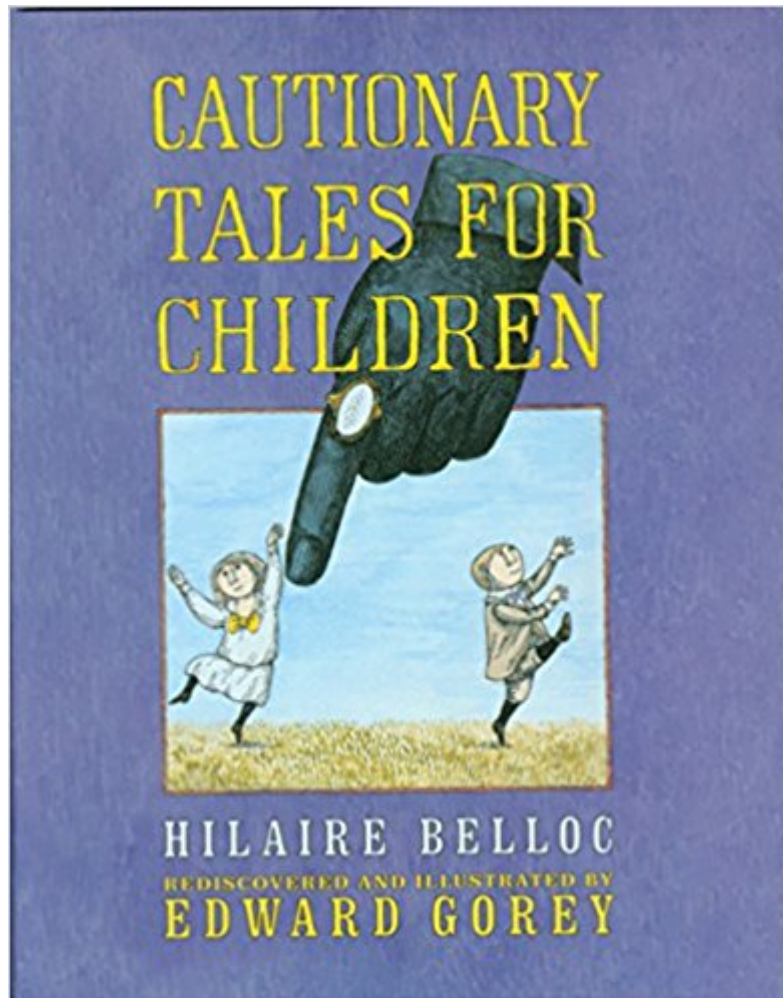




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Cautionary Tales For Children



Synopsis

For readers of any age, a witty and strikingly irreverent collection of moral guidance— Most notable among prolific English satirist Hilaire Belloc's writings are the sharp and clever admonishments he composed for children. Collected here and illustrated to wonderful haunting effect by Edward Gorey, these short, funny pieces offer moral instruction for all types of mischief makers—from a certain young Jim, "who ran away from his nurse and was eaten by a lion," to the tale of Matilda, "who told lies and was burned to death"—and add up to a delightful read for any fan of Roald Dahl or Shel Silverstein.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 59 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #238,982 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #38 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Art of Comics and Manga #53 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Limericks & Humorous Verse #89 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Humorous

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

Customer Reviews

Adult/High School-Tales is written in the style of a picture book, with sprightly little rhymes that speak of the foibles of children and the horrible consequences thereof. First penned nearly a century ago, the sort of story that Belloc parodies continues to be written today and read to youngsters, but readers who are more sophisticated will better appreciate these tales of disproportionate punishment. Children are whimsically eaten by lions or consigned to life as a bootblack for their sins-or, by contrast, a boy who fires a loaded gun at his sister is reprimanded sternly. Gorey's artfully antiquated style exactly fits Belloc's writing and brings this edition to life-a single pen-and-ink line shows the sister's satisfaction at hearing her brother called to task. The

previously unpublished illustrations meticulously convey texture, such as the clothing of the myriad physicians called in to help poor Henry King who swallowed string, and the expressions of the self-satisfied adults seem so earnestly and seriously drawn as to make the whole that much more humorous. The art is refined and genteel-never gory. Teenagers will enjoy this quick and cathartic read. Paul Brink, Fairfax County Public Library System, VA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gorey didn't just illustrate these tales by major English literatus Belloc; he is credited with rediscovering them. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

My rating is missing a few stars, for this book is missing a few chapters. It's abridged, though you won't find that in the description or anywhere on the actual volume itself. Included in this delightfully illustrated volume are the following short stories, all told in verse: Jim, Who ran away from his Nurse, and was eaten by a Lion. Henry King, Who chewed bits of String, and was early cut off in Dreadful Agonies. Matilda, Who told Lies, and was Burned to Death. Franklin Hyde, Who caroused in the Dirt and was corrected by His Uncle. Godolphin Horne, Who was cursed with the Sin of Pride, and Became a Boot-Black. Algernon, Who played with a Loaded Gun, and, on missing his Sister was reprimanded by his Father. Hildebrand, Who was frightened by a Passing Motor, and was brought to Reason. However, the proper, full text by Hilaire Belloc, also ought include the following additional four stories (or five, depending on how you count poor Lundy.): Lord Lundy, Who was too Freely Moved to Tears, and thereby ruined his Political Career. Lord Lundy (SECOND CANTO) Rebecca, Who slammed Doors for Fun and Perished Miserably. George, Who played with a Dangerous Toy, and suffered a Catastrophe of considerable Dimensions. Charles Augustus Fortescue, Who always Did what was Right, and so accumulated an Immense Fortune. The last of which stories, about Charles, seems not to fit with Gorey's somewhat gory themed books, for it contains the lone story of redemption, a lone example of exemplary virtue in a child. It's nice to end on a high note. My favorite story, that of Rebecca (who perished miserably) you will have to get from a different volume. (You can find the full thing on Project Gutenberg's website, for the story with original illustrations is out of copyright.)

Belloc would be angry with this: the original edition was interspersed with illustrations vital to the verse, eg "...she looked like this" where "this" showed Rebecca looking something like a pancake. More seriously, the transcribers have omitted parts of verses, thereby destroying Belloc's couplets.

The introduction in poem form says it all. Is this book true? And is it True? It is not True. And if it were it wouldn't do, For people such as me and you Who pretty nearly all day long Are doing something rather wrong. Because if things were really so, You would have perished long ago. These poems are "not the nicest things you ever saw." And mostly parents will think they're not right for children to read. But the children may enjoy them and laugh along, for they know that life isn't all peaches and cream. I mean, a disobedient boy named Jim being eaten by a lion at the zoo, beginning at the boy's feet and working upward! Let that be a lesson to you, young reader, not to be disobedient. Stick with your parents when they tell you to do so. How about Henry King who chewed and swallowed string? Why, he became all tied up in knots inside and the physicians couldn't do anything about it. So the poor boy died. Then there's Matilda who cried FIRE and brought the firetrucks to her house. And the time she again cried FIRE when there was a fire--well, guess the rest. So if you and your kids can stand to face reality, this book has it in singing cadence, clever rhymes and spades (what you use to dig graves with.)

One wonders who, with options wide would name their screaming, new born baby Clyde? Or Even Hilaire -- a name so florid, French, and rude, Seems pre-destined to start a feud. Or Inspire a Belle Edward of France and also quids, to scribble moral poems to reckless, dirty kids. But Scribble poems Hilaire he did, and books and also letters, This funny man Belloc would often best his betters.

Read these as a child and now reading them to my child. A bit dark and full of humor these poems and tales cleverly impart morality and common sense for children.

I've been able to recite "Rebecca" since second grade. This is a collection of accessible verse the whole family will love, that may teach the kiddies a thing or two.

Most of the reviews here are for the Edward Gorey version of Cautionary Tales. That's a really fun book, but readers should know that Belloc's little poems are a delight even without the pictures. Kids absolutely love them and are shocked by their wit. These poems give kids credit for being sharp enough get the joke---and not need absolutely everything sugar coated. When my daughter was six she was told to come to school with a poem to recite. Most of the kids had nursery rhymes or well known American poems. My daughter brought Belloc's The Lion and The Tiger. The teacher, who knew nothing was the poems, got a huge kick out of them, especially The Tiger with its dry

recommendation that "mother's of large families who heed to common sense, will find a tiger well repays the trouble, and expense."

This is one of those books that should be required reading for all parents. The humor is pure British...i.e. very droll. I first encountered it over 30 years ago when my own children were young and I have forgotten the times I was asked to read it to them at their bedsides. I won't say more because I do not wish to spoil your fun when you do read the book. I will say that if you like Dr. Suess, you will love Hillaire Belloc.

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