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Jump On Board the Animal Train

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Jill Bennett](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

A small boy tells how he and his mother set out one day on a walk along the road, past the building site and the ice-cream stall to the station where they are greeted by train driver daddy who is taking him on this train for a special birthday treat. That sounds very straightforward and uneventful ? not so. Lurking in various places en route are a bear, a tiger, an elephant and a giraffe all of which make themselves known to the boy but seemingly not his mother who continues walking straight on eyes front, unaware of the growing procession. Moreover, when they reach the station daddy instructs the animals to ?Jump on board? and covers his son?s eyes. ?Now Daddy is with us and that makes three!? the birthday boy tells us. But there is an even bigger surprise to come for readers and the boy certainly (but perhaps not after all, for Mummy), when the final page is turned and opened out to reveal a veritable menagerie all waiting to join in the birthday celebration.

Cleverly constructed narrative, both verbal and visual, and the split-page design are all used to great effect. The whole of the boy?s monologue is in rhyme and the repeat refrain, ?Ssh! Listen! What can it be? I think there?s something following me!? together with a visual clue as to the almost hidden animal next to appear when the half page is turned, mean that we share in the on-going joke. In addition, the authors have left gaps for readers to fill. Such questions as ?Did the mother know about the animals??. ?Where have the animals come from?? and ?How did the other animals get to the train?? are among those that emerged from my audience of under sixes.

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