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Picture Books

The Little Big Book for Grandfathers
Alice Wong, editor
Hiro Clark Wakabayashi, editor
Welcome Press
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Any grandpa who has ever been at a loss for ways to entertain and relate to his grandchildren will find in this book a pirate's treasure chest full of ideas, stories, and activities. The latest in the publisher's series of "Little Big Books," the volume is sized (6" square and 1" thick) to make it handy for stowing on a coffee table, in the car, or in a special Granddad bag.

The editors have three children each, and have worked on previous "Little Big Books." Wong has also edited *Mom's Almanac*, and Wakabayashi has worked on Disney Editions' *Brother Bear* and *Lilo and Stitch*.

Here, they include literary excerpts from the classics, like selections from *Peter Pan* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, for quiet reading, as well as tall tales like "Pecos Bill Rides Again" and "Sweet Betsy from Pike," which can spark discussions about truth and exaggeration. Grandfathers will find fairy tales such as the traditional "Chicken Little" and Hans Christian Anderson's "What the Old Man Does Is Always Right" (which Grandpa may like to read after the wee ones have seen him argue with Grandma), and tales in verse, like poetic versions of Rip Van Winkle and Sleeping Beauty. There are Aesop's Fables like "The Blue Jay and the Owl," which teaches about listening, and "The Goose with the Golden Eggs," which teaches about greed.

There are directions for wondrous, classic grandfather activities, like making finger puppets out of peanut shells and playing a Mancala-like bean game, plus tips on fishing and gazing at stars or clouds. The complete lyrics to old songs like "Oh! Susannah" and "Do Your Ears Hang Low?" are here, along with jokes, riddles, and poems galore by the likes of Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and that old favorite, Anonymous. Granddads will find recipes for delicious, healthy food to make with their grandkids, like Kitchen-Sink Pizzas and One-Dish

Wonders. Sprinkled throughout like Grandpa kisses are little quotations and words of wisdom like René Descartes' "It is not enough to have a good mind. The main thing is to use it well" and Longfellow's "It takes less time to do a thing right than to explain why you did it wrong."

The editors have compiled a king's ransom of inspiration for grandpas (or grandmas or babysitters or anyone who helps take care of youngsters). The layout and design are superb, featuring illustrations from the classic Victorian painter Jessie Willcox Smith, plus other artists, from Norman Rockwell to Shel Silverstein. The acknowledgements page is somewhat incomplete, which may disappoint the research-minded grandfather, but the table of contents is handily organized by category, so Granddads can easily find just the kind of story or activity they're looking for to create lasting, magical memories with their grandchildren.

Karen McCarthy