



The Story of Little Black Sambo

By Helen Bannerman

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The jolly and exciting tale of the little boy who lost his red coat and his blue trousers and his purple shoes but who was saved from the tigers to eat 169 pancakes for his supper, has been universally loved by generations of children. First written in 1899, the story has become a childhood classic and the authorized American edition with the original drawings by the author has sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

Little Black Sambo is a book that speaks the common language of all nations, and has added more to the joy of little children than perhaps any other story. They love to hear it again and again; to read it to themselves; to act it out in their play.

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The Story of Little Black Sambo By Helen Bannerman Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #89451 in Books
- Brand: Harper Collins
- Published on: 1923-01-01
- Released on: 1923-01-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
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- 64 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

PreSchool-Grade 4-Despite the controversy surrounding Bannerman's racially insensitive choice of names and style of illustration for her 1899 book, *Little Black Sambo* perseveres in print and in the memories of adults who encountered the tale as children. Whereas Julius Lester (*Sam and the Tigers* [Dial, 1996]) casts Sam as a hero of the American South, and Fred Marcellino places *The Story of Little Babaji* (HarperCollins, 1996) in India, Bing affirms Bannerman's text and the incongruities inherent in fantasy. His African child lives in India where those infamous tigers want to eat him up-until each receives a portion of his new outfit. This is vintage Bing. The book has a weathered look, including the illusion of ripped seams and folded, yellowed pages. The danger, however, is palpable from the outset: the linen and gilt cover bears the deep, jagged imprint of a claw. Each double-page painting is framed in black and infused with golden light. The glow emanates from the sun, the tigers, the domes-foreshadowing the brilliance of that "lovely melted butter." Pen and ink are applied meticulously to skin, fur, and landscape, creating a rich overall texture and depth; the areas of unadulterated color provide the magical aura. Endpapers decorated with newspaper clippings, postcards, maps, shadow puppets, and other realia provide an in-depth history of the story and the particulars of this version. Some adults will no doubt continue to debate the use of *Sambo*. Children will be dazzled and delighted by the turn of events depicted here.

Wendy Lukehart, Washington DC Public Library

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-up. It's a great story, told with rhythm and excitement, that has thrilled generations of children since it was first published in 1899. Bing's new illustrations, in bright jungle colors with pen-and-ink crosshatching, are beautiful, big, and dramatic, showing a smart, contemporary African kid in India defeating those vain, huge, scary tigers. But the name in the title and on nearly every page has long been considered an insult and continues to be associated with gross racist caricature. It's hard to get past that. Julius Lester and Jerry Pinkney altered the name in their retelling, *Sam and the Tigers* (1996). Bing chose not to do that, and his version has already garnered lots of publicity. At least one library has been asked to remove the book from its collection, and there's lots of debate from scholars on both sides of the issues, with questions covering everything from "How does the controversy relate to the arguments over Huck Finn's use of the 'n-word?'" and "Is the debate only about intellectual freedom?" to "Is this really a story for preschoolers today?" The endpapers present an interesting history of the book's publication and the ongoing debate, and it may be readers who can talk about that history and about whether the great new illustrations make up for that name who will be the audience here. Hazel Rochman

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About the Author

Helen Bannerman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Johanna Hernandez:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. As it is

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