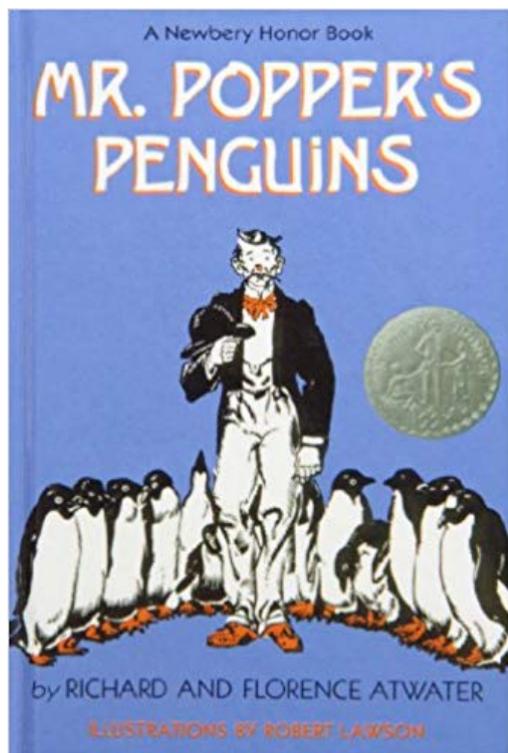


Mr. Popper's Penguins *by* Robert Lawson, Richard Atwater



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ISBN: 143520493X

ISBN13: 978-1435204935

Author: Robert Lawson, Richard Atwater

Book title: Mr. Popper's Penguins

Publisher: Paw Prints 2007-06-28 (June 28, 2007)

Language: English

Category: Animals

Size PDF version: 1360 kb

Size ePUB version: 1201 kb

Size FB2 version: 1124 kb

Other formats: lrf lit docx mbr

Mr. Popper's Penguins is one of the handful of American books for children that has attained the status of a classic. First published in 1938, this story of a housepainter who is sent a male penguin by the great Admiral Drake, and who, thanks to the arrival of a female penguin, soon has twelve penguins living in his house, has amused and enchanted generations of children and their parents.



Reviews of the *Mr. Popper's Penguins* *by* Robert Lawson, Richard Atwater

Gavirim

I read this book out loud to my family, which includes hubby, a teen boy, and a tween girl. We each giggled at least once, including my very serious husband. I knew it had the stamp of approval when we finished chapter 19 of 20 and there was a collective groan when I read the title of the 20th and last chapter, but put the book down for the next night. We read one chapter each evening, or about 15-20 minutes if there were no chapter delineations, as in some other books. That chapter 20 title indicated that the end was coming for Mr. Popper's Penguins.

Last night we read the last chapter. Sigh. I wasn't ready for it to be over. If you read the Kindle copy of the book, be sure to read the end-of-book matter. There are pictures of the Atwater family, and an explanation of how this book came to be. I'm SO glad Mrs. Atwater made some realistic changes to the book before it was published after Mr. Atwater's death. What she did turned it into the award-winning classic that it is, a must-read for all ages.

This book was an assigned read-aloud for our homeschool curriculum, but we set it aside in a big stack of books to be read later, since it was just for enjoyment and not really related to other readings and assignments in the curriculum at the time. I'm so glad we waited, because now it would be remembered forever. It was very different from the Jim Carrey movie (also fabulous), so read this and enjoy a completely different story. Pretty much the only things relating the book and movie were the character names and the plethora of penguins!

Enjoy some time with your family and read aloud!

Fearlesshunter

I had never read this silly little book until it was on sale for Kindle and I decided to read it at bedtime with my eight-year-old son. We found its whimsical and bizarre story charming and had a great time with it. While the book's central plot ends in an abrupt deus-ex-machina and I was hoping for a bit more of a pleasant epilogue, we enjoyed our time with it. Looking forward to watching the movie with him (which I actually heard wasn't so great). Still, the turn-of-the-century explorer trope is used wildly in this book, but the fun part is that it is a book that never takes itself seriously, so it is the perfect short-chaptered before bedtime book that is a lot of fun to read as we get snoozy. Captivating illustrations throughout.

Doomwarden

My Four-Year-Old is just beginning to be interested in having chapter books read to her. But as she gets stressed out by conflict of any sort, it's kind of tough finding good candidates for her. This is a winner.

For those of you who haven't read the book, the basic premise is that a house painter who spends his off-hours reading about (and writing to) explorers in the South Pole receives a penguin in the mail from one of those explorers. Since his work is over for the winter, he becomes very involved in the comfort and care of said penguin (and the eleven other penguins that quickly follow). In the end, he transforms his basement into an ice rink (an idea my daughter wholeheartedly supports, by the way), and spends more than his wife ever thought possible on fish and canned shrimp.

I won't tell you how an out-of-work house painter manages to pay for all that (wouldn't want to spoil the ending), but I will say that the process is highly entertaining for all involved. I found myself looking forward to each night's installment of Mr. Popper nearly as much as The Four-Year-Old.

Although I personally found the ending to be highly improbable, The Four-Year-Old saw nothing at all the matter with it--except for that little bit of unpleasantness with the policemen and firemen--and has spent many a happy evening reenacting the finale in the bathtub.

And now, if you will excuse me, I need to go read Mr. Popper's Penguins to The Four-Year-Old again. I promised her I would as soon as I finished writing the review.

(Excerpted from review posted on my blog: Caterpickles-Scientific & Linguistic Engagement with a 4-Year-Old Mind)

Cordalas

This is a short, fun, and completely fantastical tale for children. While the book shows its age, unsurprising given that the book was written more than seventy years ago, this book is best enjoyed if read by an adult to a child.

Ignore the modern movie adaptation of the book, and you will find the story is very simple. There are none of the emotional, unresolved issues that run through every member of the family in the movie. Mr. Popper was a forgetful house painter who must have painted every house in Stillwater, sometimes many times over. When he was not working, which was the winter months, he had all the time to sit in his chair and read about the Antarctic. He even wrote to Admiral Drake, a famous explorer, and to his surprise, one day he found a rather large package arrive by express mail, with a live penguin inside. From there begins the delightful adventure and episodes of slapstick humour when Mr. Popper tries to convince a service man to drill holes in a refrigerator and put a handle inside one, or when he calls City Hall to try and find out if a license is needed to keep a penguin. In the early decades of the twentieth century, it is not that surprising that people would not have heard of penguins. The cute birds are after all found only in Antarctica.

The book is a happy tale, though you do wonder sometimes just how much the penguins would have liked being outside their native home of Antarctica. But then again, you have to remind yourself that this is a seventy five year old book. Mr. Popper is a fairly uni-dimensional man, a quiet man, a good husband and a good father, and most of all, a good penguin keeper. There are no villains in this book, at least none that are downright evil or mean.

The book, in my opinion, given how pervasive digital animation movies have become, may not appeal to older children. That is the reason I said at the beginning of my review that this book may be best enjoyed if read by an adult to young children.

If you buy the e-book version, you also get a short biography of the author, Richard Atwater, and his wife and collaborator, Florence Atwater, along with nine photographs.

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