



## Drummer Hoff

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"DRUMMER HOFF" is a lively folk verse all about the building of a cannon. Brightly dressed in full uniform, each soldier brings a part for the remarkable machine.

## Drummer Hoff Details

Date : Published September 20th 2005 by Aladdin Paperbacks (first published 1967)

ISBN : 9781416908333

Author : Barbara Emberley , Ed Emberley (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Drummer Hoff for online ebook

### **Lisa Brown says**

A fun read aloud, perfect for babies, toddlers, and young children. Filled with repetition, my kids loved to help me say all the different parts as each person was added to the story, but their favorite part was the end when "Drummer Hoff fired it off" and the got to say "Kababloom!"

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### **Brielle says**

This book was about war. All of the members of the war were missing an arm, leg, or were wearing an eye patch. At the end of the book they blew themselves up because they stood in front of the cannon. At the end of the book nature took over. I liked this book but I feel that it would be confusing for a young reader to understand the message behind the book.

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### **Mary Haake says**

DRUMMER HOFF FIRRRRED IT OFF!  
KABLOOOOM!

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### **Crissy says**

Short and sweet. Love the illustrations and rhyming.

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### **Kathryn says**

This is probably a 3 for my enjoyment level but I have to bump it up because it's so memorable.

This was my first time reading it as an adult and I was struck by the final illustration of Drummer Hoff; very powerful seeing the cannon covered in cobwebs and flowers, birds and butterflies. That said, I don't think I noticed it as a kid so it seems like a subtle message to me. It's based on a folk song so perhaps the Emberleys were adding their own views there at the end.

While this is not destined to be one of my favorite books, and wasn't a favorite when I was a kid, either, it is definitely one of those books that sticks in my mind because of the illustrations. Before I read it this time, I couldn't have told you what it was about. But if I saw the cover I would have known instantly that it's "Drummer Hoff" -- those bold woodcut illustrations feel really unique to me.

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### **Chaitra says**

The soldiers bring something or other to fire off a cannon. They all have a part to play. The rhyme is repetitive in a House that Jack Built fashion. But the real winner is that bright artwork made of woodcuts. The end page is particularly good according to me, because the canon, which has been made to explode, is now in ruins, with flowers and butterflies running through it. Very Ozymandias.

(Another book I didn't test on my son because I read it in the library just before returning it, but I'd like to).

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### **Jacklyn says**

Drummer Hoff is written by Barbara Emberley and illustrated by Ed Emberley. It is a short poem about troops of soldiers who will fire off cannon. The illustrations appear to me like woodcut printing because the lines look stiff and there are many geometrical shapes. The page where they fire the cannon leaves me a strong impression. The blast forms red swirls that sweep across to another page; the loud noise of blasting is printed in bold yellow capital letters; the soldier, the carriage, the land are covered in red and the background in cold blue and sharp lines. These two pages are the only two pages that illustration takes up the whole space. After that, it became peaceful again. The carriage is left on the field and plants are growing on top of it, but the soldiers are gone. Although I like this book a lot, I don't think children who read this book can fully understand the message behind it unless someone explain it to them. Otherwise it just seems like happy soldiers who go onto the battlefield and nothing bad happens.

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### **Jennifer (JenIsNotaBookSnob) says**

Fascinating book. I really liked the illustrations, this may be a good choice for a rhythm storytime. Has a nice structure to it that seems like it would work nicely.

Very simple and short with a brief humorous bit at the end.

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### **Nora says**

Drummer Hoff is a book written in the style of a cumulative song. It starts with Drummer Hoff, and throughout the story seven others join him, all to build and fire a cannon. They build the cannon on a grassy field, and in the end it is overgrown by flowers and plants, and birds are perched on the canon. Drummer Hoff is illustrated in a colorful mosaic style, with ornate patterns drawn within every person and object. Pages with narrative are a stark contrast to those with the characters, as they are plain white, with only the grassy field at the very bottom of the page. The eye is drawn to the bright jewel toned illustrations, and once readers get the hang of the story song, they can pay more of their attention to the pictures. Once each character has been presented, for the rest of the book only their head is visible at the bottom page, bringing the attention to the new character introduced in that verse of the song, so to speak. When the cannon is finally fired, the entire page is drawn in red, the smoke from the blast, the grass, the cannon itself, and Drummer Hoff himself, against a brilliant blue background. This red is an angrier color, pairing appropriately with the firing of an explosive, and on the next page is peacefully overgrown by flowers and

plants. With only the cumulative song as text, the pictures on the final pages are the epilogue to the firing of the cannon.

This book could be used in a classroom in a counting lesson. As characters are added to the story, the count gets higher, and students could count along with the book. It could also be used to make predictions. The teacher could read aloud, and students could predict what the next step in building will be.

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### **Jon(athan) Nakapalau says**

Ever come across a book and remember that it was one of your favorites as a child? This book was in a used book store and it hit me...BOOM! Like a cannon ball of memory - taking me back to a time when my grandfather first read it to me.

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### **Book Concierge says**

This is a picture book for very young children, with repetitive rhymes that tell the story of a group of soldiers who build a cannon. Illustrator Ed Emberley won the Caldecott medal for his work. The vibrantly colored illustrations remind me of a psychedelic Beatles album cover!

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### **Paul Hankins says**

The 1968 Caldecott Award winner. I found this at a garage sale of a retiring educator a couple of years ago and this title has sat on a downstairs bookshelf until I decided to go back and read these award winners this weekend.

Delightful verse about the hierarchy of people who give orders until the eventual firing of the cannon by Drummer Hoff. Colorful woodcuts make up the illustrations that are a feast for the eyes.

This might work well in a writer workshop if the prompt involved many people in a process.

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### **Meltha says**

Another Caldecott winner, but I kept wondering sort of why. The illustrations were colorful and vaguely psychedelic, almost looking a bit like stained glass windows, but the story, a rhyming cumulative one a la The House that Jack Built, at times didn't work very well. For example, Chowder brings the powder, and Harrel or Farrel or some similar name brings a barrel. The problem is the gun powder is already in a barrel, and the barrel actually referred to is the barrel of the cannon, which actually took me a while myself, so it would have to fly over children's heads completely. Eventually, Drummer Hoff sets off the cannon, and it appears everybody else is standing in front of it at the time and is blown to kingdom come, though that isn't made completely explicit. The final image is the cannon full of birds' nests, feeling rather "Where Have All the Flowers Gone." Again, this could well be a comment on the Vietnam War given the era of the book, but the concept itself hasn't aged particularly well.

ETA: Yep, still rather baffling.

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### **Theo Logos says**

I discovered 'Drummer Hoff' in a Scholastic book offer at school when I was six, and begged my parents to buy it for me. Like many little boys, I was enamored by soldiers, and would pour over the book again and again, entranced by the colorful European dress uniforms worn by the motley bunch of soldiers who were assembling, loading, and preparing to fire a cannon. Each one was distinctive, and I was particularly fond of Sergeant Chowder (who brought the powder), a gruff looking peg-legged fellow in a grenadiers hat, and Captain Bammer (who brought the rammer), a swashbuckling, eye-patch wearing chap. All of the illustrations were stunningly lined wood-cuts, brightly colored. I would try to draw soldiers who looked like those in the book, and learned all the words by heart.

Jump forward thirty years. My first child was born, and though I hadn't looked at the book in over twenty-five years, I found myself chanting the words to my baby as I rocked him to sleep - I still remembered them perfectly! I retrieved Drummer Hoff from my parent's attic, and it became a favorite of my boys. It is a cherished piece of my childhood that I am thrilled to be able to pass on to them.

It is worth mentioning that Drummer Hoff contains a subtle anti-war message as well. When the cannon fires, it is a two page spread KAHBAHBLOOM, all done in hellish red with some dark purple and blue behind it. When you turn the next page, all of the sharply dressed, parade ground soldiers are gone, and the abandoned cannon that was their focus has become a dilapidated ruin in an overgrown meadow full of birds and butterflies. Though as a child I could not clearly articulate the thoughts, I remember pondering what happened to the soldiers; why they had left the cannon there, and if they had perhaps been hurt when it was fired.. It was my first influence to suggest that war might be something other than romance and adventure. This book is a fine, age appropriate way to begin to instill the values of peace in the hearts of little boys. Among all of the many wonderful books written for small children, this was, is, and ever shall be my very favorite. It receives my highest recommendation.

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### **Mary says**

This book is based off of an old folk verse. Told with vibrant illustrations, it tells the story of the construction of a cannon. Each soldier has something different to contribute, which intertwines a beautiful lesson of social-emotional learning, history, and poetry. The story starts off small and gradually builds to convey a bigger picture.

*"General Border  
Gave the order,  
Major Scott  
Brought the shot,  
Captain Bammer  
Brought the rammer,  
Sergeant Chowder  
Brought the powder,  
Corporal Farrell  
Brought the barrel,*

*Private Parriage  
Brought the carriage,  
But Drummer Hoff fired it off."*

I think this book would be perfect for a reading or writing workshop, because it takes various components and adds them to the existing story – an important element of writing in general. This idea is presented in a way that seems somewhat simplified as the reader must do most of the interpreting and thinking. Digging for a deeper meaning provides the audience to think more critically to develop a more in-depth understanding of the author's message he is trying to convey. This text could be used for different purposes: to discuss poetic writing and other literary elements; as a mentor text for intertwining history into your writing; to learn about this period of history; or to convey the social-emotional type lesson that everyone has something unique to offer to an overall production... Everyone has a gift that is to be valued.

My favorite part of the story is the illustrations, as their bright colors and details make it even more memorable. The first time I read "Drummer Hoff," I knew it's poetic and historical writing style would be appreciated by all. After all, it did win a Caldecott Metal! I was reassured that younger audiences would also swoon when my fourth grade reading partner expressed his excitement after reading it. He was exposed to a new literary style and both of us were ecstatic about the new possibilities of his writing. In fact, we were so inspired that we immediately went to his writer's journal to update one of his latest poems. It brings something new to the typical classroom read alouds, as it truly is unique. The illustrations, characters, writing style, and plot are unlike everything I have read before which is why I find it brilliant.

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