



The Bear in the Book

Kate Banks , Georg Hallensleben (Illustrations)

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It's time for bed, and a little boy chooses his favorite book for his mother to read to him. The bear in the book is preparing for his own deep slumber, hibernating through the winter while humans and other animals explore the snowy landscape around him. Just when the bear wakes up to greet the spring, the boy drifts off to sleep. Kate Banks' soft and rhythmic text is brought to life by Georg Hallensleben's strong, expressive paintings in this bedtime read that will carry young readers through the seasons.

The Bear in the Book Details

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Author : Kate Banks , Georg Hallensleben (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review The Bear in the Book for online ebook

Richie Partington says

Richie's Picks: THE BEAR IN THE BOOK by Kate Banks and Georg Hallensleben, ill., Farrar, Straus & Giroux, October 2012, 36p., ISBN: 978-0-374-305918

“Crocuses popped up through the earth.
A fox drank from a pond.
‘I’m thirsty,’ said the little boy,
His mother got him a glass of water.
The boy held the book. He listened to the sound
the pages made when he turned them back and forth.
‘Shh,’ he said to the sleeping bear.”

The last time I wrote about the circle time movement song “Sleeping Bears” was five years ago, when I recommended OLD MOTHER BEAR by Victoria Miles and Molly Bang.

Now, thanks to THE BEAR IN THE BOOK, I’ll take the opportunity to mention it again.

You “do” Sleeping Bears by getting the kids to all lean over or lie down, eyes closed, pretending to be asleep, and then singing to them this little verse:

Sleeping bears, oh sleeping bears, oh sleeping in their caves.
Sleeping bears, oh sleeping bears, oh sleeping in their caves.
Please be very quiet, oh so very quiet,
If you shake them, if you wake them, they get very mad.

When they hear “they get very mad,” the kids all spring up, stand on their toes, bare their claws and teeth, and give the loudest roar they possibly can.

I always enjoyed leading a couple of rounds of Sleeping Bears before having the children settle down for a story.

“The bear was munching on berries and leaves.
He was fattening himself up for the winter.
Then he gathered twigs and carried them to his den.
‘He is making a soft bed,’ said the boy’s mother.”

THE BEAR IN THE BOOK contains a story of a bear preparing for hibernation and then embarking on his winter sleep.

But that is the story within the story. THE BEAR IN THE BOOK is actually the story of a young child at bedtime nestling up next to his mother and interacting with his favorite book.

There are so many different ways in which the young boy here connects with the book and the story:

He CHOOSES the book from those on the shelf.

He OPENS it, and LOOKS at the pictures.
He HANDS it to his mom and cuddles up.
He ASKS questions about the story.
He CONNECTS with the book's character, telling the bear in the book "shh."
He TURNS the pages.
He IMAGINES feeling the snow falling "across the pages of the book."
He FINDS the animals outside the bear's den obscured by the snow and woods.
He DESIRES to skate like the children in the story.
He TOUCHES the sharp corners of the book.
He IDENTIFIES and POINTS OUT the colors in one of the spreads.
He GETS thirsty hearing about the fox drinking.

And, of course, by this time, the boy is yawning, his eyes beginning to feel heavy.

"She turned to the last page of the book.
The bear was rolling over in his den.
The warm wind was tickling his back.
Spring had arrived.
'Wake up, big black bear, wake up,' said the boy's mama.
"The bear got to his feet.
He crossed the page.
And walked out into the sunshine.
But the boy's eyes had closed."

One more thing I really liked here: The cover of the book is a "headshot" of the bear looking at us. When I happened to lay my reading glasses down on top of the book, I discovered that the headshot was scaled so as to make my glasses fit him perfectly. (And, of course, if you turn the book over you see the back of the bear's head on the back cover.)

Good night...

Richie Partington
Richie's Picks <http://richiespicks.com>
BudNotBuddy@aol.com
Moderator http://groups.yahoo.com/group/middle_... <http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/facult...>

Edward Sullivan says

Lovely bedtime story with a playful POV.

Heather says

A decent book about how to read aloud to your child, but too boring, wordy, and blurry for a group read.

Tamara says

There is a LOT going on here. A bedtime story, a hibernation story, a story within a story...book awareness, seek & find, color identification...

Packed with early literacy goodies, but seemed a bit disjointed to me. Might work well if read repeatedly over consecutive nights?

Linda says

This is realistic fiction, a mama reads a book to her young boy at bedtime. It's about a bear getting ready for winter, then hibernating. But there is sweetness of the mom with her boy, answering his questions, reading page by page, repeating "sleep, big bear, sleep" creates a sort of magic. Lovely full-page illustrations by Georg Hallensleben show the setting and Kate Banks creates the mood with a different approach to a story. On one page, after the bear has begun hibernating, she writes: "Snowflakes began to fall across the pages of the book." Later, "Winter settled like a big hush," read the boy's mother. It's a must read aloud, and young children will love it.

Christy says

It's time for bed, and a little boy chooses his favorite book for his mother to read to him. The bear in the book is preparing for his own deep slumber, hibernating through the winter while humans and other animals explore the snowy landscape around him. Just when the bear wakes up to greet the spring, the boy drifts off to sleep. Kate Banks' soft and rhythmic text is brought to life by Georg Hallensleben's strong, expressive paintings in this bedtime read that will carry young readers through the seasons.

Tasha says

A little boy sits in bed reading a book with his mother. It's a book about a bear getting ready to sleep for the winter. The boy and his mother share the story together, talking about the pictures and the bear. The bear eats and eats, getting ready to hibernate until he finally curls up and falls asleep. Then the snow comes, and the little boy can almost feel the cold from the page of the book. He looks closely at the pictures and finds hidden animals in the snowy landscape. The snow continues and the boy snuggles in closer, the bear sleeps on. As spring nears, the boy gets sleepy. Just as the bear is about to wake up, the boy falls asleep for the night. Now it's his turn to sleep long and deep in a cozy bed.

This book is pure joy. It celebrates both the written word and the art of the picture book. Even more so though, it celebrates the connection built by sharing a book right before bed. Just as the boy could feel the winter emanating from the page, here you can feel the warmth and coziness. With my librarian hat on, I am delighted to see a book that models what reading aloud to a small child should look like. There should be conversations about the pictures, questions and answers about what is happening in the story, looking at the

colors on the page, finding hidden animals, and much more activity than simply reading a story aloud.

Hallensleben's illustrations have a gorgeous rough texture to them. The paint is lovely and thick, resulting in rich colors that add to that feeling of warmth and home. They also bridge the connection between the book and the family reading together, flowing seamlessly back and forth, uniting as an entire story.

Highly recommended, this is a book that will have you curled up and sharing it with your own little one immediately. Appropriate for ages 3-5.

Melissa says

A gentle celebration of the bedtime reading ritual. Very nice model of what reading to kids can look like; sharing, talking, making connections.

Jim Erekson says

The post-modern turn of the book about a book experience is not something new. Hallensleben's control of composition captured the expansive material feeling of a picture book. His renditions of page turns, crossing the gutter, and having your body immersed in the world of the book all felt fresh and were my favorite parts of the book. Banks' words added to this experience giving a little of the boy and his mom, and a little of the book with each set of words.

But. Yet another book about bedtime? Do kids in the picturebook world ever read at any other time? I'd love to see a book about a mother who wakes her child up in the morning to a book--books for breakfast [Hi, Lu]!

The Library Lady says

THIS is the sort of book that should've won the Caldecott instead of soon to date hipster crap.

The experience of being curled up warm in bed, reading with a loving parent, is universal and timeless. The interaction between parent and child is exactly what all the librarians who genuflect thrice daily to the tenets of "Every Child Ready to Read" are supposed to be striving towards. And the art is beautiful without being fussy with texture that is almost tactile.

When books about fish w/hats and cats w/buttons (no names here) have fallen into obsolescence, books like this will still be on the shelf, being loved by children and their parents. That's worth a lot more than a medal or honor from a committee full of clueless librarians. That's what children's books are all about.

Mari says

A quiet, sweet, bedtime cuddle book that does a great job of modeling all that a reading together experience can be. The story sparks talk about how a boy and his mother feel and what they like. It makes the boy think

and ask questions, which his mom answers. The two snuggle as they read, making it clear that this is special time that they both enjoy. This book is NOT didactic, but to those of us who try and encourage reading together in ways that help young people's brains grow, this is lovely.

Kathy says

Listening to a bedtime story about a bear hibernating a small boy falls asleep.

This perfect picture book is a celebration of bedtime story time. The listener is very young, maybe 2 or 3. He names animals in the pictures and experiences the bookness of the book, its sharp corners and pages that turn. He gets distracted, gets a drink, and pays attention again. The art is completely child-like, especially the house with the smoke coming from the chimney, but the movement in these illustrations keeps you turning the pages. Irresistable.

Kerri says

This is the picture book version of inception. A book within a book.

Alyssa Paulson says

This book was very unique in many ways. There are essentially two storylines occurring throughout the book, as a little boy reads before bed with his mother about a bear hibernating. It has wonderful, painted illustrations that help to support the story, as well as extend it. Also, this book would be a good tool to use when teaching about personification; There are many examples of this, such as "the wind blew its icy breath..." (p. 9). Overall, this was a great read!

Jackie says

Bear getting ready to sleep for the winter.
