



# **I Must Have Bobo!**

*Eileen Rosenthal , Marc Rosenthal*

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When Willy woke up there was trouble. Where was Bobo? Willy needs Bobo. But, Earl the cat likes Bobo, too. A favorite toy is hard to share...even when it's a sock monkey. With sparse text and a modern-nostalgic vibe, this retro-fun book about friends (sock monkeys) and frenemies (devious cats) is an ode to favorite toys everywhere. Oh, Earl! Leave Bobo alone.

## I Must Have Bobo! Details

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# From Reader Review *I Must Have Bobo!* for online ebook

## Melody says

An adorable story of a boy and a cat, both of whom LOVE LOVE LOVE Bobo the stuffed toy. The boy keeps taking Bobo, then the cat sneaks in and steals him back again. It's minimalist and spare, the illustrations are so cute, and the story so amusing. It's not *The Salamander Room*, it's not Robert McCloskey, but it's nevertheless a keeper.

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## Tandie says

This is so dang cute. A sock monkey named Bobo vs. the kitty cat. Must buy to appease my sock monkey addiction!

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## Barbara says

Willy does everything with his stuffed monkey, Bobo, but he's not the only one in the house who loves Bobo. His cat, Earl, also loves to cuddle up with Bobo. When Willy wakes up one day and can't find his beloved companion, he seaches everywhere before finding Bobo nestled under the covers with Earl. From there on, the battle is on with Willy trying to keep Bobo to himself, and Earl dragging him off. The simple illustrations capture Willy's determination not to share, and Earl's own persistence in sneaking off with Bobo.

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## Betsy says

Picture books in which beloved toys go astray are the heart and soul of the industry. The reasons are infinitely clear. When dealing with a four-year-old reader, you want to present them with a tale that taps into their insecurities and fears without going overboard. Showing them losing their mom or dad would be WAY too serious for the format, and that goes for the family pet as well. Better to keep it low-key. In this way books like *Knuffle Bunny* (in all three of its various incarnations) remains a beloved institution. The newest entrant to the field is the beautifully named *I Must Have Bobo!* by Eileen Rosenthal, illustrated by her husband Marc Rosenthal. Part epic rage against the dying of the light/losing of the toy, part battle of wits between a boy and a cat, *Bobo* is about the kind of struggle that any preschooler can understand. And while I might have put a different ending on it, when it comes to stuffed monkeys, Bobo is where it's at.

Willy wakes up one morning to find there's something wrong. Something, or someONE, missing. Bobo, Willy's stuffed monkey, is always on hand when the boy needs to go down a scary slide or sneak past a large dog. So where is he now? After a quick investigation it becomes clear that Earl, the family housecat, is the unapologetic Bobo snatcher in question. Thus begins a battle of wits between Willy and Earl as each find and take back the beloved Bobo. Finally, when Earl has proved particularly clever, Willy finds the two on the couch and surprisingly enough envelopes BOTH in a big, affectionate hug.

It's a great little readaloud if you're willing to give it your all. I mean, if you intend to read this to a group of

kids then you really have to let your lungs rip with this book. Interestingly, the story begins between a third personal omniscient narrator but after that first sentence of "When Willy woke up, there was trouble" it switches over entirely into Willy's own dialogue. This means that the reader has to embody Willy and his pain. That first cry of "I must have Bobo!" has to come from the heart or you might lose your audience. Plus it's a lot of fun to scream. So really, win-win.

Of course, one thing you really want when you're reading a picture book aloud to a room of kids is a kicking ending. You want something that's gonna stop 'em dead in their little sneaker-wearing tracks. Good endings to picture books can go the surprise twist route (*My Lucky Day*, *Bark George*, etc.) or they can just feel satisfying (*Fortune Cookies*, *Fortunately*). I felt that *I Must Have Bobo* came close to the latter ending. After searching through the home not just crying "Bobo" but also "Earl", Willie finds both pet and toy snuggled on the couch. "Bobo! Earl!" he cries. Then, surprisingly, he drapes himself over both cat and toy. The text reads, "Here's my Bobo." So I fully expected the final page to show a resigned Earl sharing Bobo with his human master with the final line, "And my Earl." Instead, the last page just shows Earl taking off with Bobo yet again. It's not introducing much of anything new, nor does it feel like a conclusive ending. I don't think it's a bad ending necessarily. If you read the book to a kid or a bunch of kids in such a way where it seems like "Here's my Bobo" is the last line then that final picture can be an amusing caper on the piece. Still and all, I can't help but think it would have been stronger with just that final heart tugging "oomph".

The art of Marc Rosenthal has been pared down for this particular picture book, I see. Drawn in pencil and colored digitally, *Bobo* is a minimalist cousin to Mr. Rosenthal's other picture books *Phooey* and *Archie and the Pirates*. Not that it looks unlike his style or anything. Bobo himself bears a stripy-sweater similarity to the aforementioned Archie, a different monkey who wins the affections of a slightly larger cat. But where Archie had a lush tropical island to serve as his backing, *Bobo* sets its story against a cream-colored world. The love triangle of Willy, Earl, and Bobo exists in a universe where only the essentials are required. I had fun watching the facial expressions of the characters as well. Willy is by far the most expressive of the three, Earl reserving his backwards ear displeasure for moments when it truly counts, and Bobo lounges eternally blank-faced through it all.

This particular book would pair well with other lost-to-the-arms-of-another titles like *Olivia . . . and the Missing Toy* or even Lilly's *Purple Plastic Purse*. I don't know how many households in America are bedeviled by pernicious toy-snatching pets, but if you happen to know of one then *I Must Have Bobo* is a must-have title. Personally I would have cranked up the ending a notch or two, but it still makes for a fun preschool read-aloud and a charmer of a book. A husband and wife co-effort that yields adorable results.

For ages 4-8.

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### **Melissa says**

I got surprisingly invested in this battle of wills between Earl and Willy--rooting for Earl all the way. Loved the expressions on the cat, and loved the cat getting the last word. Illustrations of the boy reminded me just a little of Charles Schulz & early Peanuts.

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### **unknown says**

I MUST HAVE BOBO... read to me at least four times in a row every day. I MUST ALSO remove the dust jacket before reading it, but also insist that it be put back on if it isn't there before we start.

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### **karen says**

the wonderful tommy tomato gave me this book, and since i rarely review my picture books, i figured now was a good time to start.

this book is so cute!

it is all about a little boy who cannot function without his stuffed monkey, bobo. i can totally relate - if i have to sleep without my bunny, i become very unhappy. i no longer carry him everywhere with me, as i did my entire freshman year of college (job interviews were fun, let me tell you!) earning me the nickname "bunny girl," but i still have him and love him, and if my cat were to keep stealing him on me, like the cat in this book, there would be problems. oh - who am i kidding - i would think it was adorable. the boy in this book seems to have a problem with sharing bobo with his cat, earl, but i think i would be okay with it. maggie does not seem to like to snuggle with toys as much as i do. she is way more mature than her owner.

i love how bobo seems to make this kid bratty, "BOBO DOESN'T LIKE RAISINS IN HIS OATMEAL!!" "BOBO THOUGHT WE WERE HAVING PANCAKES", but bobo also protects him from scary dogs and buggas. and that is an admirable quality in stuffed pals.

the illustrations are very simple, but i love the frowny expression on earl's face whenever willy takes bobo back. earl will have his vengeance. adorable.

i particularly love that when i typed in the title to review this, goodreads politely asked me, "did you mean **i must have boob??**" goodreads, have you been reading my mail??

when you click the link for "i must have boob," however, it takes you exactly nowhere. way to prank me, goodreads...

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### **Thabata says**

I must confess this was one of those books judged by the cover. Oh, yes. Mr. Marc Rosenthal's illustration of a cat grabbing a monkey by its tail reminded me of my very first cat and his stuffed monkey. Therefore, he fished me right in, there was no denying. The colouring of the pages background is a novelty. The pastel slash baby yellow, so timid in its hue was chosen with much taste. The design, placement of each drawing, was also made with taste and elegance. Albeit I'm not fond of the boy and would very much prefer a book only about the majestic grey Earl the cat and Bobo the stuffed monkey, this is a charming children's book, fun in its own right, worth reading for sure.

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### **Elisabeth says**

This is a heavily requested read-aloud at my house this week. Perfect for preschoolers (Warning! included in

the book are the following scary things: bitey bugs, big slides, and oatmeal WITH raisins). I want a print of the illustration of the boy, Bobo and Earl on the couch together - too sweet.

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### **Candice says**

Willie has a favorite toy - Bobo the sock monkey. Bobo helps Willie with everything. They go down the slide together. Bobo holds Willie's hand when they walk past the big dog. And, just like Willie, Bobo doesn't like raisins in his oatmeal. Somehow Bobo keeps disappearing. It's that evil cat, Earl! The text is minimal, and the illustrations focus on Willie, Bobo, and that despicable Earl. While these three characters are in color, the rest of the picture is outlined in brown on cream pages. This makes for a good effect as the eye is drawn to the Willie and Bobo. And Earl.

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### **Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says**

A boy who is psychologically attached to a toy sock monkey finds it missing one day, only to discover that Earl the cat has taken it. The boy takes it back, only to have Earl sneak off with it again. I'm not sure what the message here is supposed to be. The boy seems to have no thought of sharing. In fact, at one point he builds a "fort" and says "Earl can't come in," which isn't very nice. When the boy has the monkey, Earl the cat watches with a sad look on his face, probably thinking "Why can't we share?" Though I liked the illustrations (Earl looks like my cat Toby), I didn't care for what seemed to be the message of the book (selfishness, no sharing). Maybe I missed something here, but not recommended.

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### **Rebecca says**

Things I like about this book:

- 1) the jacket flap is told in rebus pictures
  - 2) the text style is simple like an early reader
  - 3) Earl has the best guilty cat face
  - 4) it ends in a group hug
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### **Terri says**

"I Must Have Bobo" deals with the age old dilemma of a child (Earl) losing a beloved belonging - in this case, a sock puppet monkey named "Bobo." Earl soon discovers that his pet (a cat?, Earl, is just as attached to Bobo as he is, and whenever Willy sets Bobo down, Earl runs off with him. Every kid can relate to losing something important to him or her. I still think about the day that my mom sold my wooden doll cradle at a garage sale without asking me - when I was in my twenties! In this sense, I think kids will find the story appealing.

The story is told, with the exception of the first line, completely in stream-of-consciousness. We know what Willy is thinking the entire time. I did not find Willy very endearing, so it was hard to invest in the story. He

is a pretty cranky kid - and Rosenthal quite effectively portrays Willy's scowl. I did, however, love the names of all of the characters.

The retro, sparse feel to the illustrations effectively told the story, but not very warm, which may be another reason that the story didn't particularly appeal to me.

There is talk about this book being a Caldecott contender. Hmmm...I would have to disagree. Just so so in my book.

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### **Tatiana says**

A simple yet hilarious short account in the day of a young boy named Willy, his favorite stuffed monkey Bobo, and his naughty cat Earl. The author and illustrator captured the humor of Willy and Earl both fighting for Bobo, both needing Bobo for their own reasons. Willy's upset with Earl is understandable, but you give extra points to Earl for persistently trying to sneak away with Bobo. For ages five and up.

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### **Chelsea Kirkland says**

Willy fights with his mischievous cat over his beloved stuffed animal bobo the monkey. Good for silly ways to think about sharing.

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