



When You Were Small

Written by Sara O'Leary

Illustrated by Julie Morstad

Simply Read Books, Vancouver, Canada, 2006, 32pp.

ISBN: 978-1894965361

When You Were Small is a fun adventure bedtime story and winner of Canada's 2007 Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award. An adventure may seem inappropriate for a bedtime story, but in this story, Henry's adventure is melded into a bedtime story his father tells. If readers pay attention to the end papers, they will find out the story starts from there. In the end papers, the protagonist, Henry, is looking at pictures on the wall, which show readers Henry's fun adventures,

such as Henry in a teacup, Henry on a person's hand, and Henry on a bird. In the story, every night Henry asks his father to tell him a story about when Henry was small, and soon, the father's narrations invite readers to the world of imagination. Children will enjoy imagining themselves as small Henry and doing things like Henry did, such as fighting as a knight on a chessboard, sleeping in a slipper, and carried in a pocket of a shirt.

From the beginning to the end, the text appears on the left side and the illustrations on the right side. It seems the editor was picturing a bedtime story scene, a parent on the left side and a child on the right side. With this sitting arrangement, it is easy for a child to look at the illustrations while the parent reads. Besides the simple arrangement of texts and illustrations, less than five lines of text on one page, large text size, and a lot of empty space create a smooth and relaxed mood for bedtime. The soft color tone along with limited number of colors is also well balanced with the adventures of Henry and helps children calm down and prepare for bed.

The Marilyn Baillie picture book award is a fairly new Canadian children's book award presented by the Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC). It is awarded to an excellent picture book published in Canada and written and illustrated by Canadians. Fiction, non-fiction, and poetry are all eligible genres for this award. Marilyn's husband launched this award as a gift to his wife, a children's book author who had many careers, including a nursery school teacher, an interior designer, and a magazine editor. Visit CCBC's website (http://www.bookcentre.ca/awards/marilyn_baillie_picture_book_award) for more about the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award.

According to Simply Read Books, Sara O'Leary, the author of *When You Were Small* (2006) is a playwright, fiction writer, and literary journalist. After *When You Were Small* (2006), she published two more books with the same illustrator, Julie Morstad. They are *When I Was Small* (2012) and *Where You Came From* (2008). Their books make a fun bedtime story series for children. Since these three books share a lot in common, children can easily make connections among these books. It will be fun to compare Henry in *When You Were Small* (2006) to the other protagonist in a different bedtime story such as Max in Maurice

Sendak's (1963) *Where Wild Things Are*, Patrick in Kate Lum's (1999) *What! Cried Granny an Almost Bedtime Story*, and the boy in Coralie Saudo's (2012) *My Sad is Big and Strong. but... A Bedtime Story*.

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