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The subject of manners for children maketh a difficult book to write.

Cole is cleverly light-hearted. Clever because her small child's misdemeanours are taken to such absurd lengths that no readers would feel they could be that stupid. Clever because she covers a range of behaviour from leaving the taps on to telling your mum that she's fat. Clever because she's not concerned with please and thank you but with do as you would be done by. Light-hearted because she recognises that sometimes the best intentions can cause the worst mess. Told in a pleasing rhyme with a short text and cheerfully manic illustrations, hers is the generous approach you would expect from the creator of **Mummy Laid an Egg** and **Doctor Dog**, without the need to be so frank or graphic.

In the past, Allan, like Cole, has sailed triumphantly close to the winds of taste with **Jesus' Christmas Party** and **The Queen's Knickers**. With **A Pig's Book of Manners**, however, he seems to have been blown off course.

Johnny Squelchnose is an appalling child who not only belches, farts and picks his nose ostentatiously in bright green but has a dislike for model citizen Claude Curlytail, who happens to be a pig rather than behaving like one. Johnny reforms, of course, but not before Allan has made the most of him, including a spectacular double page spread in which he does an arching pee in the park pond.

Presumably, Allan's intention is a serious one. But the effect is rather like the tabloid report of a sex scandal. You take the wagging finger for granted but it is the naughty bits you are invited to relish. Warning: do not encourage participation at storytime. The blurb claims 'You can be an absolute pig and learn perfect politeness.' I don't think so.

Running Order:

81

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