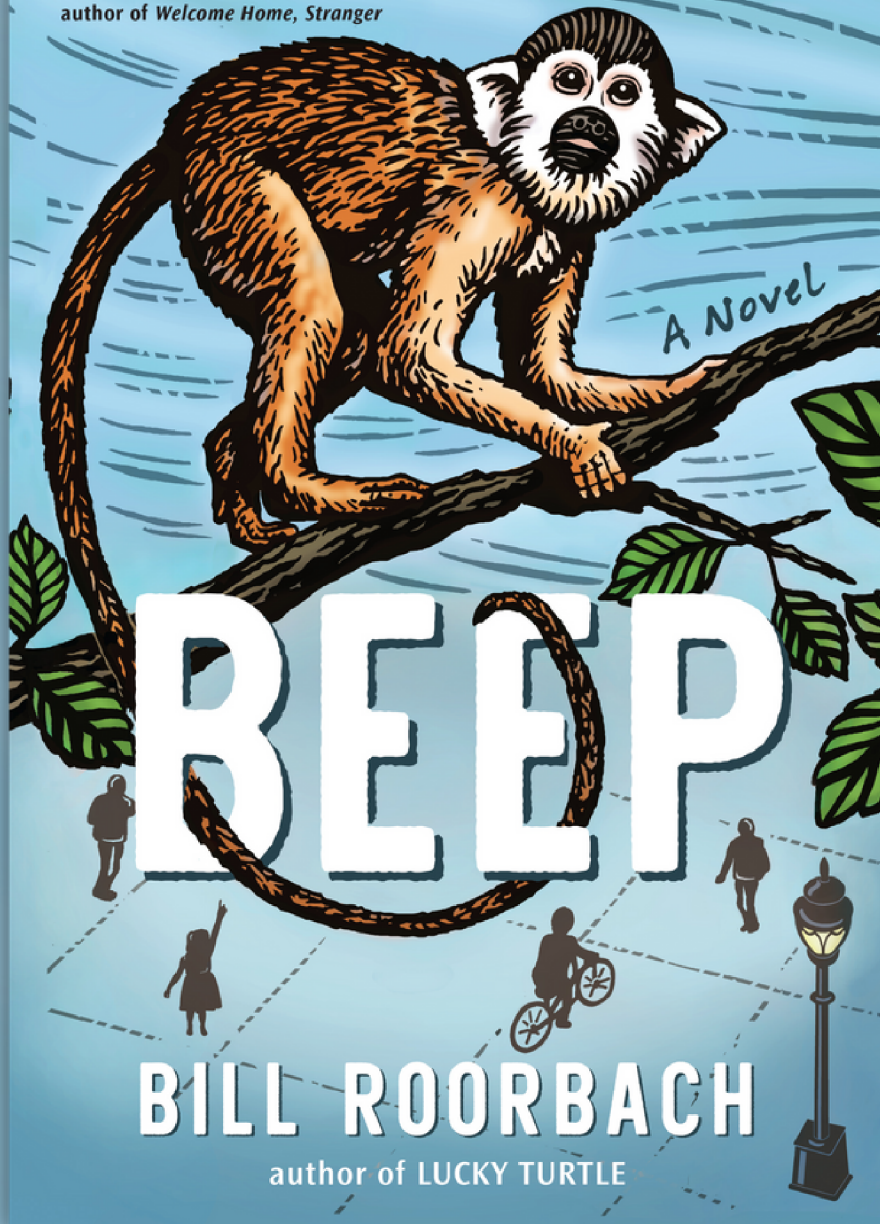




"Wildly beautiful, funny, moving, entrancing, and hopeful . . .
A triumph of storytelling." —KATE CHRISTENSEN,
author of *Welcome Home, Stranger*



BOOK CLUB KIT

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Book Lovers,

A couple of years ago, I woke in the middle of the night with a start. I couldn't catch hold of all that had gone on in my dream, but a sentence lingered: "I am Beep, monkey."

For some reason that made me smile, and there in the dark I wrote it down on the sticky note pad I always keep on my nightstand among the seashells and beach glass. "I am Beep, monkey." It made me smile again in the morning. No clue what it meant, though a character immediately began to form in my mind. The sticky note rode my shirt till lunchtime, then went on the shade of my desk lamp. And every time I saw it I grinned, even laughed.

Meanwhile, I'd been thinking about a new novel. I thought whatever I wrote should address one of the biggest problems of our time—climate change—which was quickly, storm by storm and tide by rising tide, record heat by fiery summer, becoming climate catastrophe. But I didn't want to write an earnest book, shaking my finger at all of mankind when I, too, am part of the problem. Best if I could impart some fun while making whatever important point.

"I am Beep, Monkey."

Suddenly, I knew I had my narrator. A sweet and charming and very intelligent squirrel monkey like the ones I'd met when I was in residence at two different biological research stations in Costa Rica a decade before. A monkey who, like most of animalkind, was being adversely affected by something he didn't quite understand, something the "you-mens" were doing. And then he meets one, a headstrong and plucky tween named Inga. She's sensitive enough to befriend our monkey, and after some inter-species communion over fruit, conspires to sneak him home to New York City, not exactly his plan.

And as I sat at my desk, this Beep character began to talk. He was naïve, he was wise, he was funny, he was oddly formal (yet sweetly loquacious), he was lovable and pure. Inga, too, sweet and courageous, adventurous and kind. They made me feel positive. They made me feel a child again. They made me feel hope. They were on a quest, at first personal—find a monkey mate for Beep—and then global: they must save the world, as no one else was stepping up.

I still smile when I see that sticky note. "I am Beep, Monkey." I hope you will smile, too. Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Bill Roarbach

P.S. In appreciation of your reading, I'd be glad to join your group by Zoom or other means. Maybe in person if you're in Maine or near enough. What a discussion we'll have!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 So many characters come into Beep's world, and he into theirs. Who are your favorites and why?
- 2 Monkeys don't talk. Not in words. But Beep sounds like a Charles Dickens character. How hard or easy was it for you to suspend your disbelief and accept a talking monkey for a narrator/protagonist? Where in the book were you most sucked in by the monkey mojo? Where were you most skeptical? What won you over in the end?
- 3 There are a number of sly literary allusions in *Beep*. How many can you pick out?
- 4 What do you think the world will be like for you-mens in the days and months and years following the conclusion of *Beep*?
- 5 Who are the bad guys in *Beep*, and why?
- 6 Inga is a true girl of powers, including courage, empathy, kindness, and compassion. She's also a bit of a rebel, even at the tender age of eleven. How does her character influence the course of the story? How might her age affect the choices she makes?
- 7 Beep the monkey takes a dim view of zoos. Why? How does this square with your own visits to zoos and your perspective on animals? Which zoo animals were you rooting for? And what do you think will happen to them after the last page of the novel?
- 8 *Beep* moves from rainforest to city and back again. How do the changing settings reflect the structure of the book?
- 9 *Beep* seems to say that all living things are interconnected, and that you-mens have drifted away from this connection. What evidence do you see for this in the real world?
- 10 What does the term "moodling" mean to Beep? Is it different from moodling in his world? Are there any ways you feel the moodle in your own life?

- 11 If, for whatever reason, civilization were to collapse tomorrow, how do you think you'd get along? What would it take to survive?
- 12 Why do the animals of *Beep* impose forgetting after the great paroxysm?
- 13 Beep the monkey has a lot of pithy misunderstandings about the you-men world. Are there any ways he made you see yourself or your surroundings anew?
- 14 What is gained by telling this story from the first-person perspective of Beep? How would the telling be affected if it were told in third person, and what would be lost?
- 15 The shubble buzz is piloted by a person perhaps a little different from most Americans. How does their worldview rhyme with Beep's? How did that come to pass?
- 16 Why does Beep think Greta Thunberg is a monkey?
- 17 How is Central Park, a beautiful urban green space, different from the rainforest? Could a monkey ever be happy there?
- 18 The animals of Beep seem to accept a certain level of killing and eating among themselves, yet they can't accept human depredations. What's the difference?
- 19 Are you more a goer or a grower? What would it take for you to become a sensitive?
- 20 Beep's knowledge and vocabulary seem to grow as the book progresses. Why do you think this happens? What might it have to do with the power of moodling?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

- 1 Which character in *Beep* would you most want to be?
- 2 Why are the animals in the Bronzoo unhappy?
- 3 What would you do if you were in Inga's position and Beep were your monkey friend?
- 4 Do you ever communicate with animals?
- 5 Is the ending of *Beep* sad or happy?
- 6 Why are some people so helpful and other people so mean?
- 7 Can you trace Beep's journey on a glope?
- 8 What are some things you and your friends and family could do to help lessen the impact of you-men activity on the natural world?
- 9 How would Beep describe your family? Your home? Your school? Your town?
- 10 What are some reasons to be hopeful for the future of our precious planet?

