SHE PUSHED BOUNDARIES — WITH BOTH HER ART AND HER LIFE

Brown herself was a most interesting woman who quit her day job at age 22 to write children's books full-time. She was also attracted to both men and women in or out of the closet. Such a thing was unheard of for a public figure. She dismissed “Goodnight Moon” as “overly sentimental.”

It wasn't until the post-war baby boom — all those babies needed a soothing, hypnotic bedtime tale — that sales of “Goodnight Moon” took off. Five years ago, Smithsonian magazine reported sales had surpassed 48 million copies.

WHEN BROWN AND HER PUBLISHER WERE STRUGGLING TO GET LIBRARIES TO CARRY HER BOOK, THEY MADE A SMALL change to the cow jumping over the moon — which appears on eight pages, plus the cover and back cover. The color of the cord’s satters taken out in hopes of avoiding offending “important ladies.” Cancel culture existed, even in 1947.

The red balloon — presumably filled with helium and floating along the top of many of the pages — disappears in the spread on pages 5 and 6. It reappears on pages 9 and 10 and 13 but disappears again on pages 17 and 12, 21 and 23 and 25 before showing up on the final spread on pages 29 and 30. The cover of “Goodnight Moon” and its 1949 sequel, “My World.”

Evidently, Brown had no problems at all with what we now call “product placement.” On the top shelf of that bookcase on the far left in 1949 was a copy of “The Runaway Bunny” — Brown’s 1942 children’s book. If you’re familiar with that book, then you have a heart.

And then, by the clock and the telephone on the little bunny’s nightstand — another book. The one — wait — who was the former wife of actor John Barrymore — while they were apart visiting the home of a married woman who was the old son of a neighbor. In 2000, the Wall Street Journal reported how that man squandered that inheritance by not finishing school, never finding steady work and by committing petty crimes.

OTHER BOOKS BY MARGARET WISE BROWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Noisy Bear</td>
<td>1939</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Runaway Bunny</td>
<td>1942</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Little Island</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Fur Family</td>
<td>1949</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Important Book</td>
<td>1958</td>
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When Brown and her publisher were struggling to get libraries to carry her books, they made a small change to the cow jumping over the moon — which appears on eight pages, plus the cover and back cover. The color of the cord’s satters taken out in hopes of avoiding offending “important ladies.” Cancel culture existed, even in 1947.

TWELVE THINGS TO WATCH FOR THE NEXT TIME YOU REREAD 'GOODNIGHT MOON'

1. “Goodnight comb. And Goodnight brush. Goodnight nobody. Goodnight mush.” If you have ever been tasked with reading to young children at bedtime, then, most likely, you saw the artwork above and can cite the words by heart: “Goodnight comb. And Goodnight brush. Goodnight nobody. Goodnight mush.”

2. “Goodnight Moon” by Margaret Wise Brown was published 75 years ago. It’s been a nightly ritual for millions of preschoolers ever since.

3. Evidently, Brown had no problems at all with what we now call “product placement.” On the top shelf of the bookcase on the far left in 1949 was a copy of “The Runaway Bunny” — Brown’s 1942 children’s book. If you’re familiar with that book, then you have a heart.

4. And then, by the clock and the telephone on the little bunny’s nightstand — another book. The one — wait — who was the former wife of actor John Barrymore — while they were apart visiting the home of a married woman who was the old son of a neighbor. In 2000, the Wall Street Journal reported how that man squandered that inheritance by not finishing school, never finding steady work and by committing petty crimes.

5. A restless young bunny yearns to run away while his mother showers him with unconditional love.

6. A scrappy dog satisfies his urge to travel on the open seas. A group of children find a recently deceased bird and decide to give it a fitting burial.

7. Brown developed the custom of reading goodnight book to all the boys in the nursery she shared with her sister. So perhaps it isn’t surprising that, 37 years later — after Brown had established herself as a prolific children’s book writer publishing dozens of books under multiple publishers and some of them under pen names — Brown would return to that theme.

8. “Goodnight Moon” went on sale on Sept. 3, 1949, for $1.75. The New York Times wrote it should prove very effective in the case of a too wide-awake youngster.

9. But the book wasn’t terribly successful at first, selling only 6,000 copies. By 1951, the publisher was considering letting it fall out of print.

10. Five years ago, Smithsonian magazine reported sales had surpassed 48 million copies.

11. When Brown and her publisher were struggling to get libraries to carry her books, they made a small change to the cow jumping over the moon — which appears on eight pages, plus the cover and back cover. The color of the cord’s satters taken out in hopes of avoiding offending “important ladies.” Cancel culture existed, even in 1947.

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