

## BEGUILING WORDLESS ADVENTURES

When I first encountered the idea of "wordless" books, I thought "That's pretty dopey, why read a book without any words?" But that was before I met up with John Goodall's books. These small (4 x 6inch) treasures will delight every child who is lucky enough receive them, and enchant innumerable adults as well.

The plot of each story unfolds on half-pages between the full pages. Surprises and changing scenes delight the reader at the turn of every panel.

*Shrewbettina's Birthday* ( Simon & Schuster, \$8.95) is a great excuse to introduce a birthday girl to John Goodall. Tiny Bettina (a shrew, smaller than a mouse) is headed from her burrow to town when her purse is snatched by an evildoer who is soon brought to justice by Mr. Mouse, who also finds out it's Shrewbettina's Birthday and helps her special day turn out better than it began.

*Naughty Nancy* (Simon & Schuster, \$8.95) tells the adventures of the mouse-bride's flower girl with a whisker bent toward mischief: she rides on the wedding dress train, slides down the reception tent into the champagne glasses, and finally stows away in the trousseau trunk and goes on the honeymoon.

*The Surprise Picnic* (Simon and Schuster, \$8.95) follows the fearless cat family on their offshore picnic to a nearby island. Their feast is all set up on a rock when they are distracted by the teapot on the campfire, and their lunch disappears (because the rock was actually a tortoise) and then one

surprise follows upon another, with rain and storm until their feckless abandonment of the island using their umbrellas. All ends well back in the village, with smiles all around.

*The Midnight Adventures of Kelly, Dot and Esmeralda* (Simon and Schuster, \$8.95) chronicles the through-the-picture-on-the-wall escapades of a doll, a toy koala and a mouse as they encounter a roadside carnival where Esmeralda (the mouse) is kidnapped as part of the acrobat act. The three toy box friends escape and all ends well on the nursery shelf well after midnight.

Lots of little details fill each picture, with the obvious love and care of a grandfather-artist working each story out for his beloved granddaughter. John Goodall invented the "form" in which the half-pages tell the tale, and perfected it in over thirty books before he moved on. These are treasures that every girl ought to own. Buy them now, before they go out of print again! These are perfect birthday presents for girls four to eight years old.

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