



## Library Book: The World According to Humphrey (Rise and Shine)

By Betty G. Birney

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A substitute teacher brings a hamster named Humphrey to school. Told from the hamster's perspective, Humphrey explains what you can learn about yourself by taking care of another species.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **From School Library Journal**

Grade 2-4-A likable hamster narrates this novel for newly independent readers. A warmhearted substitute teacher brings Humphrey to Room 26, explaining, "You can learn a lot about yourself by taking care of another species." Unfortunately, when Mrs. Brisbane returns to school, she is less than enthusiastic about taking on a class pet, and is unaware of the impact that the hamster has on the students, as well as on the families with whom he spends his weekends. Humphrey manages to bring out hidden courage and kindness in those he visits. He helps the members of one family turn off the TV and rediscover the pleasure of one another's company; he encourages a shy girl to speak up; and he even helps the principal gain control over his own less-than-obedient offspring. Humphrey's unique opportunity to observe the students, both at school and at home, develops into a compelling picture of Room 26. The hamster's experiences at Mrs. Brisbane's house round out that portrait. Birney succeeds in developing the animal's character without the narrative becoming too cute or contrived. Humphrey's views underscore the importance of knowing the full story before making judgments, and his presence makes a positive difference in the lives of the people he meets. All in all, a winning book that will appeal to children who like tales about animals, school life, and friendship.-*Pat Leach, Lincoln City Libraries, NE*

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### **From Booklist**

Gr. 2-5. Humphrey the hamster enjoys being Room 26's classroom pet. He adores Ms. Mac, and every day brings new learning and experiences. Then Ms. Mac unexpectedly leaves; worse, returning teacher Mrs. Brisbane despises small furry creatures--leaving Humphrey both brokenhearted and worried about his future. Going home on weekends with school staff members and students helps, revealing diverse, often surprising stories and situations that allow both Humphrey and his human caretakers to learn from one another. Humphrey, a delightful, irresistible character, is big hearted, observant, and creative, and his experiences, whether escaping a nosy dog or helping an immigrant family speak English, range from comedic to touching. His lively, first-person narrative, filled with witty commentary on human and hamster behavior, makes for an engaging, entertaining read that illustrates "you can learn a lot about yourself by getting to know another species." A wonderful addition to the animal-fiction collection, this story should have wide appeal. *Shelle Rosenfeld*

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### **Review**

"A likable hamster narrates this novel for newly independent readers....Birney succeeds in developing the animal's character without the narrative becoming too cute or contrived. Humphrey's views underscore the importance of knowing the full story before making judgments, and his presence makes a positive difference in the lives of the people he meets. All in all, a winning book that will appeal to children who like tales about animals, school life, and friendship."—**School Library Journal**

"The story deftly avoids triteness while still feeling breezy and acknowledging deeply felt troubles, such as Mrs. Brisbane's husband's depression. The pet-care tips punctuating each chapter would benefit any youngster thinking about getting a hamster, but for everyone else, this read is simply good-good-good."—**Kirkus Reviews**

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