



The Big Box

By Toni Morrison, Slade Morrison

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The Big Box By Toni Morrison, Slade Morrison Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

If Pulitzer Prize-winning Nobel laureate Toni Morrison and her son Slade hope to reach children with their rhyming message of personal freedom and individuality, they may have missed the mark. But if even a few excessively controlling grownups learn to "let children be children," this big, colorful picture book might serve its purpose after all. Patty, Mickey, and Liza Sue live in a big brown box (locked from the inside) with all the amenities a modern child dreams of: TV, Barbie, pizza, Spice Girls T-shirts, beanbag chairs, and Pepsi. All this, but no liberty. They've been placed in this box because the adults in their lives believe "those kids can't handle their freedom." They have too much fun in school, sing when they should be studying, feed honey to the bees, and play handball where they shouldn't. Parents, neighbors, and teachers are uncomfortable with these irrepressible children, and hope to control them with strict boundaries. Meanwhile, the younger-yet-wiser children just want the freedom to become themselves: "Even sparrows scream/ And rabbits hop/ And beavers chew trees when they need 'em./ I don't mean to be rude: I want to be nice,/ But I'd like to hang on to my freedom."

Giselle Potter's lovely, childlike paintings create an atmosphere of naïve bewilderment, as the plaintive children wail, over and over, "If freedom is handled just *your way*/ Then it's not my freedom or free." Morrison's first foray into children's literature is a puzzling, thickly ironic book that asks more questions than it answers. Even as a celebration of the unfettered exuberance of children in the face of societal oppression, a lighter touch would have done wonders. (Click to see a sample spread. Text copyright 1999 by Toni Morrison. Illustrations copyright 1999 by Giselle Potter. With permission of Jump at the Sun, Hyperion Books for Children.) --*Emilie Coulter*

From Publishers Weekly

In what PW called "a social commentary on childhood," two girls and a boy live in a "big brown box" with a door that has "three big locks"; they have been sent there by adults who think they "can't handle their freedom." Ages 8-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 3-6-Morrison sets to rhyme a story her son created when he was nine-years-old. When three children make their parents, neighbors, or teachers nervous-Patty talks in the library, Mickey plays handball where he shouldn't, and Liza Sue lets the chickens on her farm keep their eggs-the adults decide that the youngsters can't handle their freedom and so choose to have them confined. A literal reading of the text says that they put them in a big box, but some will infer that they were institutionalized. Their parents visit on Wednesday nights and provide plenty of material gifts, but "the door only opens one way." Potter's moody, quirky, somber-colored illustrations, similar to those she created for Candace Fleming's *Gabriella's Song* (Atheneum, 1997), interpret the story quite literally, picturing nearly every object mentioned in the text, leaving little to readers' imaginations. The box varies between a furnished room with the three locks on the door referred to in the text, to the cardboard box on the cover, from which, at the end of the story, the three break free to recapture their personal freedom. This is a book that will have a hard time finding an audience: it looks like a picture book for younger children, yet the theme and images require some sophistication and a desire to explore life's boundaries. What children of any age will make of parents who decided to lock up their own children for relatively minor infractions remains to be seen.

Ellen Fader, Multnomah County Library, Portland, OR

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joseph Lunsford:

This The Big Box book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is usually information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This specific The Big Box without we realize teach the one who studying it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't end up being worry The Big Box can bring whenever you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even phone. This The Big Box having very good arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

Billy Gallardo:

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Doris Snell:

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Gary Lund:

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