



Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

Volume 34
Issue 3 *January/February 1994*

Article 8

2-1-1994

Children's Books

Janet Chupka

Battle Creek Public Schools, Battle Creek, Michigan

Sherry Myers

Kalamazoo Public Schools, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Shelly Shragg

Harper Creek Community Schools

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons



Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation

Chupka, J., Myers, S., & Shragg, S. (1994). Children's Books. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 34 (3). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol34/iss3/8

This Book Reviews is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Education and Literacy Studies at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.





Children's Books

Truck. ISBN: 0-688-12611-1. 1993. 32 pp. US\$18.95 (Big Book Edition). *School Bus*. ISBN: 0-688-12267-1. 1993. 32 pp. US\$4.95 (paperback). Each of these books is written by Donald Crews. Published by Mulberry Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019.

Janet Chupka
Battle Creek Public Schools

Hop on board the big red semi-truck and take a trip through the cities and across the countryside to deliver a load of tricycles to its destination. In *Truck*, a Caldecott Honor Book, Donald Crews uses vivid, graphic illustrations to capture the reader's attention. Although this book does not have traditional narrative text, it is full of signs, symbols, and words young readers will enjoy.

In *School Bus*, young readers will travel to school and back home again on the bright yellow school bus. Donald Crews uses large simple text appropriate for preschool and primary students.

Both of these books are full of environmental signs, symbols, and words we see along our streets and highways. *Truck* is available as a big book, a particularly useful format in helping children make the transition from environmental print to text. Together, *Truck* and *School Bus* would be a great way to introduce a unit about transportation.

Stone Men. Written by Nicki Weiss. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-11015-0. 1993. 32 pp. US\$14.00.

Sherry Myers, Kalamazoo Public Schools

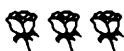
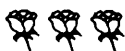
Stone Men is a folk tale told to Arnie by his grandmother. In it we meet Isaac, a quiet peddler who traveled from village to village pushing his cart. Although the villagers were happy to see him, they thought he was a little peculiar. Occasionally, he would give a little stone man to a child, but he never spoke to the villagers. After he left the village — when no farmhouse was in sight — he would stop and pile up stones and a branch or two to make a stone man. This man would be his friend, a quiet one who would listen to the messages of Isaac's heart. He would look back at the stone man as he traveled on. When he could no longer see his creation, he would stop and build another. So he continued, day after day, week after week, year after year.

One night, however, Isaac overheard some voices in the woods and went to investigate. He discovered a group of the czar's soldiers who were planning to attack the nearby village of Bruria at dawn. Isaac ran back to alert the villagers, but since they were exhausted by their preparations for Passover, none woke to his pounding on their doors. As the climax to this tale unfolds, the reader is caught up in wondering, along with the villagers, what miracle will save their village.

Stone Men will be a welcome addition to any home or library. Weiss tells her story simply but enchantingly, for it is a story of a simple but enchanting man. Isaac is a hero, but a very different kind of hero from the ones most children envision with today's emphasis on sports figures and super heroes. There are some lovely messages within the tale about

acceptance of others and human potential. Opportunities abound for critical thinking: Is Isaac a hero? Why would you say that? Why did he return to his normal routine rather than staying in the village? Why did he talk to his stone friends rather than to the villagers? Art follow-up, inspired by Weiss' attractive four-color illustrations, would also follow naturally from a reading of this tale..

Materials appearing in the review section of this journal are not endorsed by *Reading Horizons* or Western Michigan University. The content of the reviews reflects the opinion of the reviewers whose names or initials appear. To submit an item for potential review, send to Kathryn Kinnucan-Welsch, Reviews Editor, *Reading Horizons*, Reading Center and Clinic, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo MI 49008.



The Rose In My Garden. Written by Arnold Lobel. Illustrated by Anita Lobel. Greenwillow Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-12265-5. 1993. 40 pp. US\$4.95.

Sherry Myers
Kalamazoo Public Schools

Anyone familiar with the song "There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea" will catch on quickly to the same style in *The Rose In My Garden*. The story starts simply with "this is the rose in my garden," and on the facing page a beautiful, intricately drawn rose. With each succeeding page, more is added to the drawing and to the story, until there is a full and splendid garden with a bee on the rose. Intrigue is added as a

frightened mouse and pursuing cat enter the picture. The cat chases the mouse, tramples the garden and wakes up the bee. Finally, we are left where we started — "this is the rose in my garden."

Each left-hand or text page also includes a small pen and ink drawing of the element being added in full-color to the right hand page. The last page varies from this motif in that the small drawing shows the cat with a bandage on its nose, confirming our prediction that the bee stung the cat.

The Rose In My Garden is a clever book further enhanced by Anita Lobel's beautifully detailed, framable art. The lush textures and colors seem to grow right off the page. The repetitive and lengthening rhyme makes the story a treat for the ear, and the illustrations make it a delight for the eye. With a little creativity, the enjoyment has only begun with the first reading of the story. Pre-school and early elementary classes could have fun turning this story into a play, using drawings or headpieces to transform the children into their roles.



Reading Horizons seeks to publish descriptions of practice and research supporting the development of literacy through multicultural education.

Prospective contributors should follow guidelines for submission of manuscripts, given on the inner front cover of this issue.

Nana's Birthday Party. Written by Amy Hest. Illustrated by Amy Schwartz. Morrow Junior Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-07497-9. 1993. 32 pp. US\$15.00.

Shelly Schragg
Harper Creek Community Schools

Nana throws herself a birthday party every year between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Each year, guests can always find Nana's special rules tacked to her front door.

Nana's Rules For Her Birthday Party

NO jeans
NO gum
NO presents (except the kind you make yourself)
NO fighting
NO whining

It is the eve before Nana's birthday party, and Maggie and Brett, Nana's granddaughters, are spending the night with her. Maggie admires Brett's talent for being able to make Nana the most memorable birthday presents ever. This year Maggie aspires to write a story for Nana and to make this gift extraordinary. Brett has not a clue what to make Nana for her birthday. The two cousins, with Nana's help and the simple phrase "pictures tell a story," discover how much easier and fun it is to work together to create an unforgettable gift. The eve of Nana's birthday party is memorable for both of the girls. Author Amy Hest employs colorful language that brings text to life for the reader. This book is a wonderful choice for read aloud and subsequent classroom art projects.