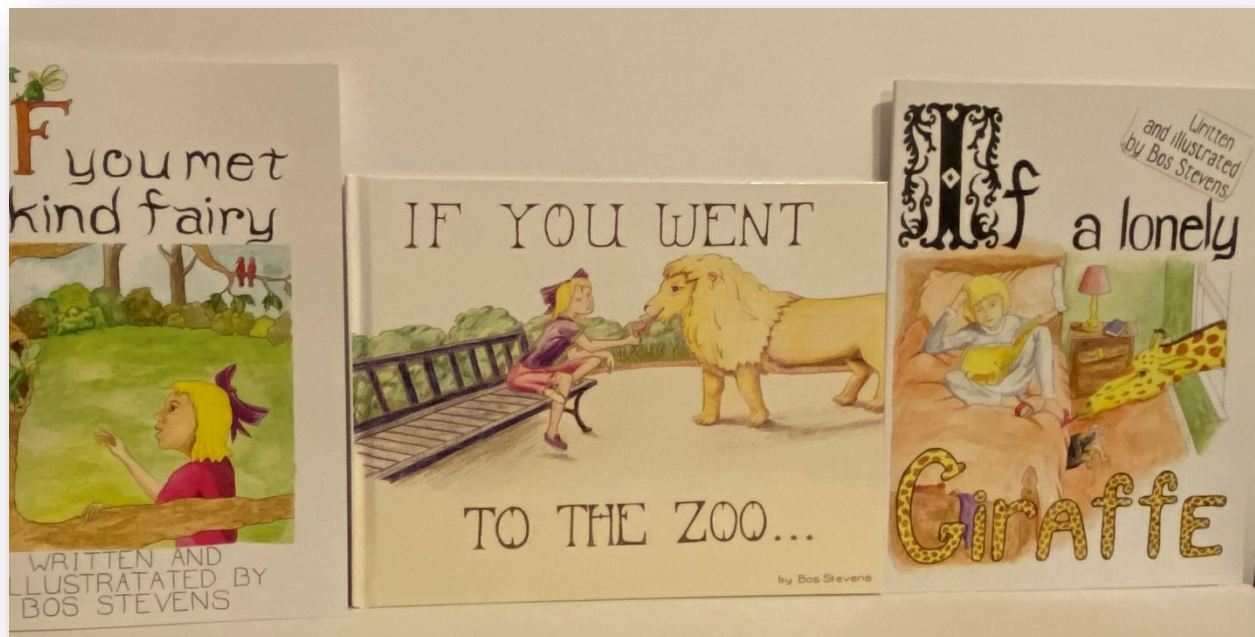


Book of the Week

If You Went to the Zoo, If a Lonely Giraffe, If You Met a Kind Fairy by Bos Stevens

Book Review by Bos Stevens



Bos Stevens, a board member of Friends of the Starkville Library will be on hand at story time on Friday, May 14, at 4 p.m. at Fire Station Park. Please bring your children and grandchildren for a wonderful event with balloons and snow cones and much more.

The Book of the Week this week contributed by Friends of the Starkville Library is the three "IF" books by Bos Stevens. Read a delightful review prepared by our own Bos Stevens.

"I have been asked to write a book review. An unusual request in and of itself. Making that request even more unusual is that I have been asked to review books which I wrote and illustrated. So this review cannot be impartial but, on the other hand, I will try not to praise them too effusively.

I have written and illustrated three little books for young children. All are written in rhyme, all start with the word "If" and all are illustrated in watercolor or colored pencil. And all of them follow the same format: hand-lettered and decorated words on the page to the reader's left and a full-page illustration on the right.

The first book in the series is *If You Went to the Zoo*. In it, a little girl comes home from the zoo with a lion on a leash. She tries to find the perfect home for him, first in her house, then in her yard and then with various animals on her family's farm. Predictably, she comes to the realization that the zoo is the best place for him, and she reluctantly returns him there.

The final illustration shows the girl back at home. As an attempt at humor, I drew a giraffe peeking in the window. Several people asked me when I was going to write the giraffe book. No such book was ever intended...but the idea took on a life of its own and resulted in the second book, *If a Lonely Giraffe*. In this book, a giraffe pokes his head through a little girl's window, and they immediately become best friends. Instead of trying to make a home for her new friend, the girl wants to show it off. She makes a mess of the house outfitting herself and the giraffe then mounts her "like a tall, long-necked horse" and rides her all over town. Until she encounters her mother, who sternly dismisses the giraffe but then shows her daughter that she was once a little girl too.

The third and last book is called *If You Met a Kind Fairy*. In this one, our heroine meets a tiny fairy deep in a forest. The fairy gives her a pair of magic wings that allow her to fly. She experiments with her new ability and picks up a small friend along the way. Together, they fly up to the clouds, mold them into a more comfortable shape and take a nap. When she wakes up, she realizes that she doesn't know where she is nor how to get home. She sheds a few tears and tells her little friend, "I wish I was back in my own yard." Her wish is granted by her magical wings which disappear at the granting of the wish. She discovers that the truest magic is being in a place "where people love you."

These books try to engage the imagination of children. Each page, whether text or illustration, has a wealth of detail that children love to notice and point out. I consciously tried to avoid any overt message, believing that children's books should primarily entertain. I hope that I succeeded in some measure.

Hopefully this review has piqued your curiosity about these books. If it has, the Starkville Library has copies of each of them. If it hasn't, then possibly it has reminded you of children in your life who would benefit from a visit to the library or a book of their own.

The Friends of Starkville Library sponsors a books and authors talk every month during the school year. Partnering with "Miss Rainey," I will be reading my books at Fire Station Park on Friday, May 14, at 4 p.m. Bring your children for this fun event. Miss Rainey has also planned balloons and snowballs."

For more information about supporting the Friends of the Starkville Library, click [here](#).