FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Picture Books

The Cow on the Roof
Eric Maddern
Paul Hess, illustrator
Frances Lincoln
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In this timeless folktale, a couple living in a cottage on a countryside in Europe seem content with life and work until Shon (pronounced *Shorn*) notices that his wife, Sian (pronounced *Sharn*) "always seemed as fresh as a buttercup" after a day's work around the farm. Convinced that toiling in the fields is more difficult than housework, Shon constantly complains until his wife suggests that the two hard workers exchange responsibilities. "Great!" Shon exclaims, "Tomorrow I'll have a rest, I'll have a holiday, I'll have a day off!"

The husband reclines with a lit pipe instead of milking the cow or making the butter for the evening meal. When he finally does begin the chores, his day is colored by one disaster after another: a pig running loose about the house, a cow grazing on the roof, and chickens scattered around the living room. Hours of "turning and churning, turning and churning" produce an alarming thirst instead of the butter the couple needs. "Gone is gone," Shon laments, watching as the ale he left running from the keg is "sloshing about on the cellar floor."

The author studied theatre and social psychology at the University of Sheffield and is an internationally known storyteller. The illustrator studied art in Sydney and has won several awards, including the Association of Illustrators Award for Best Unpublished Illustration and the Sydney Morning Herald Award for Best Portrait in a Photographic Competition. The two, natives of Australia, have collaborated on previous projects, including *The King With Horse's Ears*.

The watercolor illustrations of heart-shaped shrubs, gates, and chairs are warm and inviting, symbolizing Sian's love for her husband and her life. Children will also recognize the patterns of other colorful shapes and repetitious language throughout the book, which welcome interaction.

When Sian returns home to find the house and farm in disarray, she calmly assesses the

damage and says, “Oh, well, gone is gone. But from now on, you stick to your work. I’ll stick to mine, and we’ll say no more about it.” This story reminds readers that everyone has special jobs (and talents) that only they can perform.

Kaavonia Hinton