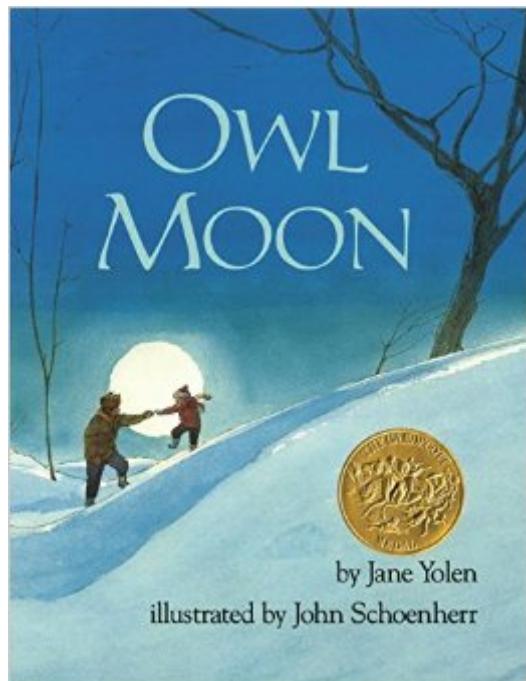


The book was found

Owl Moon



Synopsis

Late one winter night a little girl and her father go owling. The trees stand still as statues and the world is silent as a dream. Whoo-whoo-whoo, the father calls to the mysterious nighttime bird. But there is no answer. Wordlessly the two companions walk along, for when you go owling you don't need words. You don't need anything but hope. Sometimes there isn't an owl, but sometimes there is. Distinguished author Jane Yolen has created a gentle, poetic story that lovingly depicts the special companionship of a young child and her father as well as humankind's close relationship to the natural world. Wonderfully complemented by John Schoenherr's soft, exquisite watercolor illustrations, this is a verbal and visual treasure, perfect for reading aloud and sharing at bedtime.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 630L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Philomel Books; 4th Printing edition (October 23, 1987)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0399214577

ISBN-13: 978-0399214578

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 0.4 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (222 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #3,530 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Animals > Birds #104 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Classics #354 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction

Age Range: 3 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

Customer Reviews

I think it's entirely possible that Jane Yolen may be the most prolific children's author living today. Don't believe me? Try clicking on her name to pull up a list of the books she's written. Then take a gander at the literally hundreds (if not, dare I say it, thousands) of books alive today because of her. It's a bit of a relief then that at least one of them won the Caldecott Medal. "Owl Moon" deserved it too. It is a sweet yet not overly sentimental tale about a nighttime owling trip taken by a girl and her father. In this tale we first get a spectacular view from above (owl's eye view, I should say) of a small farm in the country. Two figures leave the warm home to tramp in the snow. The moon is

brightly lit above so that (as the book says), "the sky seemed to shine". The girl has never been owling before but she understands the rules intrinsically. One must be especially quiet on these occasions. Once in a while the girl's father calls a deep, "Whoo-whoo-who-who-whoooooo" into the woods, but he does not receive a reply. They walk on through the cold until they come to a clearing in the woods where the snow is so clean and pure that it looks like a bowl of milk. The father hoots again and this time receives an answer. An owl comes closer and closer, finally landing on a nearby branch just as the father shines his flashlight on it. There, the reader sees a magnificent two page spread of an owl, its large wings open beside it, regarding the girl and her parent. Then it's off and the adventure is done. Says the girl, "I was a shadow as we walked home". A couple remarkable occurrences marked the creation of this book.

Owl Moon is a wonderful story of a young girl's first hunt for the Great Horned Owl with her father. As they trek through the snowy forest, Jane Yolen's text and John Schoenherr's illustrations work together to create a realistic adventure and to express good parenting. The picture book comes to life through a peaceful countryside and a still forest. The child's continual silence and concentration add to the hunt. Within the text the child says, "I put my mittens over my mouth and listened hard." This displays her constant effort to remain quiet and to take the adventure seriously. Each illustration depicts a calm forest dominated by snow and nature. I feel that this book contains ideas that are "simple but not necessarily simplistic" much like Perry Nodelman's analysis of children's literature (221). For instance, in many scenes animals can be found hiding without the knowledge of the characters. The animals all sit calmly. This shows that the intent of the father and child is not to disturb nature but to quietly observe and to be apart of it just while they pass. This idea can not be found written within the text yet, it is understood when they see an owl and do not shoot it. This peaceful respect for nature that the father is instilling in his child is shown when they came to the clearing in the dark woods. She speaks of how the fit it exactly "and the snow below it was whiter than the milk in a cereal bowl." This emphasizes her grasp of the beauty and enjoyment natural world in a child-like way. It brings to mind games equal to finding shapes in clouds. The illustrator has also gone through the trouble of presenting the field in the shape of a large bowl. I feel that the most important aspect of the work is the example of good parenting it delivers.

Let me clear up one mystery. The dust jacket of this book clearly indicates that this is a story about a girl and her father ("Pa"). The illustrations also clearly show a little girl. The story's appeal relates to this because the experience described is one that crosses nicely between what many think of as

the "feminine" worlds of beauty and the moon and the "masculine" worlds of tracking animals and rambling around at night in the snow during winter. I do think that boys will like the story too. Owling would be a great adventure for any child. The experience is a magical one. The daughter is going owling for the first time. This is a type of bird watching that must occur at night, because owls are nocturnal. You have to have a full moon (or close to one) so that you can see the owls. The silvery moonshine creates great contrasts of light patches on the snow against a backdrop of treed shadows. "When you go owling you have to be brave." There are other requirements. "If you go owling, you have to be quiet . . ." "When you go owling you don't need words or warm or anything but hope." The book also evokes primitive sound. Her father calls out:

"Whoo-whoo-who-who-who-whoooooo . . ." to simulate the call of the Great Horned Owl. That's how you find an owl. You hope one will be attracted by the call. Then, the magical moment occurs, and an owl comes. You are face to face. Can such a moment be forgotten? The owl leaves. The relief is palpable. "I knew then I could talk, I could even laugh at last.

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