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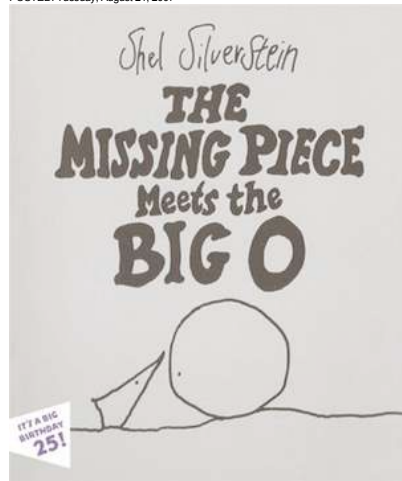
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Reviewing the Classics of Children's Literature - The Missing Piece Meets the Big O

POSTED: Tuesday, August 21, 2007



The Missing Piece Meets the Big O – 25th Anniversary Edition
 Author: Shel Silverstein
 Publisher: HarperCollins
 ISBN-10: 0060256575
 ISBN-13: 978-0060256579

There are several reasons this book has been around so long. It's great. It's simple. It's charming. It's powerful. It deals with a common issue for both children and adults, that of fitting in and of self-esteem. With simple line drawings and laconic but eloquently poetic text, it conveys a strong message with gentleness and humor.

I first bought this book years ago, in its first printing. I bought it for my then three-year old son Albert who saw it at a bookstore and wanted it. When I read it to him that night, I was so struck by the truth of the book that I cried. The book touched me deeply and made me see something about myself that I had never really looked at. You see, I was the painfully shy child, the quiet one who hid behind books, never raised her hand in class and rarely spoke. My friends now will laugh and think I'm telling a fib, but no, that was me. I entered into a marriage far too young and it ended early and badly. Shel Silverstein's book helped me to heal and grow as a person and find myself, my self-esteem and become the woman I am today.

Over the years, I've bought this book more times than I can count. Each of my children owns a copy as do my grandchildren. I give it away to nieces and nephews, children of friends, strangers on buses, you name it. I always seem to find a person in need of this book and it finds its way off my shelf and into those eager and waiting hands. I just go out and buy another, and another, and another...

So enough about me and onto what makes this book a classic. The Missing Piece Meets the Big O tells the story of a little triangular piece sitting all alone.

"The missing piece sat alone waiting for someone to come along and take it somewhere...."

The story goes on to tell about the pieces that didn't fit, or fit but couldn't roll, or grew annoyed when the piece started to grow. The piece meets the Big O who says he isn't missing a piece but the piece is welcome to roll with him if he likes. By the end of the book, the Missing Piece is rolling on his own and has become his own complete self.

Each page is a simple and compassionate lesson. The book tells you to be yourself, of how important it is to be who you are on your own power and that you don't need someone to complete you. You can BE who you want to be all on your own initiative and determination. That's a strong message and an important lesson. A lesson most of us have a hard time learning.

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