



## **If...**

*Sarah Perry*

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A diving board to creative wordplay, the fascinating picture book *If...* offers a surrealistic view of the natural world. The two-page spreads present artful watercolors paired with such strange possibilities as "If zebras had stars and stripes...", "If the moon were square...", and "If worms had wheels..." Although some of the ideas and pictures are whimsical to the point of being downright creepy ("If caterpillars were toothpaste...", "If toes were teeth..."), the hypotheticals will surely inspire flights of fancy for readers of all ages. What could be more appealing for a 5-year-old than imagining the silliest suppositions and seeing them come to life in realistic paintings?

Sculptor Sarah Perry creates a world to make us stop and think. One of her best illustrations depicts a large, hairy warthog with a sparkling crown and the text, "If ugly were beautiful..." With every *if* idea, the author encourages the kind of mental double take that comes naturally for children. (Ages 4 to 7, and adults, too) --  
*Emilie Coulter*

## If... Details

Date : Published November 2nd 1995 by J. Paul Getty Museum

ISBN : 9780892363216

Author : Sarah Perry

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## **From Reader Review If... for online ebook**

### **Dominick says**

This picture book is a great springboard for the imagination, gorgeously illustrated. The gimmick is a series of surreal ideas (some more surreal than others; e.g. "if cats could fly" is far less bizarre than, say, "if teeth were toes" or "if toothpaste was a caterpillar") designed to inspire imagination. If cats could fly ... what would that mean? What if your hair was made of mice, or if dogs were mountains? Great opportunities for creativity. And the sheer beauty of the art really adds the icing to the cake; this is a splendid book to look at.

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### **Chris Shue says**

I found this children's book challenges readers to use their imagination. The author used many vivid and realistic illustrations in her What if... scenarios. The book was short on words, but heavy in illustrations. A reader can read the short text then discuss the imaginative, fantasy illustration beside it. The illustrations engage the reader to dream up their own imaginary scenario. This type of book could be a great resource to teach young readers how to analyze illustrations. I thought the most colorful page was, what if frogs ate rainbows. The illustrations included humans and animals primarily. The book touched upon minor social issues like, what if ugly was beautiful. Readers are able to come out of their realistic, structured lifestyles, and allowed to think about unrealistic, silly possibilities. I enjoy cracking jokes and being silly with my children, overall this book was right up my alley!

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### **Kit Feral says**

if toes were teeth was so creepy, it was awesome haha. love the creativity and the illustrations were top quality. but this was a horrible bedtime choice, my kids were in stitches!

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### **Eva Kelly says**

Now THIS is a great book! It's all random pictures of what things would be like if they were other things. And you know, a lot of these, I could really see. Like dogs being mountains and clouds being spirits. But you know what? You really start looking twice at your toothbrush when you see the one about if caterpillars were toothpaste. That one is a LITTLE gross.

This one had THE BEST pictures ever and so it's a good one. The best one was about "if you could hold music." Sometimes when a song is really good I feel like I can do that. Like with the "Swan Lake" music. That one feels like you can hold it and carry it around even after it's over. You can hold a CD or an ipad, but that's not the same.

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### **Jessica says**

Had lovely and slightly creepy illustrations.

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**Rachel says**

This is a create book to assist in boosting creativity.

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**Dan says**

Reminded me of Zoom, one of my favorite kiddy (suitable for adults) books.

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**Linda Atkinson says**

To be weeded. So sad :(

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**Matthew says**

This would pair well with Imagine a Day and its accompanying series. It's an effective presentation all prompted by if statements. Might trigger some imaginative writing responses. Worth a look.

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**Carolyn says**

( This was somehow slotted under "comment section" instead of review )

I picked this little gem up for my K/G1 class thinking they might find it interesting. I was blown away. Not only are they interested (every spare moment of "free time" they request "If" and take turns "reading" to each other) they are now completely engaged in their own imaginative writing exercise that has led to "If cats were chocolate", "if markers could dance", "If cars could jump", and "if bears played hopscotch".

The classroom activities are endless if you only use your imagination as creatively as Ms. Perry.

My initial rating was a 4\* but I have since changed to a 5\* given the reaction of my students

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**Rebecca says**

Some of the pictures were creepy.

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## **Emily says**

This is a classy children's picture book, that will astonish and delight a person of any age. Once a child learns the meaning of "if....", the sky is the limit. The "If" statement on each double spread page is on the left, the realized image is on the opposite side, making you wonder which came first: the language or the imagined scene? Perhaps we should all doodle more. "If ants could count..." and here we have a picture of ants crawling in a figure eight (or infinity). "If the moon were square..." and we have a shining cube hanging in a beautiful twilight sky. Children should be free to laugh, say "ewwww" and generally delight in images that sometimes make your imagination soar and sometimes make you feel squeamish and shivery. If...the result is, you want to sit down and draw something, then ... mission accomplished.

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## **KC says**

Cool pictures and can be somewhat creepy for some.

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## **Sydney says**

Picture Book

-Says crazy things and the pictures portray this things. Use in the classroom to get students to think outside of the book.

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## **Sandi Rossman says**

I reviewed this book for the picture book soak category (picture book assignment).

This book takes the imagination on an adventure as the reader's brain is posed with one if statement after another. The if statements cause the reader to ponder amazing thoughts such as "If lightning made rhinos..." The imagination has to stretch far outside the realm of the possible to consider such fantasies.

The visual elements of this book are strong enough to stand alone as a picture book without words because they completely tell the story of the if statements that are written on the pages opposite the images. The pictures are literal representations of the words and have just the right amount of whimsy and humor to them to make the if statements seem like possibilities in the real world. The pictures make me wish the if statements were real.

I couldn't help but smile as I turned each page to find a new picture to make me think about ordinary objects in a completely different light. Since I often have a hard time visualizing what I can put into words, this book was perfect for me because it let the creative side of my brain revel in stunning images that can never be possible in the natural world or that I could never dream up in a million years.

Children are full of questions at any age. I would use this book in the classroom to help students think creatively before a creative writing assignment. This book lets children know that they can dream to create something new in the world. This would also be a good book to read before starting an art project to get kids'

thinking about new ideas and concepts before creating art. I also think this would be a great book to share with students if you had an extra few minutes at the end of class. It would end the class on a happy note!

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