



# The Hat Trick

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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These short novels, intended for 8-10 year-olds with reading difficulties, are set in a script-style typeface, with the text double-spaced, and on cream-coloured paper, all of which were like by the dyslexic children I consulted. The language is clear and contemporary in style, with straightforward sentence construction and varied vocabulary. The illustrations for three out four are in cartoon style, in two of them probably computer drawn or coloured with different hatched patterns. I do find it tedious that children who take longer to learn to read comfortably are all supposed to relate almost entirely to cartoon-type illustrations, often, as in some of these examples, rather ugly in style. It seems to me that all children should be offered a wide range of style of illustration at all stages, whether to appeal to different tastes or as part of their visual education.

**The Hat Trick** is a well-sustained, Tike Tyler-ish account of a 1950s football-crazy girl who manages, against her mother's wishes, to play, and help to win, a match.

In **The House With No Name**, Colin (now a ghost) mistakenly thinks that he caused the death of his younger brother as a result of jealousy. Using a strange metaphor whereby Colin becomes the house in which the accident occurred, the story reaches resolution when the house finally fall down. My 9-year-old reader found all this a bit too eerie, and I feel that the complex emotions, interesting as they are, are not well-enough worked out to be a useful analogy for children experiencing similar jealous feelings.

In **Pompom**, Paul is desperate to boost his image at school, so is initially appalled to have to look after a poodle for a while. However, while doing so he learns a lot about himself and about friendship, and how appearances can be deceptive. (He learns plenty about poodles too!)

Lastly **Juggler**, which is an amusing but daft story in which an accident caused by the eponymous 'juggler' is covered up by some more, rather fortuitous, juggling, while providing a good reminder of how to deal with a chip pan fire.

Though well-written and well-intentioned, I feel these, in common with many books for this stage, just do not have that rattling good yarn that makes the pages really turn.

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