



I Wish I'd Written by Simon Mason

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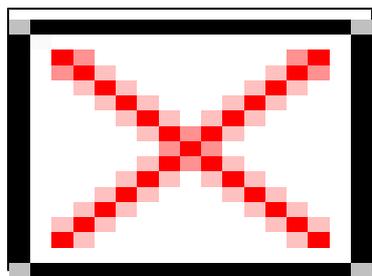
I Wish I'd Written

Byline:

Simon Mason on Winnie the Pooh

Simon Mason loved Winnie the Pooh so much, he named his first bicycle in its honour.

There are two books I wish I'd written, Winnie the Pooh and The House at Pooh Corner, though obviously they form a single whole. I loved the book(s) as a child, and I loved reading them to my children ? who seemed to love them too.



A lot of the appeal for me comes from the comedy ? all sorts of comedy: situational comedy, character-based comedy and just wonderful gags. The jokes in particular are of a high order: natural, sharp, warm, fresh, pitch-perfect. Pooh?s wearily resigned comment that a gorse bush can be a bit like an ambush; Tigger finding thistles too ?hot? to eat. Such jokes arrive out of the story; they?re in the air the characters breathe.

There is ? and it?s been remarked on ? an adult tone. Some people find that it talks over the heads of young readers. I never found that myself. To me the tone is soothing, reassuring, the sound of a trusted reader-out-loud. ?Listen to this, you?ll like it . . .? It seems to me that the jokes are shared with ? not withheld from ? the young audience. They get them.

At the heart of the book, for me, are the characters. Later I would see human types in them ? Eeyore the grump, Tigger the optimist ? but at the time they just were Eeyore and Tigger, vivid creatures in my imaginative world. I was fascinated, and half-frightened, by Rabbit, and sorry for him at the same time. Christopher Robin is a bore, perhaps: his tone of shrill certainty intrudes on the fantasy world. But Pooh and Piglet and small and warm enough, and true enough to themselves, to survive the bossy boy. Their conversations, as much as their adventures, are our own. We have all embarked on a heffalump hunt, we?ve all been terrified of wozzles. I named my first bicycle ?Brain of Pooh? and crashed it almost immediately, and didn?t mind. I knew all about accidents already.

Simon Mason?s latest book, **Moon Pie** (978-1849920360) is published by David Fickling Books at £5.99. He is also the editor of **Black Arts** by Andrew Prentice and Jonathan Weil, (978-1849921329) also published by David Fickling Books, and shortlisted for the 2013 Branford Boase Award.

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