

Hold Tight

Written & Illustrated by John Prater
Bodley Head £10.99
ISBN: 0 370 32566 4

Grandbear's attempts to get the washing down are thwarted by Babybear's repeated requests for him to join the little one in a series of exciting rides involving a cardboard box and a washing basket. It's not the simplicity of the story sequence that wins the reader over, it's the warm, gentle relationship between old bear and young bear that is so appealing.



Grandbear slips back easily into the world of the very young, knowing instinctively how to involve, amuse and interest Babybear and allowing always for the imagination to be stirred into action. And with a split-page technique John Prater indicates what is going on inside Babybear's head when he and the old one go adventuring.

Jack Ousbey

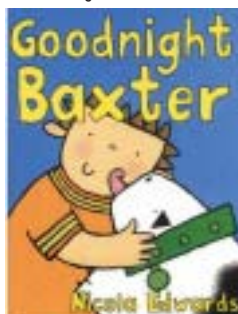
Goodnight Baxter

Written & Illustrated by Nicola Edwards
David Bennett Books £9.99
ISBN: 1 85602 433 4

What do you do when your new puppy won't sleep at night? Charlie tries everything to encourage Baxter to stay in his basket, but each time he leaves him the puppy jumps out and barks for attention. Finally the problem is solved when Baxter manages to struggle up the stairs and find comfort sleeping by Charlie's bedside. The pictures are simple, bright and varied and the text large

and clear - a heartwarming tale to share with the youngest children.

Janice Knight



For Sharing

Big Mama Makes the World

Written by Phyllis Root
Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury
Walker Books £12.99
ISBN: 0 7445 7382 3

This tale, for all ages, is a creation myth told with joy and illustrated with much love. Both the words and exuberant pictures lead the reader into the mind of the creator - Big Mama. She does not mess around; with a baby on her hip we move from darkness to light, from a ball of mud to a big bang. She has a day off 'But I'll be keeping an eye on you all.' She is very pleased with her work and finishes beautifully, 'Good, That's very, very good.' So is this book which is destined to become a classic.

Mike Maran



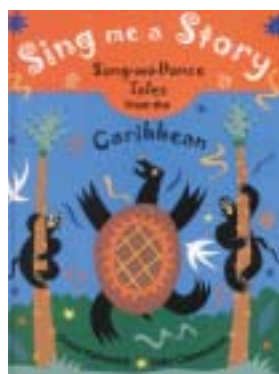
Sing Me a Story

Written by Grace Hallworth
Illustrated by John Clementson
Frances Lincoln £12.99
ISBN: 0 7112 1850 1

When I first retired I used to spend a lot of time sharing stories with groups of very young children. One of their all time favourites was a tale called *Quaka Raja*, which included a little verse that really required to be sung. I invented my own rather tuneless song which slipped by the children without notice. Now, Grace Hallworth, internationally known as a captivating storyteller, has put together a collection of Caribbean tales, not just for telling but for singing and dancing as well. And there on page 30 is the story of *Quaka Raja*. Children will love to take part in these traditional tales and

adults leading the event will be strongly supported by the music, dance steps and John Clementson's brilliant collages. And that's not all! Three areas of the National Curriculum can be covered at the same time. Just what we need! Grace across the Curriculum.

Jack Ousbey



Ten Dirty Pigs

Written by Carol Roth
Illustrated by Pamela Paperone
North-South Books £4.99
ISBN: 0 7358 1569 0

Ten Dirty Pigs, (or is it *Ten Clean Pigs*?) is a clever picture book, which may go on for ever if you keep turning the two halves around. The ten small pigs of the title are amusing little characters, either splashing in the mud or cleaning themselves up. They dance in a lively fashion across the pages and invite you to study their antics in detail. Small children enjoy counting the pigs in this colourful, quirky upside-down, turn-around picture book.

Janice Knight

A Whole World

by Katie Couprie and Antonin Louchard
Milet £10.99
ISBN: 1 84059 342 3

A strange collection of photographs and paintings put together in a small square book. Some pictures fit opposite each other with ease, some challenge the perceptions, some confuse - but all intrigue. This wordless book could be looked at by the very young or by art students. It could be used in most schools as a

starting point for creative writing. It would sit happily in a 'quiet' corner or on the bedside table. It is a spur to the imagination.

Enid Stephenson

Shy Guy

Written by Gilles Tibo
Illustrated by Pef
North-South £9.99
ISBN: 0 7358 1710 3

This is a joy, and an encouragement to those who work with children to continue providing opportunities for impromptu talks and presentations, a feature of classroom life that has been squeezed in recent years. Greg is a shy boy, nicknamed Red because of his tongue-tied tendency to blush. A pet goldfish, ironically a red goldfish, proves the key first to improving his confidence and self-esteem (he enjoys showing Fred off to his friends) and then, much to Greg's own surprise, to unleashing his verbal fluency, when he takes the goldfish to school and is invited by the teacher to speak to the class. Pef's artwork is suitably humorous.

Michael Thorn

Buster's Bone

Written by Anne Cottringer
Illustrated by Candice Whatmore
Orchard Books £10.99
ISBN: 1 84121 026 9

A charming, gentle tale and comforting for the smallest child in the family. Salutary for the bigger ones too. Buster is a little dog; all his brothers and sisters are bigger so he never gets anything brand new. One day he finds the biggest, juiciest bone he has ever seen. Delighted, he hides it deep to make sure nobody else gets to it. But the big dog next door unearths it! Buster's brothers and sisters come to the rescue and Buster finds the virtues of sharing - as do the others involved. Simple, spare yet dramatic, the text is a model of its kind. The pictures, with their bold outlines and positively vestigial detail, convey Buster's emotions vividly. A lovely production, destined to give pleasure to a lot of children.

Dennis Hamley



Poochie - Poo

- Written and Illustrated by Helen Stephens
- David Fickling Books £10.99
- ISBN: 0 385 60410 6

Victor is a good puppy but his friend Butch claims to be the naughty one. And whenever Victor behaves conspicuously well, Butch is always at hand to sneer at his good example. Victor eventually makes a half-hearted attempt to do something bad, but can't stand the strain. He also discovers that things are not as they seem, with Butch finally unveiled as much better than he makes out. There is a valuable message in this picture book, stylishly and brightly illustrated throughout.

Nicholas Tucker



I am a Dog

- Written by Alan Brown
- Illustrated by Jonathan Allen
- Red Fox £4.99
- ISBN: 0 09 941327 2

A strangely moving picture book about a little boy with a big problem - his baby sister Rosie, who seems to take up more than her fair share of their parents' love and available time. In spite of all his attention-seeking strategies pretending to be a dog, mum and dad seem to be far too busy to attend to him - or are they? The problem resolves itself when the little boy is taken to the local stray dogs' home and is allowed to choose a small dog to look after. Not only are the illustrations richly bright and amusing - check out the endpapers with their funny depictions of boy as dog at the start and dog as itself at the end.

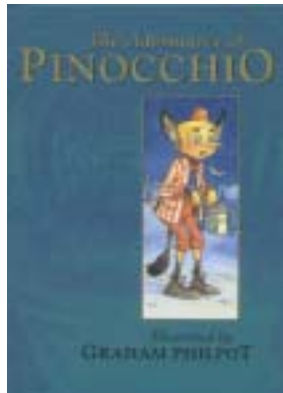
Janice Knight

Pinocchio

- Written by Carlo Collodi
- Illustrated by Iassen Ghiuselev
- Simply Read £16.99
- ISBN: 0 968876 80 3

The Adventures of Pinocchio

- Written by Carlo Collodi
- Illustrated by Graham Philpot
- David Bennett Books
- ISBN: 0 439 98257 X



These are two very different books. Ghiuselev's Pinocchio is already an award-winning title. D deservedly. Endpaper fetishists - I speak with some degree of empathy - will go into paroxysms of pleasure as they stroke their fingers across the geometrically arranged red-ink woodcuts on pale blue ribbed paper. Inside the paper is heavy, the Italian printing first-class, and the illustrations (particularly the uncoloured ones) of exquisite draughtsmanship. The text fills 150 pages. Graham Philpot's version - the retelling is also by Helen Rossendale - is much more condensed, and in turn more highly and more colourfully illustrated, with a closer relationship to the Disney version and a livelier text.

Michael Thorn

The Sleeping Princess

- Written by Saviour Pirotta
- Illustrated by Emma Chichester-Clark
- Orchard Books £12.99
- ISBN: 1 84121 541 4



Fairy tales often come overdressed. This beautiful collection of retellings from Grimm is plain in the best sense; clear, direct writing, as matter-of-fact as the originals were, complemented

by Chichester-Clark's richly-coloured, finely-drawn pictures of simple people in extraordinary situations. Even her seven dwarves are just ordinary, rather short blokes. The book is generously illustrated throughout plus one double-page spread per story, and high production values - paper, typography, binding, jacket, make this a worthy gift for a deserving child, if you can bear to part with it

Jan Mark

Swan Lake

- Retold and Illustrated by Lisbeth Zwerger
- North-South £9.99
- ISBN: 0 7358 1702 2

Zwerger's sombre, almost sinister artwork is offset by the fact that she bases her retelling on Tchaikovsky's original 1877 ballet, which has a happy ending, rather than on the better-known version that ends tragically. Her story is also distinctive for managing to do without the names of the main characters. Each impeccably-framed illustration is a work of art in its own right. The pictures are haunting, lingering in the mind long after the book has been shut.

Michael Thorn

Miracles, Whales and Wonderful Tales

- Adapted by Shirley Isherwood
- Hutchinson £12.99
- ISBN: 0 09 176869 1

Some of the most well-known and best loved stories from the Bible feature in this delightful book, which has been adapted for children by Shirley Isherwood and illustrated sympathetically by a number of artists. Each story in turn is told from a personal point of view by the most important character - perhaps by Jonah or Noah's dove - and the added details give interest to the text. Written with imagination each tale is suitable for sharing with an adult or being read alone by older children.

Janice Knight



Fly !

- Written and Illustrated by Christopher Myers
- Jump at the Sun/Hyperion £11.99
- ISBN: 0 7868 0652 4

This is a fabulous book. The artwork is highly distinctive, using deep, rich hues with soft lines. Christopher Myers, son of Walter Dean Myers, tells a story about a boy, Jawanza, cooped up in the top floor of a high-rise block of flats, tantalised by the children playing below, and the flock of pigeons flying in the sky. The pigeons, it turns out, belong to a strange man-on-the-roof dressed in white. Jawanza gets talking to the man who, though mocking and taunting the boy with jive-talk, proves inspirational. In the times we live in, to be able to tell a story about a man befriending a boy without making an adult feel even slightly uncomfortable is something of an achievement in itself.

Michael Thorn

The Classic Tales of Hans Christian Andersen

- Retold by Margaret Clark
- Illustrated by Christian Birmingham
- Scholastic £14.99
- ISBN: 0 439 98257 X

This large, sumptuous hardback is very much a Christian Birmingham showcase, with fourteen full-page colour plates, as well as smaller coloured and black-and-white illustrations. The book is worth owning for the large colour pictures alone. Rarely has *The Little Match Girl* looked so pitiful, shivering and barefooted in the snow, while windows glow warmly in the townscape behind her. A princess sleeping on a pile of twenty mattresses is seen dimly in the blue dark, Birmingham's use of perspective emphasising the height of the bedding. This is evocative artwork of the highest order, accompanied by concise retellings printed in two-column format.

Michael Thorn

