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When Joseph's mother comes home, says his father, things are going to change. And almost at once they do - in the weirdest of ways . . .

Changes Details

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Rebecca says

This book was okay. It has some intelligent ideas which may be a stroke of genius, but the ideas are delivered in a bit of an obscure way which doesn't suit every reader. Sadly we fell in to the "didn't really get it" category.

A little boy is told things are going to change, and so he starts noticing obscure changes around the house which are impossible but really creative and result in fun pictures for us! The end result however was a little bit flat, not really explaining the boys creative mind/unusual findings, and left us a little disappointed.

The illustrations however really are such great fun and were enough to keep us interested, but the story line just sadly wasn't for us.

ARC provided free from the publishers in exchange for an honest review.

Jacqueline Field says

Changes By Anthony Browne

Joseph is a boy who lives with his mother and father. When Joseph is at home one day he tells Joseph that things are going to change when his mother gets home. His father left the house so while he was gone Joseph decided to explore all his favourite and familiar places. He looked in the kitchen and couldn't see any change, he looked in the living room, his bedroom and even outside in the garden but everything seemed the same to him. Joseph couldn't understand what his father meant. Joseph gave up on exploring the house and went to his bedroom switched the light off and laid in his bed. Then all of a sudden his bedroom door opens and his father and mother switch on the light and they are standing at his door with a new baby sister.

I used this book on SBT1 to describe to a year two class about the process of change for a PSHCE lesson. I wanted the pupils to understand that change wasn't a negative process and through change we sometimes gain a positive outcome. The pupils loved the story as they were excited to discover what the change for Joseph was. They also after the story had stories of their own to tell about when they gained a brother or a sister or times when they went through positive change.

Lauren Grosch says

Changes made me feel really uncomfortable at first. Joseph's dad tells him that things are going to change when his mom gets home. Then he notices that the kettle looks like a cat, a shoe turns into a bird, the couch turns into an alligator and the chair turns into a gorilla. Things don't stop there though. The cat's tail turns into a snake and the alligator's tail turns into a banana. Joseph decides he should go outside. Things seem normal at first but his soccer ball turns into an egg, his bike wheel turns into an apple, the broom handle turns into a broom handle and the actual broom turns into a porcupine. He goes into his room and turns the light

off so he can't see the weird things going on around him. When his parents get home, they have a new baby. When I got to the end of the book and realized what it was about, it made me think of when my mom told me she was pregnant with my little brother. She took me out for ice cream and told me someone new was coming to live with us. My first reaction was that it was my grandpa (I have no idea why, I was only 7) so I started preparing for my grandpa to come live with us. I think Anthony Browne came up with a really creative way to show how a new sibling can effect older children. Even though the book made me feel uncomfortable at first, I really enjoyed reading it. The pictures are all done very realistically which makes the story feel more real.

Fatheha Begum says

Another Anthony Browne's surreal book, with great imagery and quirky pictures. This book is about a young boy who is waiting for something big to change. His father had told him that something will change before he left the house. As the boy waits in the house alone, he feels everything changes around him. The boy happens to imagine that objects around the house change into animals and other things...

But what is actually going to change? What did the father mean by change? Is the boy imagining things or is things are actually changing around him?

Well what we get to find out is that his father and mother bring home a new baby. This is definitely going to change things around the house for sure. As we all may have experienced this, we should all know how it is to feel when we get a new baby sister or brother in the house. It can be the most exciting of times, also it may be the biggest change. Parents tend to be very busy with the new child that they almost forget to give attention to the other child.

It is a great book to introduce to children and can discuss new things happening in their life. You can talk about feelings of how they felt when something new happened or the change that took place

Andy Verschoyle says

read today to year 1 - the pictures work very well with a large group - 27 kids - but the beautiful details would be great for a solo read. the language is minimal its all about the striking images.

simple family message and the class fell silent when they saw the baby - a surprise to all of them!

Alexandra says

Este libro representa muy bien a todos los cambios que nos enfrentamos cuando llega un nuevo integrante a la familia, me gusto mucho lo que logró Anthony con esta historia.

Shanaz Khan says

This book is about a boy called Joseph who notices changes around his home. It starts off with Joseph

noticing something strange about the kettle, the picture that represents the kettle has a cat's tail coming out from the side. As the story goes on Joseph walks around the house and outside to see what he can understand about his father stating that 'things are going to change'.

There are various pictures to demonstrate changes in the house. The pictures would appear funny to a young reader however I don't think a young child would easily grasp the concept of the fact that having a new baby would change the household without having it been explained to. The images are quite scary that relates to 'changes' however if I was to read this to a class I would talk about the positiveness of 'changes' and relate it to seasons changing, growing up there are changes etc. I think a young child reading this would enjoy analyzing the pictures as it does go into detail of various changes within the household.

Shereil says

This book is about a young boy who is at home waiting for a big change that his father told him will come when he returns home. While he waits he imagines a number of different objects around the house are various animals instead. He wonders and wonders and in the end the big change turns out to be a new born baby, his little sister. I thought this book was very interesting the way the pictures were so well turned from everyday objects to animals. I think it really showed the vast imagination of children and just how different they might view things. As an adult reader however, I felt the book did not deliver anything spectacular at the end, I had hoped for something bigger to happen. Although that is exactly why this book is not aimed at adults, we are perhaps wanting too much, and a new born baby is such a wonderful and special thing that should be treasured. Children can be excited by small things that adults sometimes take for granted and so it was nice that this book reflected this. Overall, the book was pleasant to read and it was certainly different to some of the picture books I had ever seen growing up. It was great the way the pictures told a story and useful for those who may not be able to read so well.

Ruth says

Typically humorous of Browne. About a new sibling arriving and dad says things are going to change. The child, Joseph doesn't know what this means and starts seeing objects morph into other things, generally animalistic.

Strawberry says

I'm not sure what to say about this very surreal and strange book. Joseph Kaye is waiting at home while his dad has gone to pick up his mum. He's been told things will change but what did his father mean by that? 'Changes' is a large book, a bit bigger than A4 in size and filled with thick glossy pages of illustrations and easy to read text.

As Joseph ponders on the question of what will change, his imagination starts coming up with all sorts of things. First he sees the kettle changing its shape. Before he knows it the kettle's become a cat! Is this what his father meant when he said things were going to change? The whole story follows this similar feel with Joseph left alone to imagine all sorts of things happening.

I really like the illustrations. I've always enjoyed Dali's paintings and Browne's illustrations take on a similar feel. There are lots of different things happening to the objects around Joseph and it's interesting just to look at the pictures and spot all the surreal changes going on. Even some very small objects such as a framed photo on top of the television have hidden fun extras that you may not notice the first time you read this book.

Although the illustrations are good, I'm not sure the story will really be understood by kids and it felt a little strange. I'm going to put a spoiler here by telling you that the ending of the book has a twist: That the 'change' is that Joseph has a new baby sister which his parents bring home for him to meet. This is a good twist but I'm not sure kids will really understand this ending if they are reading it alone.

The illustrations are great in this book and I think many kids will really enjoy looking at the pictures and spotting all the changes that appear, but whether the message in the story will be understood, and whether it's a good book for discussing a new sibling to children I'm not so sure.

-Thanks to Walker books for a free copy (as part of The Anthony Browne Collection).

JINA YU says

The plot of this story follows a typical structure such as beginning, middle, and end. Although many stories start when the protagonists leave their home, this story begins with the change of the main character's situation. As everything goes complicate by changing their shapes, the story goes to its highest point. When the boy turns off the light in order not to see any other changes, it is the climax in this story. Parents' homecoming with a new baby brings a resolution and the story has consonant closure with the combination of structural and psychological closure. There is a psychological closure when the boy regains his family and feels happy with his sister. The structural closure comes with the resolution of problems. This story is told by an omnipresent narrator so Joseph's minds are expressed by texts. However, the narrator does not mention how Joseph feels. Readers can recognize his feelings with illustrations. Sometimes, texts are not related to pictures on a page which creates irony but this book's texts match pictures. The book also contains a lot of symbols which indicate a new baby and a mother. There are a picture of Maria and a holy baby on the wall, a nest with four eggs on the TV screen, a family photo, a soccer ball which turns into an egg and a bird, and all furniture that become animals. As reader read this book again and again, they can find new things, which is amazing to read picturebooks.

Claire Holloway says

I enjoyed this book and many children that have younger siblings will be able to relate to it. Joseph's dad tells him that things are going to change and at this point, his imagination goes wild as he starts imagining all different things that could be changing, such as the sofa turning into a crocodile. At the end of this book, it is revealed that the 'change' in the house is that his mum had a baby and now he is a big brother. The illustrations in this book are very realistic and highlight how children can have very vivid imaginations to think of all the possible things that could happen to explain what his dad said.

Similarly, when my little sister was born, my parents told me that things would be changing in the house because I would have a little sister that would also need looking after. I understood this at the time, but this may be attributed to the fact that I was nearly seven. Some young children, perhaps in reception, may not

understand what changes will occur with a new baby in the house and hence imagine all different things.

Jasmine Longworth says

A book about a small boy getting a new baby sister. Anthony talks about the dad telling the boy that something is going to change, the boy then imagines lots of different changes and animals which could signify what it may be like when this change happens. I think it is a great book to talk to children about a significant change that may be going on in their life.

Becky says

A young boy at home alone all day watches ordinary household objects turn into animals, body parts, and all manner of strange things. Before leaving the boy at home, his father (who, we're told, is going to pick up the boy's mother) told him everything was going to change.

Throughout the spare text, the boy watches the outlandish metamorphoses taking place around him and wonders, "Is this what my father meant?"

Finally, the boy's parents return home. They've been at the hospital, and the big change is a new baby. The end.

I would think twice -- and perhaps more than twice -- before giving this book to most children. Anthony Browne's illustrations are, as usual, so good they seem somehow hyper-realistic. *Changes* is obviously meant to be a fantasy -- who leaves their young child at home in order to go collect one's wife and new baby from the hospital?! -- but Browne's style is so detailed and *real*, I almost felt like I was actually witnessing the fantastic changes (an armchair turns into a gorilla, an electric kettle morphs into a cat, etc.). It was freaky. Spooky!

I'm pretty sure this book would have scared the heck out of me as a kid. I'm willing to bet it would scare plenty of kids today. Home alone with a chair that turns into a huge black gorilla that won't stop staring at you. Freak OUT!

Don't get me wrong, I admire it as I admire all of Browne's books. But I'd be careful about showing it to a particularly sensitive child.

Jonathan Dowell says

This book demonstrates the true power of building up tension. Throughout, Browne illustrates absurd and fantastical objects such as a cat combined with a kettle (a cattle), a bird combined with a shoe, a monkey combined with a chair, and an alligator combined with a banana. Especially after reading books with similar themes, such as Chris Van Allsburg's "Jumanji", the reader is left wondering what the cause of all this madness is because humans, as a general rule, tend to prefer order and reason, and cannot (or will not) accept any other method. Browne, of course, is fully cognizant of this so he gives the reader some leeway by having the narrator mention that Joseph's Father said that "things were going to change". However, this chain of

events was not what the father was referring to, but rather, the introduction of a new baby into the family. The suspense is then alleviated, and the book serves as a great anti-joke.

There are indeed a few clues throughout the book that these actions are not occurring within the realm of reality however. Notably, many of the illustrations are bordered, which gives the reader a sense of detachment from what is happening in the book; it makes it seem as if it were "just a picture". Also, some of the pictures that are not bordered, such as one which depicts Joseph sitting on a wall, show him as being covered by a sea of white. It almost looks like he is either floating or in some sort of dream-world.
