



First Edition. Octavo (215 by 135mm), viii, 414pp, folding map at rear, publisher's brown cloth boards with gilt lettering to the spine, dust jacket in near fine condition with small chip at foot, inscription to upper flyleaf.

Issue: The publisher's printed price of £ net is present to the front flap.

BRIGHT EYES!

Watership Down.

Author

ADAMS, Richard; HEMMETT, Marilyn; and LAWRENCE, John

Publication date

1972.

Publisher

Penguin Books Ltd and Kestrel Books,

Publication place

Harmondsworth,

Physical description

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Issue: The publisher's printed price of £3.50 net is present to the front flap.

Dimensions

Notes

Fine presentation copy of Richard Adams's immigration parable, 'Watership Down', centring on anthropomorphic bunnies and their adventures in north Hampshire.

The Book

"All the world will be your enemy, Prince of a Thousand enemies. And when they catch you, they will kill you. But first they must catch you; digger, listener, runner, Prince with the swift warning. Be cunning, and full of tricks, and your people will never be destroyed".

The above prophecy, foretelling the destruction of the warren, leads the rabbits to abandon all and emigrate. Crossing the River Enborne, and seeking a new home, Bigwig, Hazel, Fiver et al's journey is fraught with challenges, including various wild animals, a shotgun, a car, and a military dictatorship.

The story is Richard Adams's debut novel, and began life as stories told to his young daughters Juliet and Rosamund during long car journeys. In his autobiography, 'The Day Gone By', Adams wrote that he based 'Watership Down' and the stories in it on his experiences during Operation Market Garden and the Battle of Arnhem, in 1944.

'Watership Down' was rejected by several publishers before being accepted by Collins. It then went on to win both the Carnegie Medal and Guardian Prize, as well as other book awards. The novel was adapted into an animated feature film in 1978 and, from 1999 to 2001, an animated children's television series.

The Map

The map is by cartographer Marilyn Hemmett, and is orientated with north at the left. It extends east to west to south from Kingsclere to Whitchurch, and north to south from Sandleford Park to Overton. It has a familiar "Ordnance Survey" feel to it, but with added grid lines. The map shows various toponyms from the book, including the ancient Harroway where Efrafa is located at the "crossing point of two bridle paths", Nuthanger Farm, Watership Down and Hampshire's famous River Test chalk stream where the rabbits made their way to safety on a raft.

Adams has inscribed the book to Elaine Moss (1924-2020):

"To Elaine Moss, with every good wish (and thank you for the lovely rose), Richard Adams May 1973".

Elaine Moss was a renowned children's author and editor, who won, in 1975, the Eleanor Farjeon award for her outstanding contribution to the world of children's books.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £6500

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