

Children's Literature Reviews

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One Saturday Evening

Barbara Baker

Dutton, 48p, \$13.99. 2007

Reviews:

Gillian Engberg (Booklist, Jul. 1, 2007 (Vol. 103, No. 21))

One Saturday Morning (1994) follows a busy bear family through its hectic, enjoyable day. In this follow-up, also a Dutton Easy Reader, the bear family settles down for the night, but there's lots to do before the lights go out. Each short chapter follows a family member: Mama washes the dishes, the table, the kitchen floor, baby Jack, and finally, in a lovely, bubbly tub, herself. In later chapters, Daisy, Rose, and Lily all take baths, enjoy rowdy play, and protest bedtime. The chapter structure and short, basic sentences are well tuned to newly confident readers, and the reassuringly familiar scenarios, nicely extended in Duke's expressive ink-and-watercolor pictures, will draw children into the cozy nighttime mayhem. The final chapter, in which Papa and Mama Bear chat over tea in the kitchen, will answer children's curiosity about what happens in the house after they're asleep. Like the previous title, this is a strong choice for the just-literate crowd. *Grades 1-3*

Gwynne Spencer (Children's Literature)

Following the quiet precedent of the much-loved *One Saturday Morning* by the same team, this recounting of the high energy antics of Lily, Daisy, Rose, and baby Jack as they try to wind down and go to sleep will please adults as well as young emerging readers. Six stories in a typical easy-reader format (large print well spaced on the page) tell of the efforts of made by each bear in this large family to enjoy Saturday evening to the fullest. Mother treats herself to a quiet bath. Lily wants to take a bath all by herself instead of with her sister. Wild Rose and Daisy share a bath and then rambunctiously descend on Papa while he's trying to settle Jack to sleep. After much mayhem and many bedtime delays, Jack, ever the insistent toddler, demands "Up!" even when left in his crib. He escapes and eventually falls asleep underneath it. When every other little bear is quiet and asleep, what Mama and Papa do will warm readers' heart--they read a book and begin to write one of their own. Even just this one-book encounter with this loving and lively family will leave warm and comfortable memories for readers young and old alike. 2007, Dutton Children's Books/Penguin Young Readers Group, \$13.99. Ages 4 to 8.

Kirkus (Kirkus Reviews, July 1, 2007 (Vol. 75, No. 13))

Following the logical progression after *One Saturday Morning* (1994), Baker and Duke create another collection of related chapters about the bear family, this time about their nightly routines. Each chapter is about one family member, starting with Mama and her Saturday evening bath and ending with Papa quietly reading his book. In between are little bears in the tub, on a lap and playing going-to-bed games. Short, declarative sentences, with plenty of repetitive phrases nestled into ample white space, recall the feel of the Little Bear books. Lively bears bound out of the illustration frames, and tired bears collapse on Mama and Papa's shoulders, making this bear family seem human. Deft touches--like the face that baby Jack makes at being left in his crib or the circular portraits of the family member at the beginning of each chapter--make this a bedtime treat for parents and new readers alike. 2007, Dutton, 48p, \$13.99. Category: Early reader. Ages 5 to 8. Starred Review. © 2007

Hope Morrison (The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, October 2007 (Vol. 61, No. 2))

The bear family of *One Saturday Morning* is back with a series of nighttime rituals and routines in this gentle, family-themed easy reader. Each chapter focuses on a member of the family and the way he or she spends Saturday evening: Mama gets Baby Jack bathed, then treats herself to a bubble bath; Lily, the eldest sibling, insists on taking a bath by herself for the first time; Rose raises havoc in the bath with sister Daisy and then throughout the house; Daisy puts her baby doll to sleep just like Mama puts Jack to sleep; Jack climbs out of his crib; and Papa, after reading to all four cubs, pours himself some cocoa and reads a good book to himself. The overall result is the depiction of a serene, loving family full of individual personalities and mutual devotion. There is a pleasing diversity of activity presented in their evening rituals so that, although nothing particularly exciting happens, there is variety and interest. Duke's watercolor illustrations mirror the familial joy inherent in the text while offering lots of visual support for novice readers. She makes especially good use of props in distinguishing the siblings: Lily wears glasses, for instance, while Daisy always has her baby doll with her. Though written for early readers, this could also be readily shared by families spending their own Saturday evenings together Review Code: R -- Recommended. (c) Copyright 2006, The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. 2007, Dutton, 48p.; Reviewed from galleys, \$13.99. Grades 1-2.

Horn Book (The Horn Book Guide, Spring 2008)

A family of bears (Mama, Papa, three girls, and toddler Jack) prepares for bed. As in the earlier books, each chapter focuses on one family member at a time. Duke manages a remarkable range of expressions on the bears' faces while using a calm palette and lots of homey details to evoke the cozy evening. Category: Easy Readers. 2007, Dutton, 48pp, 13.99. *Ages 5 to 9*. Rating: 2: Superior, well above average.

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