



SIXTEEN SOUTH AND NELVANA HARNESS A HORSE NAMED STEVE FOR NEW ANIMATED SERIES

Acclaimed Picture Book from Kids Can Press Garner International Attention for Canadian Author-Illustrator Kelly Collier

March 28, 2023 – BAFTA-winning and EMMY®-nominated Belfast-based studio Sixteen South has announced today that together with Corus Entertainment’s Nelvana, a world-leading international developer, producer, distributor, and licensor of children’s animated and live-action content, they have optioned and are co-developing and co-producing *A Horse Named Steve*, a new 2D animated series based on the acclaimed debut picture book by Toronto author-illustrator Kelly Collier. The 52 X 11 series will feature hilarious storylines while showing the importance of friendship, teamwork and appreciating one’s true self.

A laugh-out-loud tale of an endearingly self-absorbed horse, *A Horse Named Steve* topped “best book of the year” lists when it was released in 2017 by Canadian independent children’s publisher Kids Can Press, celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Illustrated in lively black-and-white artwork interwoven with humorous commentary, the book and its follow-up, *Team Steve*, follow the exploits of Steve, a good-natured, rather obtuse horse who thinks he’s ordinary but wants to be exceptional.

“We knew as soon as we saw the cover of *A Horse Named Steve* that Steve was a perfect addition to Sixteen South’s stable,” said Sixteen South’s Creative Director, Colin Williams. “Kelly’s offbeat humour and quirky illustration style sealed the deal, aligning so well with the kind of stories we like to bring to life, so we moved quickly to option the rights from Kids Can Press.”

Athena Georgaklis, VP of Nelvana Studios, adds, “Steve’s larger-than-life antics and slapstick comedy have delighted both children and adults alike. We’re excited to not only develop yet another revered Kids Can Press book franchise into an animated series but are also eager to collaborate with Colin and the Sixteen South team to co-develop and co-produce a series that successfully captures Kelly’s unique tone and illustration style on screen.”

“As we celebrate our 50th Anniversary, we’ve been reminded of how important the wide range of partnerships we’ve fostered over the years are to the success of our business,” said Lisa Lyons Johnston, President and Publisher of Kids Can Press. “Developing these kinds of partnerships—with Sixteen South and of course with our colleagues at Nelvana—helps to expand the reach of our creators’ books and puts their characters and stories in front of children and families wherever they may be. We’re always on the lookout for stories that will appeal to creators of other children’s entertainment media, as Kelly’s work clearly has.”

Recently the Vooks animated digital ebook of *A Horse Named Steve*, narrated by EMMY-nominated actor Rainn Wilson, helped earn the American company a 2023 Bologna Ragazzi Crossmedia Award nomination in the inaugural Digital Library category. The awards are part of the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, the premier global children’s publishing event held annually in Bologna, Italy.

“It’s amazing to see how far Steve has come,” said author-illustrator Kelly Collier, “Particularly because he started out as a little doodle I made to fill an empty picture frame! I can’t wait to see Steve strutting around on TV screens, having found the perfect home with Sixteen South and Nelvana.”



About Sixteen South

An EMMY nominated and BAFTA winning studio, Sixteen South is passionate about creating quality television for children across the globe and was the BAFTA Children's Independent Production Company of the Year in 2017. Their shows include *Lily's Driftwood Bay*, which has been sold into 130 territories; *Pajanimals*, produced in partnership with The Jim Henson Company; *Big & Small*, a co-production with Kindle Entertainment; *Sesame Tree*, a partnership with Sesame Workshop; their IFTA and BAFTA winning *Big City Park*; *Claude*; *Wildwoods*; *Odo*; and *Pinkalicious*.

Website – www.sixteensouth.tv

Facebook – www.facebook.com/sixteensouth

Twitter – www.twitter.com/sixteensouth

Instagram – www.instagram.com/sixteensouth

About Nelvana

Entertaining kids for over 50 years, Nelvana is a world-leading international producer and distributor of children's animated and live-action content. Nelvana produces a stable of award-winning and globally renowned brands that focus on comedies, preschool and action series, and ancillary consumer products programs. Nelvana's content airs on Corus Entertainment's kids channels in Canada and in over 180 countries around the world. The Nelvana library has well over 4,700 episodes of programming and has received over 70 major international program awards including Emmys and Canadian Screen Awards. Visit the Nelvana website at nelvana.com.

About Kids Can Press

Part of the Corus Entertainment family, Kids Can Press is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2023. A recipient of the distinguished Bologna Prize for Best Children's Publisher, North America, Kids Can Press is known for its acclaimed literary picture books, character-driven franchises with global and crossover appeal, and award-winning STEM– and social issues–based nonfiction enjoyed by young readers around the world. Kids Can Press has seen several of its franchise properties developed for TV and film by Nelvana, including: Franklin the Turtle; Scaredy Squirrel; the Binky Adventure series; and the best-selling picture book *The Most Magnificent Thing*, which has been adapted into an award-winning animated short with a TV series in production. Kids Can Press is among some of the industry's leading publishers distributed by Hachette Client Services and is a proud signatory of the United Nations Publishers Compact. For more on our books and creators:

Website – www.kidscanpress.com

Facebook – www.facebook.com/KidsCanBooks

Twitter – www.twitter.com/KidsCanPress

Instagram – www.instagram.com/kidscanpress

About Kelly Collier

Kelly Collier was born in Ottawa and grew up in Toronto, Ontario, where she lives with her husband and daughter. She is the illustrator of the Izzy chapter book series and many other picture books and is both the author and illustrator of the Steve the Horse series.

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