 PBParty Finalist

2021 PBParty Finalist

2020 Fall Writing Frenzy Finalist

2021 Fall Writing Frenzy Finalist

2021 Halloweensie Writing Contest Honorable Mention

### **Interviews:**

Ryan G. Van Cleave, Only Picture Books, March 13, 2023. [Author/Illustrator Interview: Bonnie Kelso.](#)

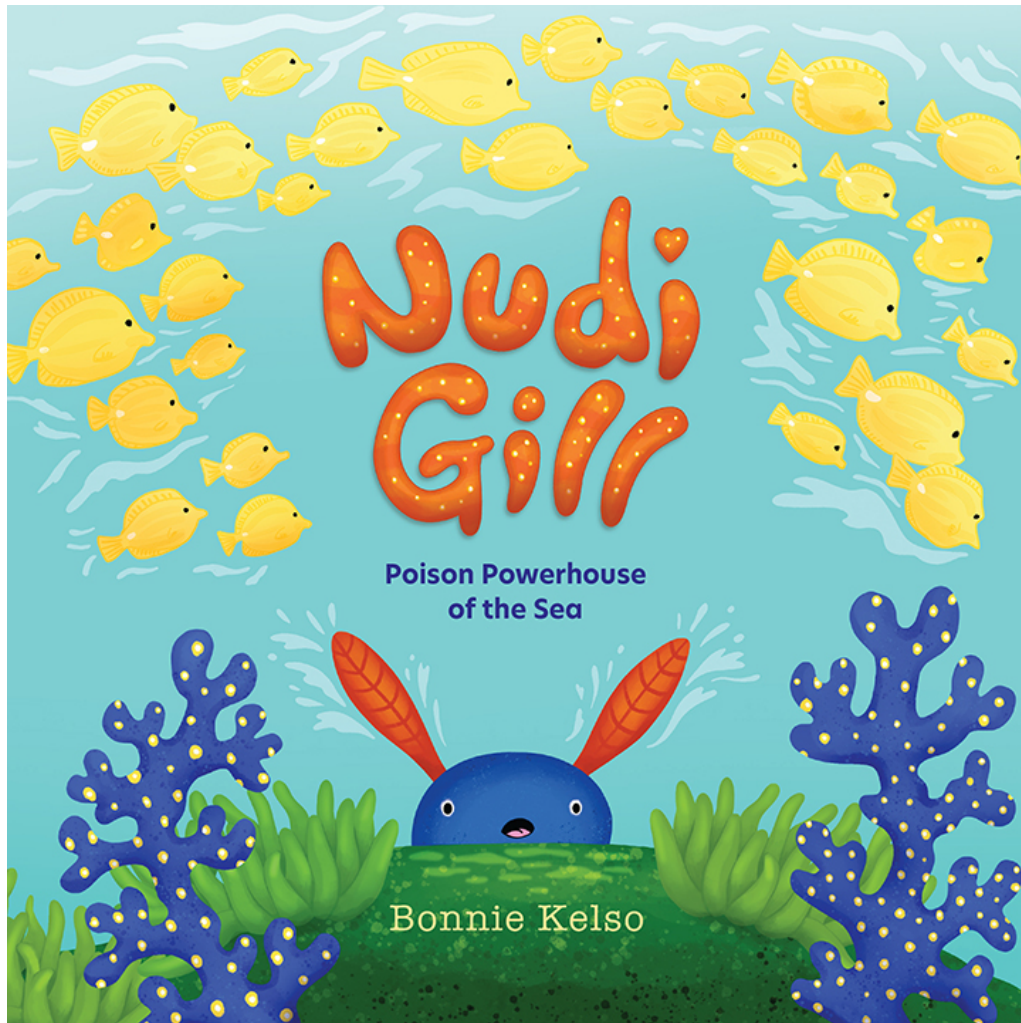
Heather Cash Morris, “First Stories” series, January 10, 2022. [First Stories Returns in 2022...Featuring Bonnie Kelso](#)

Sandra Sutter, Gnome Road Publishing, October 19, 2021. [The Art of NUDI GILL ~ A Short Q&A with Bonnie Kelso](#)

Sandra Sutter, Gnome Road Publishing, May 17, 2021. [A Welcome to Author-Illustrator Bonnie Kelso!](#)

Amanda Davis, “Rising Stars” series, February 22, 2021. [Meet Rising Star, Author-Illustrator Bonnie Kelso!](#)

## Picture Book Cover Art and Descriptions:

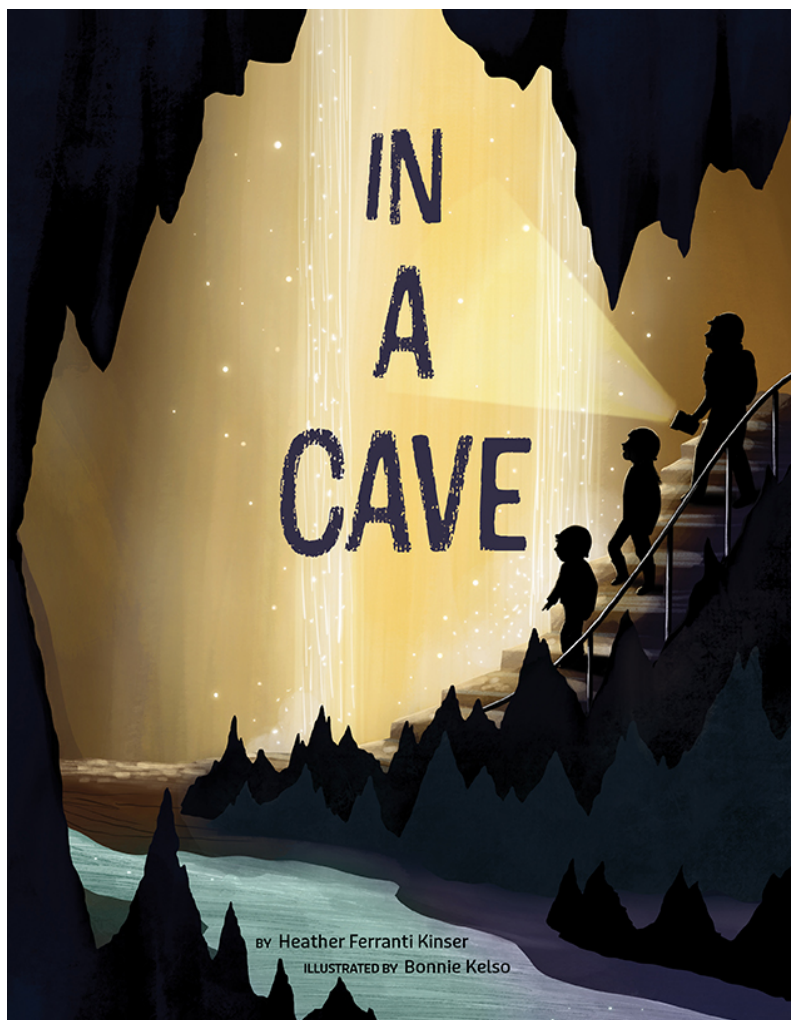


### **Nudi Gill: Poison Powerhouse of the Sea**

Meet Gill, a flashy nudibranch (noo-de-brank) living a fierce and fascinating life in the ocean without a shell and completely . . .NAKED!

When a curious young snorkeler stumbles upon Gill, she learns there is more than meets the eye when it comes to her sassy new friend. This soft-bodied mollusk is anything but vulnerable, turning a diet of dangerous ocean creatures into a poisonous sting of its own. Found in unique shapes and colors in every ocean throughout the world, Gill and his diverse family of nudibranchs serve as a reminder that being small doesn't mean you can't have it all!

With illustrations as striking and colorful as Gill himself, this is an underwater adventure like no other where young readers can see for themselves what makes Gill and his fabulous family of nudibranchs tiny, but mighty poison powerhouses of the sea.



### **In A Cave (Releases October 3, 2023)**

*Written by Heather Ferranti Kinser and illustrated by Bonnie Kelso.*

Work up an appetite for cave popcorn as you journey into a subterranean world filled with dazzling cave formations and cave-dwelling creatures!

Join two young explorers and their trusted guide as they head off on a wonder-filled underground adventure. Slip through crevices, creep through passageways, and stop to admire the beauty of a fascinating ecosystem. From stalactites and stalagmites, to dripstone, shelfstone, and pearls - there is something to discover at every turn. Troglobites, glow worms, spiders, and bats make your acquaintance before your return to the light and familiarity of places above.

With a lyrical, rhyming text, and illustrations that illuminate and bring warmth to an otherwise dark and damp environment, *IN A CAVE* is sure to please science and nature lovers of all ages.



**Sea Smiles (Releases February 13, 2024)**

When an otherwise harmless apple becomes the instrument for losing a tooth, a young girl is ready to retire her smile. That is . . . until she discovers teeth can give us all a lot to smile about.

This humorous, informative story is sure to be a hit with any kid who has lost a tooth, is about to, or just loves learning cool and fascinating facts about animals with weird teeth in the sea! Take a look inside the mouth of a Wolffish, penguin, sea krait and more. Then count up those teeth, and prepare to be surprised. One of these smiley sea animals has over 750,000 “teeth” - and it won't be the one you're expecting!

Author-illustrator Bonnie Kelso brings blasts of color, texture and fun to an adorable cast of characters who make the business of losing teeth entertaining, and yet a normal part of life. It's a perfect addition to any library, home, or dental office waiting room.