



Piggybook

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Illus. in full color. "Mr. Piggott and his sons are a male chauvinist lot who, outside of yelling for their dinner, don't exercise themselves much around the house. When Mrs. Piggott finally tires of the endless chores that sandwich her workday, she leaves the menfolk on their own, with a note saying, 'You are pigs.' With the cooking and housework untended, they soon turn genuinely porcine, a transformation Browne foreshadows with pig faces on the wallpaper, vases, fireplace, phone. As in most of Browne's art, there is more than a touch of irony and visual humor here. Fun to read aloud."--*Bulletin, Center for Children's Books*.

Piggybook Details

Date : Published September 26th 1990 by Dragonfly Books (first published 1986)

ISBN : 9780679808374

Author : Anthony Browne

Format : Paperback 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Family

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From Reader Review Piggybook for online ebook

Ross Oates says

Piggybook by Anthony Browne is a book about a family of two boys, a father and a mother. The father and the two boys in the family treat poor Mrs. Piggott (the mother) like a maid and she is burdened with having to do all of the housework before going to work every day. One day the mother decides she has had enough when she doesn't come home and leaves a note calling them pigs. The men in the house are left to take care of themselves and eventually, turn into pigs (literally). The mother returns and the men learn their lesson. They appreciate the mother more and even help her around the house.

This book could be suitable for children in both KS1 and KS2 as it portrays valuable lessons such as the importance of not taking your mother or any family for granted. It highlights the importance of team work within in the family circle where everybody should contribute in whatever way they can to help other family members and get things done around the home.

Leonardo says

No me gustan los libros de este muchacho.

Tiffany says

Wow! Where to start with this book? I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book! Unfortunately, the story reminded me a lot of my childhood. My mom did everything for all of us, although she never left! I can see that Browne was trying to show what society thinks of women as wives and mothers.

The illustrations were my favorite part of the book, by far! Just by "noticing" things on the cover, I saw that the woman was the only one who wasn't smiling and she looked like she was carrying the family. As I opened the book, I noticed that there was a pig with wings on the title and dedication pages. I immediately thought that what was going to happen in the story would be far fetched or impossible based on the saying "when pigs fly".

The gorilla in the newspaper and the painting reminds me of Voices in the Park.

In one page when the father is asking where the dinner is, his shadow is in the shape of a pig and then when the mother leaves, there is a shadowy figure of a wolf outside of a window. That makes me think of The Three Little Pigs story.

My favorite part about the illustrations is that the amount of pigs appearing in the background increases as the males in the story act more and more like pigs.

Finally, I liked the message at the end of the story. The mother comes back to the family and is finally firm with them about not just doing the household chores and being a servant to the family. She proves that she

can move past society's view of a wife and mother and do anything, like fix a car!

Nicole says

Anthony Browne has again made a picturebook that questions the status quo, challenges societies stereotypes and makes readers question gender roles that still plague our contemporary lives. What I love about Browne's books is that he pushes the genre of childrens literature into uncharted waters, never underestimating the young readers he writes his books for. Piggybook is the story of a young family who discover that they have been taking advantage of the sole female in the house, by expecting her to clean up after them as they head off to their "very important job" and "very important school". Although the mother/wife of this family also works outside of the home she is responsible for all of the household chores. Along with Browne's characteristic visual imagery, the males in the family transform into pigs halfway through the story, this picturebook has the potential to transform the way students view gender roles in their own lives. What a wonderful way to expose students to the topic of feminist theories and open up their discussions on the current expectations of males and females in our society.

Aymin Silva says

Piggybook is about a family of four, a Dad, two sons and Mum who appears to be exhausted of her seemingly unappreciated role in the family causing her to leave them to fend for themselves. Ultimately, she agrees to return home, after seeing them living in squalor, and they seem to share the domestic chores. As Joosen (2015, p.151) states Piggybook was written in the mid-1980's "when second-wave feminism had exerted considerable influence on children's literature," which could mean Browne was trying to challenge the gender-roles in society. Although Bradford (1998) proposes that if the book is read ironically it could be viewed as contesting equality in domestic roles.

It is narrated in the past tense with speech from the males but never the Mum, who is spoken for by the narrator and once through her own note, which could reflect how she has no voice in the family. More so, the use of the past tense could make the reader want to know what is happening to the characters in the present.

A variety of aspects within Piggybook link to other works by Browne, such as the intertextual links, particularly of famous artwork. Within Piggybook Browne includes the famous portrait 'Laughing Cavalier' (1624) and 'Mr and Mrs Andrews' (1750). On one hand, this could be to appeal to, and engage with, the adult reader, as Browne (no date) has stated that he believes that "picture books are for everybody at any age". However, he has also stated that he hopes the paintings are not "seen as winking over the child's shoulder" as he believes these tell another aspect of the story and add to the context (1994, p.185). These intertextual links could be taught to children, as Purdon (2000) reports doing, with the children taking the intertextuality as a puzzle to solve. This could suggest Browne credits children's ability to understand and make references to other texts.

Browne's use of colour, positioning and lines throughout Piggybook can aid the reader in making inferences, particularly about the Mum, who first appears on page 4. Although here she has not been given a face, which could be so that the reader inputs their own emotions or to represent her lack of identity. The use of a diminishing return across the two pages when describing her pre-work domestic routine, combined with the repetition of "all", could be to reflect the number of chores she has to do before she can be at the same point

as the male characters- being at work/school. These images contrast to those of the males, as she is much lower in saturation and the hue is an ochre colour making the images look sepia. This could represent her quieter and duller life in comparison to her brightly coloured family, such as the bold primary colours on the boys' ties on the previous page. More so, the style the Mum is drawn in shifts to include cross-hatching which could make the reader feel the Mum's troubled emotions and nervous energy.

Common features of Browne's work are hidden images and merging of animals and humans, both can be seen here in the form of pigs. These are scattered throughout, hidden in plant pots and buttons, for example. The purpose of this could be to foreshadow the second half where the males turn into pigs. There is also a potential reference to this on the first endpaper where there are two flying pigs, who could be an allusion to the phrase 'when pigs can fly' that is used to refer to something that will never happen, which in this context could mean Mr Piggot taking on domestic duties.

At the end of the book, we see Mrs Piggot happily fixing the car- a stereotypically unlikely role for women, which could imply that the family have become less gender-stereotyped. However, Browne's portrayal of the family on the last double page could suggest otherwise. On the left, the three males stand holding food with their faces drawn almost like a caricature with black dots for eyes, thin line for a smile, and prominent circular rosy cheeks. This contrasts greatly to the right where there is a vignette of Mrs Piggot drawn more realistically with detailed eyes, depth to her lips, and clear strands of hair. This could have been done to imply that the males' behaviour was a facade and they were faking to make the Mum stay.

As a concept, I like the idea of using literature to challenge gender roles in society. Piggybook could be used to teach the negative implications of them to both adults and children, make people realise their own actions or perhaps send a less progressive view of faking your behaviour to settle a situation. I would be interested to read Piggybook with children and adults from varying cultures to learn what understandings they bring to the text, as Meek (1988, p.6) states "reading does not happen in a vacuum" therefore their own contexts and experiences could affect their interpretations.

Josh says

Most of us, growing up, were very dependent of our mothers; and most of the time, we never paid attention to all the effort that went into her hard work. This is the case with the men of the Piggott family in Anthony Browne's book, Piggybook. The Piggott family consists of four members- Mr. Piggott, Simon and Patrick Piggott and Mrs. Piggott. This is the order they are introduced in the book and all but Mrs. Piggott are introduced together. The three men of the family demand a lot, and without any consideration of the mother. Their demands get worse as the story progresses and Mrs. Piggott decides to let them feel how life is without a caring mother.

The way the book is structured is very interesting. The story is told through the omniscient limited point of view; it's apparent since the characters thoughts aren't known, but the use of the pronouns "they" and "their" are throughout the story. Also, the story is not centralized around a child character. This being a children's book, one would expect that the main character is a child, of some sort. In this case, and in my opinion, it's the mother. Some may disagree and say that the "protagonists" are the father and the sons, since they're in the book for a longer duration of the story, but they're more of the antagonist; they treat the mother very coldly and with macho behavior. The conflict in the story is Person v Society because it's the mother against the society within her home; she is basically treated like a rag doll and she decides to make a change to solve this problem within this society.

The illustrations in are great. For the first half of the book, the illustrations stayed in parallel/ symmetrical

interaction with the text. After the first half, the illustrations sort of take a turn, still describing the text but with a twist- enhancing interaction with the text. Even in the beginning of the story, there were small symbols that foreshadowed future events (Don't want to spoil anything but look for a certain pink animal throughout the illustrations). The colors in the illustrations also affect the mood. In scenes where the men are relaxing, the colors are vibrant and lively; but when the mom is shown doing all the work, there's a brown filter on the illustration, making it monotone.

This story, although no the conventional kid's book, was a fun read and can help teach your children a lesson in gratitude and appreciations for others hard work. Heck, an adult can read this by themselves and have a blast. My mom loved it so I'm giving it five stars.

Leslie says

Every family needs to read this book. Every. Night. Until they die. After reading it with me last night for the first time, Nash looked at me quizzically, his head turned sideways with one magnificently bushy eyebrow raised in the Spock style, as if to say - Hey, you're trying to teach me something here, aren't you mom. Knock it off.

Mom - 1

Whiny Kids - 0

This is an awesome book.

juan carlos says

Un clásico de la literatura infantil, que me encanto y lo recomiendo para todas las edades.

¿Para qué leer el libro de los cerdos?

1. Por que te explica muy bien y de manera amena y divertida los roles familiares.
2. Le ayuda a entender a los menores de la casa que la mamá es una pieza importante, sin embargo eso no quiere decir que ellos no deben ayudar.
3. Muestra acerca de los hábitos y deberes que debe existir en un hogar.
4. El trabajo en equipo es muy importante para generar buen armonía en el hogar.

Bonnie says

Anthony Browne: named the UK's Children's Laureate in June, 2009.

I love this book – and so did the kids in the many classes I have read it to. Usually, we would read it twice – straightaway – because it isn't only the printed word, but the illustrations that add depth and texture to this richly layered picture book.

No getting around it: the males in the Piggott family are chauvinistic pigs. Dad and the two boys consider it

their right to make demands upon the only female in the household, their mom. Mr. Piggott has a “very important job” and Simon and Patrick attend a “very important school” dressed in their British school uniforms. Meanwhile, almost-faceless Mom makes their breakfast, does all the chores; then goes to her own outside job.

Every evening when they come home, the boys say, “Hurry up with the meal, Mom,” and Dad, busy reading the paper, adds, “Hurry up with the meal, old girl.” So Mom prepares dinner, does more chores, and makes lunches for the following day while the boys lounge on the chesterfield, in front of the TV.

One night, the boys arrive home to a silent house, “*Where’s Mom?*” *Mr. Piggott demands.* Mom is nowhere to be found, but she has left a note on the mantelpiece: *You are pigs.*

With his great use of foreshadowing, Anthony Browne has included so many details that even pre-school children will search for all the signs of pigs they can find.

The “boys” literally turn into pigs as they try to take care of themselves. (Oh, the artwork is exquisite – and even the language changes):

“*When is Mom coming home?*” *the boys squealed after another horrible meal.*

“*How should I know?*” *Mr. Piggott grunted.*

They all became more and more grumpy.

Another double page spread, with text and more pigs, and then:

One night there was nothing in the house for them to cook. “We’ll just have to root around and find some scraps,” snorted Mr. Piggott.

And just then Mrs. Piggott walked in.

Her three piggy-boys, on their knees pleading for her to come back, see her for the first time as more than just “background”. And of course, given their hard lesson, they begin to pitch in.

By the end of the book Mom has a huge smile on her face as she too, pitches in, in a way she never has before.

Anthony Browne, author and illustrator of *Piggybook*, has produced a book about gender roles that is both insightful and meaningful, and sends a message to both males and females. And it may have been written over two decades ago, but the message is still relevant today.

Anna Harris says

This book is about the Piggott family – Mr. Piggott, Mrs. Piggott, and their sons Simon and Patrick. Poor Mrs. Piggott is lumbered with having to do all of the housework and clearing up after the rest of her family before going to work, every single day, until one day she decides to take a stand!

This is an absolutely fantastic and very cleverly illustrated picture book, which would be enjoyed and

appreciated by children in KS1 or lower KS2 – I actually worked with a class of year 3 children on this book last year in their literacy lessons, and they loved it for its humour and its illustrations, although they were also able to understand and reflect upon the less light-hearted themes contained within the story as well. This book reminds us not to take people for granted, and it also addresses and questions traditional gender stereotypes – by the end of the story all of the male members of the family are doing their fair share of the housework and Mrs. Piggott is happy because she is able to mend the car. This is therefore a fantastic story for children to read in that it not only highlights the importance of everyone doing their fair share, but reminds us not to stereotype certain roles as being jobs that are just suitable for women or for men.

Ellie Labbett says

A great statement from Browne about the reliance and pressure placed upon some mothers in the family home. I loved how the illustrations mirror the behaviour and attitudes of the characters, with their entire home being overcome by images of pigs. This is often quite subtle, and could be used to help children with reflecting more deeply about how the actions that characters links to characterization.

Rylie says

Piggybook begins with the introduction of a seemingly perfect family. A dashing husband with two polished young boys standing in front of their picturesque home; only mentioning that his wife was inside the house. “Hurry up with the breakfast” and “Hurry up with the meal, old girl”, the story takes us through the daily routine of the over worked Mrs. Piggot trying to meet the needs of her demanding boys. Until one day she disappears, leaving only a note. The boys soon realize the impossible demands they have placed on their mother, begging for her to return to a changed home. This story uses a home-away-home setting, I felt, to add a dramatic emphasis to the character development. Both, the father, Mr. Piggot, and his two sons are examples of dynamic characters. These boys begin the story very selfish and unwilling to put forth an effort in their daily routine. After having their “caretaker” disappear, the home-away-home setting, they realize what part they must play day to day. After this you can see the boys taking their part in chores and housework, no longer expecting their mother to do all the work herself.

In the opening of the book that shows Mr. Piggot reading the note left on the fireplace mantel there are two images with distinct characteristics, a large image to the left that corresponds with the image below the text to the right. In the image on the left you see a mantelpiece boarded with pig embellishments. You see pigs in the fireplace detailing, the blue pig tiles, and pig faces on the fireplace floor frame. There is a painting hanging above the mantel that pictures a pig-like man with his dog, you can also clearly see the cut out figure of a woman. The wallpaper, a vase, and even an eraser on one of the pencils on the mantel all resemble a pig.

This image adds a huge emphasis to the impact of the image to the right. Placed under the text there is a famed image of a pig hand holding a note that reads, “You are pigs”. The note is being held by a pig hand, dressed in a suit, in front of the pig wallpaper background. Until this point Mr. Piggot and his two sons have only been pictured as humans. However, this father and his boys will remain as pigs while they try to take on all the duties and responsibilities they placed on their mother. I felt one strong essence of representational and interpersonal structure in the opening where the pig boys were pleading for their mother to come back. In the image on the left the pigs are low in the image and close to the bottom of the boarder. Where, the

mother stands tall, having a large portion of her head breaking the boarder. This shows her importance over the pigs. This builds on the image on the right that shows the pig father and boys from the perspective of the mother. The pigs are holding direct eye contact with the readers, giving you their feelings of sincerity.

I enjoyed reading this book very much. There where several details in the illustrations that I did not notice at first. As I looked deeper into the pages I felt the message of the story was really brought forward by the illustrations. I thought this was a very creative way to send a more powerful message.

Abril G. Karera says

Un clásico ya de la literatura infantil que consigue sorprender, divertir y, al mismo tiempo, repensar los roles de las personas en una familia. Basta decir que lo hemos disfrutado mucho, platicado mucho y reído mucho.

Lindsay says

I couldn't help but laugh while reading this book as I pictured my mother trying to discourage me from dating as a teenager by claiming that "all men are pigs!" Clearly Mrs. Piggot is also a scorned woman as you can see by the cover of this story in which she is symbolically carrying her family the way she carries the load of responsibilities at home. As usual, Browne has incorporated many symbols into his work to enhance whatever social issue he is aiming to highlight. In this story his use of pig imagery is a clear play on men as "chauvinist pigs" expecting the woman to cook, clean and dote on the men in their lives. However, considering that Piggybook is a children's picture book, I was kind of shocked that Mrs. Piggot actually leaves, but I also couldn't help cheer her on. As a woman and child of divorce, I appreciate Browne keeping it "real" and not sugarcoating family relationships the way most children's books do. I was really surprised at how Browne, a male author, portrayed the strength of the female figure in the home rather than the male. In fact, when mom leaves, the boys are helpless, filthy and not at all self-sufficient. Classic children's books portray men as the strong family figure, the provider and the protector and the woman as the needy, doting house wives. It was nice to see women appreciated for once. Browne must have had a great mother!

Gemma Ford says

Lots of hidden details within the images which are good to explore! Teaches lesson of gratitude and forgiveness.
