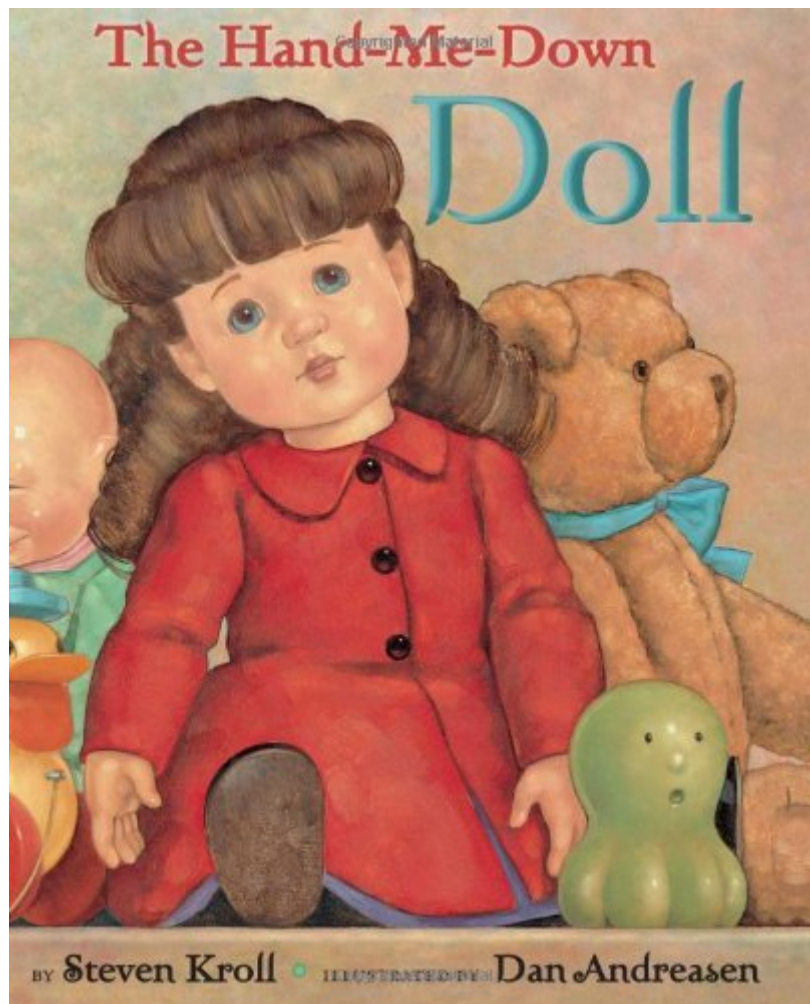


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The Hand-Me-Down Doll



Synopsis

A beautiful doll with long, dark curls and a velvet coat has been passed from owner to owner: a spoiled little girl, a farmer and his wife, a woman who works the ring-toss booth at a county fair, a chauffeur, a waiter, and a dirty-faced boy. Keep me and love me and give me a name, begs the doll. Finally, her luck changes when she meets a little girl who appreciates her and takes her home. Originally published in 1983, the slightly shortened text is beautifully interpreted in Dan Andreasen's nostalgic oil-painted illustrations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This sweet story follows the journey of a pretty little doll who yearns to find a home, be loved, and be given a name. Her journey begins on a sad note - she is bought for the entertainment of a spoiled little girl who already has too many toys, and is consigned to a shelf, where she sits collecting dust for a while before she is given away to someone else. The poor, frightened doll wonders if she will ever find a loving home, and just when all hope seems lost, something unexpected happens and the hand-me down doll finds someone to love her. The story engaged my seven-year-old daughter's attention and in fact we were both enraptured by the doll's story. The

beautiful illustrations enhance the story and make the doll seem like a living character. This is a wonderful, poignant story that will appeal to young girls who love dolls.

My 4 year old daughter loves this book. The first read was a little tough to get through because my daughter was so distressed by the doll's misfortune, but she loved the ending. Now she wants to hear it over and over. I like this story because I think it opens the door to a discussion about materialism, by showing that having one special toy can be more meaningful than having so many toys that they sit unused. The book also has lovely, old-timey illustrations that draw in the reader. Worth picking up, especially for a girl who loves dolls.

There are two ways to look at this book. The first way is the surface view - it is a story about a doll who is given to a child who doesn't appreciate her. On that level, it can teach children about passing toys on to those in need, particularly children who have too much. But there is a deeper parallel I read here, if you put yourself in the place of the doll. Sometimes we feel unappreciated and unwanted. But the ending for the doll is our ending as well, there will come a day when we find our true purpose and will have the opportunity to be complete. In that context, it is a Cinderella story, although deeply hidden. As a pastor, I can see an even deeper parable here. We are only happy when we find our true owner, the one who redeems us, gives us a name, and treasures us. I have added it to my collection of parables to keep on hand.

This book is so bittersweet. It's a lovely story about a doll finding a home, but the whole story is about that search. The doll is given emotions, and one can't help but feel sad along with her, since all she wants is a friend. In the story, the doll, brand new, is given to a girl who is very spoiled and overindulged. She has absolutely no appreciation for the doll, and refuses to name her or play with her. Through a series of events, the doll exchanges hands a few times, first being used as a decoration for farmers, and a prize at a ring toss booth. All she wants, as she's passed from person to person, is to have a friend and a name, but she finds herself primarily in the hands of adults, rather than children. The oil paintings that accompany the story are beautiful and realistic. The doll is given subtle facial expressions that help convey the feelings in the book. The book ends happily, but I don't want to give away the ending. It's a story that could be appreciated by adult doll collectors as much as children; in fact, perhaps more so due to the overarching sadness present in it. It somewhat reminded me of The Velveteen Rabbit.

When I was a child there was a certain moralistic flavor to some children's stories and books that were designed with the goal of improving children's behavior. Instead they were guilt producing. I looked at the other reviews and I am definitely in the minority, but this story came across that way to me. The original owner of the doll in this story was "a spoiled little girl named Glenda" who had more toys than she could appreciate. Glenda eventually gives away this doll that she doesn't play with. Why could this not be portrayed as an act of generosity instead of an apathetic action? So it goes through the story as the doll passes through the hands of a number of adults and "a dirty-faced boy." Finally the doll ends up in the hands of a girl who will love her. Of course the main plot of the story is the travels of the doll from hand to hand until she reaches the hands of a girl who will love her. However, it seems like one of the points of this story is that children should appreciate what they have; but couldn't this point be made in a positive way with positive examples? I am not a fan of this book and would not buy this for a child. It seems to me that great children's books are filled with good role models and motivated by heroic or sacrificial examples rather than by negative examples.

I read this book to my 3-Year-old granddaughter, who is at the age where she devours books. She loves picture books and enjoys having favorite stories read over and over. But she's game to hear new stories as well. I wasn't sure how she would take to "The Hand-Me-Down Doll" since the sad-faced doll goes through assorted trials before finding a happy home with the right person. The story is simple, yet memorable. One of the main reasons both she and I like the book is its lush illustrations by Dan Andreasen, which remind me of old-style, detailed picture books from when I was a child. This "retro" look may appeal more to parents or grandparents than kids themselves, but the pictures definitely make the story come alive. The proof of the book's effectiveness is the fact that my granddaughter asked to hear it again, right away. She's made similar requests for books that especially strike her fancy. This book has become a welcome addition to her ever-growing home library.

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