



Bird, Balloon, Bear

Il Sung Na

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A fresh and heartwarming new story from Il Sung Na about finding the courage to make a friend.

Bird is new to the forest, and he's looking for a friend. Bear could use a friend, too.

But Bird is too shy to introduce himself. Just as he musters the courage to say hello . . . it's too late! Bear has already found a friend: a bright, shiny red balloon.

Has Bird missed his chance?

From the acclaimed Il Sung Na comes a charming and beautifully illustrated story about courage, kindness, and friendship.

Peek inside the jacket for a special poster!

Praise for Il Sung Na:

"Na brings fresh energy to the familiar. With a coloring style that feels as if someone took a firecracker to a box of crayons, Na makes turtle shells as dynamic as a peacock's plumage." --*The New York Times (The Opposite Zoo)*

"Il Sung Na's illustrative art is so joyous, so jubilantly colorful, it feels celebratory and poetic even when the story is simple and spare." --*The Boston Globe (A Book of Babies)*

★ "[A] grand read-aloud." --*Kirkus Reviews, Starred (Welcome Home, Bear)*

★ "It's the rare picture book that, upon arrival, feels as though it has been around for years already; Na's belongs to this group." --*Publishers Weekly, Starred (A Book of Sleep)*

★ "Vibrant [and] whimsical." --*School Library Journal, Starred (Snow Rabbit, Spring Rabbit)*

Bird, Balloon, Bear Details

Date : Published March 14th 2017 by Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers

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Author : Il Sung Na

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From Reader Review Bird, Balloon, Bear for online ebook

Hannah says

Na has a knack for taking a simple concept and elevating it to the sublime. In BIRD, BALLOON, BEAR, friendship is the concept, and Na uses it to create an unbelievably gorgeous meditation on shyness, courage, and acceptance. With skillful page turns, brilliant use of white space, and energetic (bright, broad strokes of color) yet gentle (lots of curved shapes and smiling faces) illustrations, Na has crafted a timeless tale for even the littlest (and the shyest) friends to enjoy.

Robyn Brown says

It's a charming, gentle story that evokes a subtle poignancy from beginning to end, not only through the simplicity of the text, but by the divine illustrations. However, I'm not sure Miss 3 quite appreciated the friendship developing between Bear and Bird after the balloon popped, so perhaps it might be more suitable for a slightly older child. However, for me, just another book I love.

Elaine says

So cute! <3

Christine Irvin says

It's Bird's first day in the forest. She is looking for a friend. She sees Bear. Bird wants to introduce herself but she's too shy. Before she can work up the nerve to say, "Hello," Bear has already found a friend. A big, red Balloon floats by Bear and he starts playing with it. Bear and Balloon play all day long. Poor Bird can only sit and watch. Will she ever get a chance to be friends with Bear?

Hannah Hayes says

This is a sweet story about a bird and bear who need friends. However before the bird has a chance to talk to the bear, the bear finds a big red balloon to play with. The bird is afraid he has missed his chance to be friends with the bear but you can never have too many good friends! I think this story would speak to shy students and let them know that it is never too late to put yourself out there.

Sara Grochowski says

New Il Sung Na! I never get tired of Na's illustrations and stories. <3

Laura G says

Beautiful illustrations that pop with color against the white pages. The story was (too?) simple, about a bird too shy to make a friend. Eventually, circumstances allow for Bird to become friends with Bear. Bothered me some that there was no growth in Bird's character--she never summoned the courage to seek out a friend; but perhaps this is realistic, and enjoying the friendship is enough.

Katie says

Who hasn't wanted to say hello to a potential new friend, but found themselves too nervous? Who hasn't felt they were too late, that the other kids (or adults) already had friends and wouldn't welcome another person? That is the situation Bird finds himself in. Bird is new to the forest and goes out looking for a friend. But the person he sees is Bear, makes a friend before Bird can work up the courage to say hello. He stands in the background and watches Bear and Balloon have fun together, until Balloon is swept away in the wind. Bird's attempt to catch Balloon ends with the Balloon popping. Here I became a little worried. Wouldn't Bear be upset that Bird popped Balloon? But no! Bear simply greets Bird, and they become friends and play together. No reason for worry, no cause for anxiety, just a friendly bear. All is good in the world at the end of the story.

Meg says

I recognized Il Sung Na's name from 'The Dreamer' and excitedly picked up this book with high hopes. Only to find... I am not as enchanted by this author/illustrator as I want to be.

There are plenty of children's books that involve balloons (and all of their wondrous, problematic characteristics), but this one isn't particularly touching (I'd recommend Pip and Posy and the Big Balloon for that). The illustrations aren't particularly amazing, though this author seems to have fair success in the publishing world.

Unless your child tends toward confusion about the difference between balloons and human beings, I'm not sure I'd recommend this book. Unless they have a real attachment to a stuffed animal, or something like that... perhaps this book could be helpful in such a scenario?

The Library Lady says

The point here to me seems to be "I'm too shy to be a friend, so I'll watch someone else be your friend, and then when they're gone, you might pick me just because I'm there."

Truthfully, Bear is a pretty shallow friend. I assume that if Bird gets eaten by a cat, he will wait a beat, then make friends with Cat.....

Rachel says

The tale starts with a bird. A bird who wants to make friends, but is too shy to do so. As he watches a bear play with his silent friend balloon, bird wants all the more to join in. Then, the little thing gets his chance when the wind lifts the red balloon away. Bird never does find the courage to "make" a friend, but he becomes friends through circumstance. Shy children will understand and relate to this. Words are hard. Because of this, words are appropriately kept to a minimal. The tone is established by the creator's use of white space, and a few pages which are filled with colour. Bird, bear, and the red balloon pop out against this white, and the other predominant hue of bluish green. All three are delightful, and chubby, with very simplistic features. Their story is one to turn to when more traditional "make a friend" books don't fit the child's personality.

Laura Harrison says

There isn't one creation by Il Sung Na I haven't fell madly in love with. Always unusually unique and creative with a whimsy that is difficult to achieve. Can't wait to see what comes next!

Tasha says

This is another beautiful picture book for the smallest of children from this author/illustrator. Bird is new to the forest and hoping to make a friend. He spots Bear but can't quite get up the courage to speak with him. Suddenly though, he sees that Bear has a friend already: a red balloon. Bear plays all day with Balloon, even watching the sunset together. Then one day, a wind gust carries Balloon up into the sky. Bird who has been watching the entire time, tries to rescue Balloon but it's too late. Balloon pops. Over the shreds of the balloon, Bird and Bear finally meet and soon they have become real friends.

This picture book looks at the pressures of trying to make a new friend, the shyness that naturally arises during that time, and how to move beyond it. The use of a balloon as the other friend is very clever, allowing Bear to have a close friend of sorts but also allowing even the youngest child to realize that Bird would always have made a much more fun and compelling friend from the start.

The illustrations are playful and light. Done on white backgrounds, the bright colors shine on the page. The forest is filled with purples, blues and greens while the sunset emerges with yellows and reds. Still, the illustrations are simple and friendly. Bear is round and cuddly while Bird is a burst of red color and quiet inquisitiveness.

The complications of new friendship have never been lovelier. Appropriate for ages 2-4.

Juliana says

This was a sweet, and somewhat sad at times, story of a bird who wanted to make a friend. He found a bear

but the bear was already friends with a balloon. When the bear accidentally loses the balloon, the bird tries to catch it for him and makes friends with him like he wanted to all along.

Erin says

The 16-month-old found this unspeakably hilarious. Pointing at the bird and the bear, he laughed big belly laughs the entire way through. The almost-4-year-old decided it was too depressing.

I found it simple and charming, with elegant illustrations. The ending was simultaneously sad and hopeful.
