



# The Adventures of Johnny Chuck

*Thornton W. Burgess*

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## **The Adventures of Johnny Chuck** Thornton W. Burgess

Spring has arrived at the Green Meadow and Johnny Chuck is strangely discontent. On a whim, he offers Jimmy Skunk his house and then wanders off. Along the way, he gets into a fight with a strange woodchuck and, after a bruising battle, chases the intruder off. At that point, Johnny is feeling rather unconquerable — that is, until Polly Chuck uses her feminine charms to capture his heart. Before long, the two are happily keeping house in a burrow in the old orchard.

Thornton W. Burgess, the author of many delightful classics for children, draws young readers into a timeless world of woodland creatures, teaching children important lessons about nature by basing the animals' actions and adventures on actual wildlife behavior. Six charming illustrations by Thea Kliros, based on Harrison Cady originals, enhance a story sure to delight young animal and nature lovers.

## **The Adventures of Johnny Chuck Details**

Date : Published January 6th 1995 by Dover Publications (first published 1913)

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Author : Thornton W. Burgess

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## **From Reader Review The Adventures of Johnny Chuck for online ebook**

### **R.A. Danger says**

This is one of the better books of this series. Johnny Chuck goes from being a journey chuck to trying to win the heart of a timid lady chuck even then Johnny Chuck has to be careful of enemies. In the end Johnny Chuck doesn't feel dissatisfied with his house and where he lived anymore. I'll just let you find out what happens in the book.

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### **Boyschool says**

#### **Darling**

Such a darling little book. 2 chapters at bedtime is just right for 3-10 year olds. Everything is sweet and pure and innocent including wonderful lessons and morals!

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### **Emma Filbrun says**

Johnny Chuck is feeling very discontented this spring. When Jimmy Skunk tells him what a nice house he has, he snaps back that Jimmy Skunk can have it—and stomps off in a huff to find another place to live! Not until he meets Polly Chuck does he realize what his real problem was, and now it is solved. He has a new problem, though: can he keep Reddy Fox and Redtail the Hawk from discovering his new home and babies?

Read my full review [here](#).

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### **Jonathan Marshall says**

#### **The Burgess Books**

This is a phrase that brings a smile to my face as often as I hear it. As a young child, I would lose myself for hours in the simple world of the wood and pond inhabited by Little Joe Otter, Buster Bear, Grandfather Frog, and terrorized by Farmer Brown's Boy. I can remember the very shelf, even the exact spot in the little library in Felton, CA where these books were kept. I would return practically every week with a new armload to last me until our next trip to the library. Often I would carry out stories that I read several times before, just so I could once again escape into this imaginary world of furry mischief.

I remember these books well in concept, though the specifics of most of the stories elude me. It was easily fifteen years ago when I began reading them and has been over a decade since I last picked up one of Burgess' stories to read it. That being said, this review is being written as a look back.

These stories are very simple and very fun. Of course, they are children's literature, so that's to be expected, but these stories strike me as especially so. Even still, I can remember some fascinating things I gleaned between the their covers.

For one thing, Burgess did a fantastic job of presenting the ideas of persepective and motivation in simplistic terms. For example, "The Adventures of Danny Field Mouse" would cast Old Man Coyote as a vicious, mean creature wishing to prey on Danny and his friends and family. Yet, pick up instead "The Adventures of Old Man Coyote" and you'll see that when the story is told with him as the protagonist, those pesky field mice are annoying and useful for little more than a snack. After reading both books, you're no more inclined to think of Old Man Coyote as a villian than you are to think of Danny Field Mouse as a pest that should be exterminated. (Note: This is a generic example. I do not recall if Old Man Coyote plays a role in Danny Field Mouse's story or the other way around, but this concept was presented several times. It made an impression on me.)

The only characters consistantly presented as antagonists were Farmer Brown and his boy. This would be one of the only things that I chalk up as odd, or maybe just a little "off" in these books. Humans and their influence on nature are presented as a negative influence on nature and animals - always. It's interesting to note though that while humans are seen as a negative, humanity is lauded and held up as virtuous. All of the animals take on not only human personalities but characteristics, traits, and mannerisms. From a frog with a monocle and an otter with a handkerchief tied to a stick, to a busy-body Jay and a reclusive owl who desires only to be left alone, humanity and it's traits keep cropping up.

Which would be another thing of value I feel that I saw in the Burgess books. These stories are full of social interaction and personality conflicts, even if they are charicatured more often than not. We see over and over again a working out of peace, if not harmony, between conflicting personalities. It may not always be easy to point out a scripture to reinforce the lesson implied, but social harmony is presented and more often than not, resolution is through reconciliation, forgiveness, or a similar method that is not only laudable, but distinctly Christian in action if not motivation.

All in all, the world created by Thornton W. Burgess is imaginative, innocent, fun, and educational. My reccomendation? Grab a handful from your local library, gather a group of kids as an excuse, and lose yourselves in childhood imaginations as you read aloud the stories that have captivated several generations of young readers with the antics of our furry, albiet elusively human, friends.

(Disclaimers: As I said, it has been over a decade since I actually read one of Burgess' books. As such, there may be a specific example that's a little off in this review or something that I would have noticed as an adult that my childhood memories are missing. Also, all of these books say I read them in 1998. While I'm certain I read several of them that year, I'm sure I read some before and after that date as well.)

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**momma.hailey says**

Incredible! It truly does not get any better when it comes to children's literature.

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**Ashley Jacobson says**

Cute story, but not as fun or relatable as Reddy Fox. The kids lost interest quickly. The main character gets married and has a family, not something they relate to. And the situations aren't nearly as exciting. But there are good lessons at the end, about people (or animals ?) who seem bad not being all bad. And about obedience. So good, but not great.

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## **Jason says**

2.5 stars rounded up to three, but it was a close thing. Close to staying at two, that is.

April second was International Children's Book Day, and this one won out for me this year. I think I have a 1941 version (it looks like it could be that old). It was on my shelf as a child, and I think it was my mother's when she was a girl. She agrees that it wasn't exactly riveting. I remember trying to read this in elementary school and just not getting hooked. I wasn't hooked this time either, but it's easy reading, and it's a good thing International Children's Book Day falls at the same time that tax season is at its worst, and I can use that as an excuse to tackle light reading. This was 191 pages, but it has plenty of pictures, is large print, and on small pages. It took me five days. Any other time of year I could've gotten this done in maybe an hour or two in one sitting.

I'm not exactly sure what the target audience for this book is. The writing style indicates that it's for very young readers. Several words and sentences are repeated which indicates an effort to further a child's vocabulary and spelling. However there are situations which only an older reader or adult would appreciate. For example, when Johnny Chuck is looking for a house for him and Polly Chuck, Polly keeps changing her mind about the site as soon as Johnny starts digging which is just like a wife (this was written in 1913). I guess it's like the old Looney Tunes cartoons; kids would see this as funny in one way whereas adults would pick up on an extra layer of humor.

I wasn't sure if I was going to make it through the first chapter without frowning up. Take this (please!):

And then gentle Sister South Wind arrived. She came in the night, and in the morning there she was, hard at work making the Green Meadows and the Green Forest ready for Mistress Spring. She broke the icy bands that had bound the Smiling Pool and the Laughing Brook so long; and the Smiling Pool began to smile once more, and the Laughing Brook to gurgle and then to laugh and finally to sing merrily.

She touched the little banks of snow that remained, and straightway they melted and disappeared. She kissed the eight babies of Unc' Billy Possum, and they kicked off the bedclothes under which old Mrs. Possum had tucked them and scrambled out of the big hollow tree to play.

She peeped in at the door of Johnny Chuck and called softly, and Johnny Chuck awoke from his long sleep and yawned and began to think about getting up. She knocked at the door of Digger the Badger, and Digger awoke. She tickled the nose of Striped Chipmunk, who was about half awake, and Striped Chipmunk sneezed and then he hopped out of bed and hurried up to his doorway to shout good morning after her, as she hurried over to see if Bobby Coon was still sleeping.

Well, isn't that so cute you could just shit? Luckily that kind of thing was few and far between, but it made me think of Dumbledore's commentary in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* when he's describing Beatrix Bloxam's efforts to rewrite some old stories "according to her ideals, which she expressed as *filling the pure minds of our little angels with healthy, happy thoughts, keeping their sweet slumber free of wicked dreams, and protecting the precious flower of their innocence...*"

Mrs. Bloxam's tale has met the same response from generations of Wizarding children: uncontrollable retching, followed by an immediate demand to have the book taken from them and mashed into pulp."

*The Adventures of Johnny Chuck* didn't elicit that response from me, but if the entire thing had been written in the style I sampled above, then I doubt I would've made it to the end. As it is, Johnny Chuck's adventures aren't all that adventurous. He leaves his house to see the world, fights someone at one point, then meets a girl chuck, settles down in a new place, and begins to raise a family. He's quite possessive of his privacy, but he has to deal with an asshole of a bird who likes to create trouble, but the trouble isn't too bad, and the bird eventually decides to not be as much of a dick as he's used to being.

This wasn't a bad book, but I have a hard time seeing kids nowadays appreciating it unless it's read to them when they're really young.

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### **Melissa says**

Ah, young love in the springtime. I could almost visualize the "Nature" program that would follow this same plot as it went along: Johnny Chuck wakes up in springtime refreshed from his hibernation and goes off in search of a mate with whom to start a cute little family of baby chucks. I especially loved how Sammy Jay kept watch over the little family and alerted them to danger!

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### **Carolyn Lind says**

Johnny Chuck, a lovable little fellow, is a favorite among the creatures of pond, field and forest of the Thornton W. Burgess books I have enjoyed since childhood. Rereading more recently, however, I have discovered that common expressions and prejudices that existed in the era when these books were written also found their way into these stories, especially in the treatment of the character, Billy Possum. My copy of the book from Dover Publishers does include illustrations.

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### **Elaine B. says**

Loved these as a child. Wish I could find and buy them today!

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### **Jimyanni says**

The Thornton Burgess series in general is quite an endearing series of children's books, which do a fine job of being readable by young readers and having interesting plots and introducing young people to a variety of

animals in a semi-anthropomorphized way. This particular entry, "The Adventures of Johnny Chuck" is not a bad entry in the series; if it over-romanticizes what happens during mating season, well, it IS a children's book, after all, and if its take on mating season is rather thoroughly sexist, it WAS written over a hundred years ago, so I'm willing to cut it a little slack. It's a fun read for a youngster, or for an older person who is willing to be a child again for the hour or so that it would take to read it, so long as one recognizes that the attitude shown toward Polly Chuck (Johnny's mate) is severely outdated.

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### **Beret says**

I read these books to my grandchildren and they love the simple but exciting stories and animal characters. I have read at least 4 or 5 of them

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