ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

Pets
John Hutton
Andrea Kang
blue manatee press
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Simple isn't always easy to pull off; to stand the test of time, a board book needs to have a straightforward message, wide appeal, and entertaining pictures that are fun to look at over and over again. Luckily, John Hutton and Andrea Kang's board book *Pets* fits the bill, with easy-to-follow illustrations, rhyming text, and a subject dear to most children's hearts: pets.

Pets is part of the "Baby Unplugged" series of board books, along with the books *Blanket* and *Yard* (other volumes are on the way). The series won a Mom's Choice Award Gold Medal and 2012 Creative Child Magazine Book of the Year, along with other accolades. "Baby Unplugged" refers to author and pediatrician John Hutton's belief, backed by research from several sources, that children do not benefit from early exposure to technology. The Baby Unplugged website offers a motto of "uniting science and sense to be screen-free until [age] 3," and in keeping with this theme, *Pets* is a kind of board book testimonial to real pets, rather than electronic ones. The book begins:

"Touch pets, feel pets/The best are real pets."

and ends with:

"Real pets happy—so fun, too / Growing up together with you."

In between, the book describes in friendly, basic terms different kinds of pets, what pets need, and what they provide. Andrea Kang's illustrations are perfect, featuring children and pets with wide, cheery faces and easy-to-read expressions. The pages are rendered in bright colors that attract and hold the attention of young eyes.

With *Pets*, John Hutton has written a memorable and enjoyable love letter to pets of all types. The only potential problem for parents in reading this book with their young ones is that requests for new real pets may soon follow. But as Hutton shows in his book, maybe that's not such a bad thing.

Peter Dabbene