ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

One, Two, Three, Oops!
Michael Coleman
Gwyneth Williamson, illustrator
Little Tiger Press
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How does Mr. Rabbit determine the number of bunnies in his large family? Mrs. Rabbit knowingly suggests that he try to do so later, but Mr. Rabbit stubbornly insists on beginning right away. Each scheme he devises to count his offspring proves inadequate to the task, although he gradually is able to count higher and higher before he reaches the inevitable "oops!" and stops in frustration. Mr. Rabbit's rhyming expressions of vexation—"noggin-sploggin, boodle-doodle"—also increase in number and variety each time he loses track of the active bunnies. When a rain shower ruins his final idea, Mr. Rabbit angrily abandons his task. The rain also drives the tired children indoors where they soon fall asleep. Now, wise Mrs. Rabbit suggests, is a good time to count the bunnies. Quickly, Mr. Rabbit counts to "TEN!" and smugly thinks his task is complete until Mrs. Rabbit gently points him in the direction of the bedroom where the littlest bunnies are happily at play. Well, fuddle-duddle!

Williamson also illustrated Coleman's previous works Ridiculous! and Lazy Ozzie. The brightly colored watercolor and ink illustrations contribute to the success of the story by showing the rabbit children's carefree antics, the perplexed expressions as their father becomes increasingly angry, and the sleeping bodies snuggled on couches and chairs. Young readers will enjoy poring over the detailed pictures of bunnies at play—one in glasses, another clutching a teddy bear and the littlest with pacifiers.

One, Two, Three, Oops! is a silly story appropriate for preschool and lower primary grades. The repetition of the counting sequence will reinforce number skills to ten. The rhyming patterns of Mr. Rabbit's exclamations, while not as imaginative as the rhymes of Dr. Seuss, do offer an important skill component for young listeners by using nonsense words. As a read-aloud, the story can spark discussion of problem solving ideas when trying to count a group of objects. Mr. Rabbit has many ideas, none of which work well. Students will be eager to offer other ways to accomplish the task. The end-paper illustration of Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit asleep with their many offspring also lends to the book's usefulness as a bedtime story for parents trying to

count up their own active children at the end of a busy day.

Janis Ansell