

Hey, Baby, Look!

Kate Shannon

Book Bridge Press, Editor

Morgan Owens, Illustrator

Blue Dream Books (June 2014)

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Shannon and Owens take board books a step beyond the basics by engaging the senses and many facets of a child's understanding.

There are requirements for a quality children's board book that must be met: bright colors, easily distinguishable pictures, and a simple layout. Kate Shannon and Morgan Owens take board books a step beyond these basics by asking children to discern patterns, colors, and themes in *Hey, Baby, Look!*

Hey, Baby, Look! is Shannon's first published board book, but her company Blue Dream Books plans to continue with more books designed for the 0-3 age group, while incorporating current educational research into their offerings. With each page of text matched by a page containing four large illustrations, *Hey, Baby, Look!* resembles many other board books at first glance. But from the first pages, along with pictures of a red apple, raspberry, strawberry, and a brown chair, come questions that make young children think about these items in new ways: "Where is the apple? / How many are sweet? / Where can you sit? / Which can you eat?"

This rhyming pattern is pleasant and consistent throughout, but the book also introduces enough surprises to ensure that children will keep looking forward to the next page, as when it says, in accompaniment to pictures of a star, crescent moon, triangle, and a quarter: "Name these four shapes. / What color is the moon? / Count the points on the star. / Sing me a tune. / Twinkle twinkle little star / How I wonder what you are."

There's also a page that prompts the singing of the ABCs. *Hey, Baby, Look!* demands more of a child than many board books—for example, when the question "Which ones are fluffy?" is asked, the answer requires looking at the pictures and evaluating each, recalling sensory impressions from other experiences.

Hey, Baby, Look! engages the senses and nearly every facet of a child's understanding. The illustrations by Owens are always easily recognizable, and the color palette is varied appealingly. It's an auspicious debut, likely to become a favorite for many children—and an indication that Shannon could become a fixture in the board book market.

PETER DABBENE (June 29, 2015)

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