

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

CHUBBY WUBBLES

M.J. Abrams

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BOOK REVIEW

Two brothers and a photogenic ferret demonstrate the basics of responsible pet ownership.

Left alone in the house again, a pet ferret named Junior wishes his owner would spend more time with his younger brother Jeffrey, who always plays with Junior during his visits. Junior's wish comes true when Jeffrey takes custody of the lonely ferret after his brother admits he's unable to spend enough time with his pet anymore. At Jeffrey's house, the ferret has all the food, toys and affectionate baby talk he could ever want and even gets a new name—Sunny. After feeding Sunny a steady diet of ferret treats, Jeffrey rechristens the ferret Chubby Wubbles—and adds a few too many nicknames after that. Chubby doesn't seem to mind, and his newfound happiness illustrates how a new home can be a welcome change for an unwanted pet. But Jeffrey soon discovers that even the best pet owners make mistakes. Chubby slips out the door while Jeffrey takes out the garbage. Initially the ferret enjoys his newfound freedom, but is soon confronted by the harsh reality of the outside world. Jeffrey eventually locates Chubby and rescues him from an aggressive flock of neighborhood geese, and the indoor pet has an epiphany: "I never realized how lucky I am to have a friend like Jeffrey to take care of me." The story's best moments come from the interplay of simple text and whimsical photographs, laid out with great comedic timing and featuring a real ferret showing a wide range of emotions, from despondence at his neglect to curiosity about the inside of a shoe to open-mouthed terror at the approach of a flock of nipping geese. Each photograph has the homespun appeal of a "lolcat" on the photo-sharing blog ICanHasCheezburger.com, minus the pithy captions. And while the ferret's abundance of names gets distracting at times, the whimsy and warmth of the story wins out.

A strong visual narrative makes for a hilarious and heartfelt lesson in caring for an unusual pet.