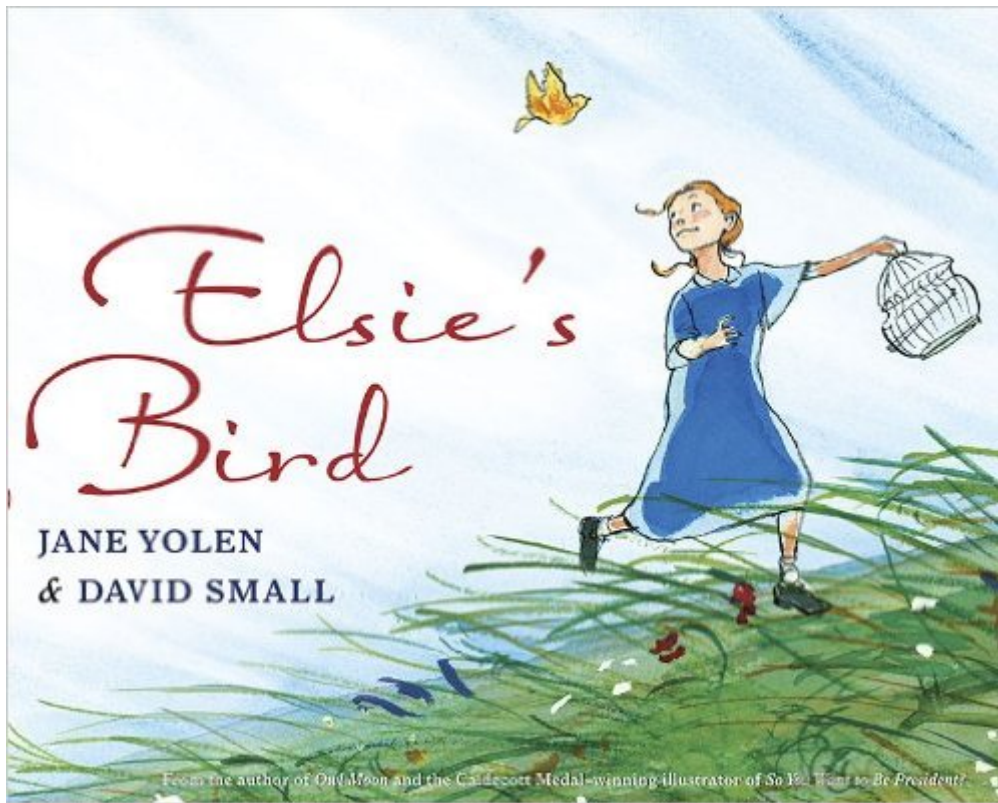


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# Elsie's Bird



## Synopsis

Elsie is a city girl. She loves the noise of the cobbled streets of Boston. But when her mother dies and her father moves them to the faraway prairies of Nebraska, Elsie hears only the silence, and she feels alone in the wide sea of grass. Her only comfort is her canary, Timmy Tune. But when Timmy flies out the window, Elsie is forced to run after him, into the tall grass of the prairie, where she's finally able to hear the voice of the prairie-beautiful and noisy- and she begins to feel at home. Jane Yolen and David Small create a remarkable, poetic, vividly rendered book about finding one's place in the world.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD890L (What's this?)

Series: AWARDS: Golden Sower Primary 2013

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Philomel Books; First Edition edition (September 2, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0399252924

ISBN-13: 978-0399252921

Product Dimensions: 11.4 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #507,878 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #240 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life #268 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving #1088 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Experiences

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## Customer Reviews

As a kid I was read a fair amount of Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Over the years a fair amount of what I heard has faded into the mists of memory. However, there is one Little House scenario that stuck with me all through my childhood and cropped up recently in my adult memory as well. It is the moment when Laura and her sister find themselves lost in the tall prairie grasses and realize they might never find their way out again. That image of children lost in grass stretching high above their heads stayed with me. Then time passed and I forgot all about it. Your average

New Yorker's encounter with tall grasses extends pretty much as far as the new High Line Park and no farther. Yet with the recent discovery of *Elsie's Bird*, I got my childhood memory back again. The dual Caldecott winners Jane Yolen and David Small come together at long last to tell the tale of a girl, a bird, and a prairie. It's the kind of book that will wedge its way into the minds of other child readers, causing them to also think of grass as a potential enemy and birds in the wild as more than just background noise. Elsie leads a happy life in Boston, even after her mother's death. However, her father finds that the city reminds him too much of his beloved wife, so he packs up Elsie and their belongings and sets off for a sod house in Nebraska to start a whole new life. Young Elsie is allowed to bring her canary Timmy Tune along with her, and he quickly becomes the one bright spot in the midst of her severe Boston homesickness.

**Age Recommendation:** 7-11; Children begin to get interested in historical fiction around first or second grade. They also like realistic books about family relationships. **Summary:** *Elsie's Bird* is about a girl, Elsie, who grows up in Boston, but after the death of her mother moves to Nebraska. Initially, Elsie does not enjoy Nebraska because it is too quiet, and she seeks comfort in her canary, Timmy Tune. One day, her canary escapes, and she explores the area around her home looking for him. She falls in love with the outdoors, and decides she likes living in Nebraska. **Critical Review:** David Small, the illustrator of *Elsie's Bird*, has won a Caldecott Medal in the past. He uses a sketching technique, and then filled in the lines of ink with both colored pencils and water colors to create a visually appealing image. Small uses bright colors, which brings both Boston and Nebraska to life. The illustrations are realistic, and the faces of the characters are detailed, and expressive. Matching and complementing the text very well. For example, when Elsie is singing, happy or unhappy the illustrations depict her appropriately. Additionally, the illustrations add background details to set the setting appropriately. For example, in Boston there is a lot of background characters (e.g. other children, adults, animals) and only a few background characters (e.g. a sea of grass). Jane Yolen based the father in the story after her own father. She is very passionate, and uses high quality writing. For example, she utilizes alliteration with Elsie's canary's name, Timmy Tune. She utilizes onomatopoeia with the "clacketing" of the wheels (p. 11). Repetition emphasizes Elsie's regret going out West. For example, "She might not have gone west had she known..."

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