

The Lunch Bag Chronicles, April 2011

Grades 2-4 / Ages 7-9.

Review by Suzanne Pierson.

****** /4**

Excerpt of The Lunch Bag Chronicles:

Why do mother kangaroos hate rainy days?

Because the kids have to play inside.

Even if you don't pack lunches in brown paper bags anymore, this wonderful book may inspire you to go looking for some the next time you are shopping. In this combination joke book and family chronicle, author and illustrator Don Sawyer shares some of the special lunch bag messages that he wrote over the years to his two young daughters. The introduction explains that Sawyer wrote and illustrated a message or rhyme each day until his daughters finished Grade 6 – over 1000 lunch bag messages.

I'm tempted to fill this entire review with examples of the jokes and rhymes, but you'll enjoy them more while looking at the colourful pencil crayon drawings that illustrated each lunch bag.

The pages appear to be copies of the actual lunch bags, complete with illustrations, jokes, rhymes and the occasional error and correction (great modelling for would-be writers). Often, the joke is on one page, and you have to turn the page to see the back of the lunch bag with the answer.

In addition, many pages include a brightly coloured section at the bottom with information that explains some of the context of the jokes. For example, the page that asks, "Why do mother kangaroos hate rainy days?" includes the information that "[o]ne year Farish had a great exchange teacher from Australia."

The book is loosely organized into themed sections, such as "animal adventures" and "vampires, cannibals, witches and monsters" – surefire topics for junior jokesters.

Share this with a class, or better still with your own children, and you are sure to hear moans and groans for the puns and tons of laughter for the humour.

Highly Recommended.

Suzanne Pierson is a retired teacher-librarian, currently instructing Librarianship courses at Queen's University in Kingston, ON.

To comment on this title or this review, send mail to cm@umanitoba.ca.

Copyright © the Manitoba Library Association. Reproduction for personal use is permitted only if this copyright notice is maintained. Any other reproduction is prohibited without permission.