



# Our Sleepysaurus | Andrew McAndrew | Sophie's Snail | Ponders

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'No pets' is the rule in the flats where Marigold, Rashid and Niki live and the Mean Man is there to see that the rule is enforced, so it takes a bit of lateral thinking when Marigold discovers the Sleepysaurus. The Old Ladies (residents) are determined to keep their new 'rock garden', the Mean Man is forced to concede defeat and the children acquire an unusual pet. Problems begin though when a heat wave strikes giving the Sleepysaurus a seemingly unquenchable thirst.

Billed as a 'Read Aloud', this amusing story with its jokey, action-filled illustrations could be enjoyed by new solo readers as well as older infant listeners.

The title story, 'Sophie's Snail', is one of six about Sophie (four) who has six-year-old twin brothers. Sophie has a mind of her own which takes surprising turns, not least her determination to save up enough money to be a farmer. Meanwhile, she makes do with woodlice, earwigs and earthworms - potting shed farming.

Dick King-Smith's witty style, combined with his obvious love of animals of all kinds, means that, despite the tender years of the chief protagonist, this book should appeal to children up to about eight, many of whom would enjoy it for themselves.

Revolving around Andrew McAndrew, rising five, are eight short episodes all of which have a pattern; Andrew talks to himself in rhyme and these rhymes take the form of wishes: 'Andrew McAndrew what would you like? All I want is a little red bike'; or intentions: 'Andrew McAndrew what is there to do? Paint Grandad's bells a nice shade of blue', which are then fulfilled in the cosy, domestic stories in which Andrew's grandfather features large.

The stories will appeal to listeners of around Andrew's age. The interest though is narrower than the other three titles in the series: I cannot imagine many children able to read the book for themselves, wanting to.

**Ponders** is a collection of eight animal stories featuring creatures (American) who live in and around a pond. One always expects something unusual from Russell Hoban and these stories are no exception. Here he extends the real life habits of animals such as the frog, the snapper turtle, the crow and the possum to create characters each with its own eccentricities. So, Grover Crow's main interest is 'objects of art' and Charlie Meadows (mouse) has a paper round.

Hoban's language and ideas demand more sophistication from a listening audience, or from solo readers, than the others in the series.

Running Order:

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