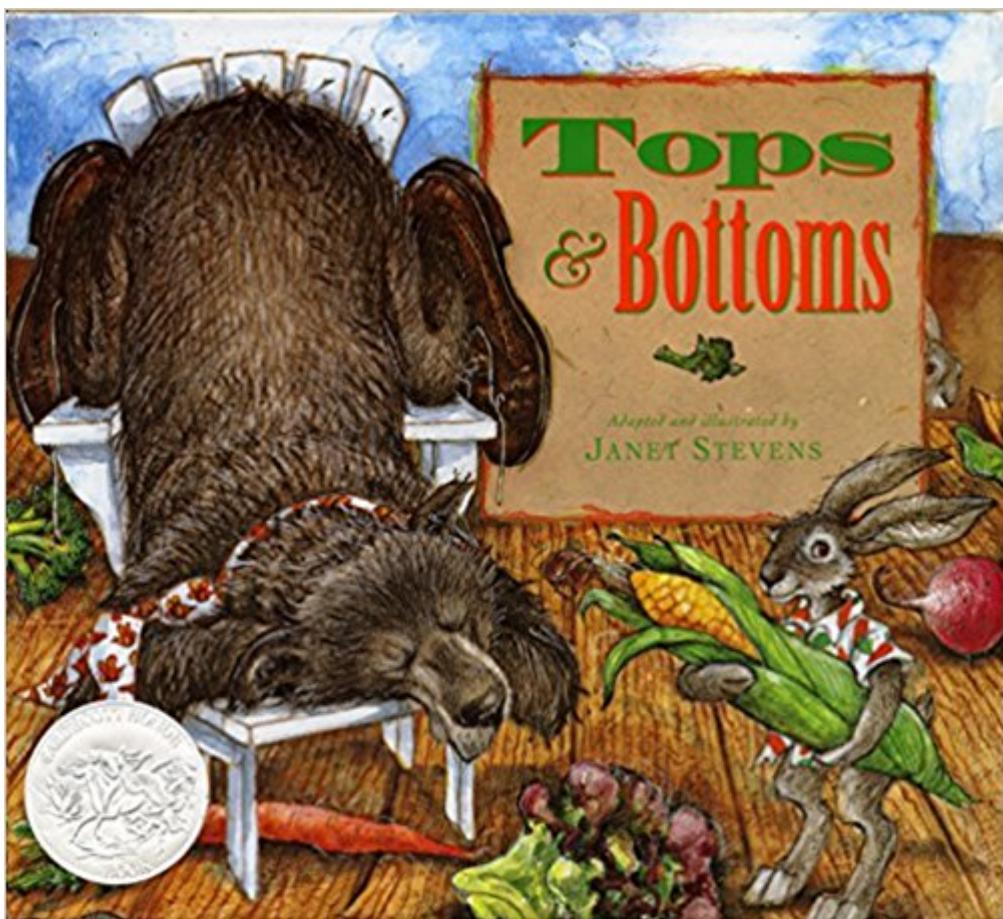


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# Tops & Bottoms (Caldecott Honor Book)



## Synopsis

Hare solves his family's problems by tricking rich and lazy Bear in this funny, energetic version of an old slave story. With roots in American slave tales, Tops & Bottoms celebrates the trickster tradition of using one's wits to overcome hardship. As usual, Stevens's animal characters, bold and colorful, are delightful. . . . It's all wonderful fun, and the book opens, fittingly, from top to bottom instead of from side to side, making it perfect for story-time sharing.

This title has been selected as a Common Core Text Exemplar (Grades 2-3, Stories)

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 580L (What's this?)

Series: Caldecott Honor Book

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Harcourt Brace; 1st edition (March 29, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0152928510

ISBN-13: 978-0152928513

Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 154 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #13,366 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural #24 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Rabbits #74 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Bears

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

PreSchool-Grade 2?A note states that this trickster tale has "roots in European folktales and slave stories of the American South." Lazy Bear sleeps through every planting season, so conniving Hare makes a deal. He and his family will work Bear's land and split the crops in half. He'll even let Bear choose which half he wants?"tops or bottoms." Bear chooses tops so Hare plants root crops, leaving Bear with a useless harvest. A furious Bear insists next time he'll take bottoms so Hare plants corn, leaving empty stalks. The entertaining story is illustrated with Stevens's now familiar artwork?lively, colorful line-and-wash spreads filled with sprightly characters and humorous details.

The contrast between the slumbering bear and the frantically energetic hare family is especially amusing. Unfortunately, some illustrations are marred by the placement of the boxed text. The book opens vertically rather than horizontally; while this design element is a clever complement to the growing theme, it is not completely successful. At times, the visual flow is interrupted. The narration is also somewhat awkward. Despite the obvious flaws, this title is sure to be popular with Stevens's fans and youngsters who crave "funny books."?Heide Piehler, Shorewood Public Library, WI  
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Ages 4^7. Large, dynamic double-page-spread paintings are only part of the charm of this very funny picture book. Easily recognizable as a trickster tale (Stevens' source note roots the story in European folktales and slave stories of the American South), this features appealing, contemporary cousins of Brer Rabbit and Brer Bear. Here, Bear and Hare are involved in a gardening partnership, with industrious, clever Hare reaping all the vegetable profits. As usual, Stevens' animal characters, bold and colorful, are delightful. Hare, decked out in a lively gardening shirt and surrounded by mischievous offspring, is the image of determination. It's Bear, however, who wins the personality prize: he snoozes away each planting season squashed in his favorite chair, changing positions with each flip of the page. It's all wonderful fun, and the book opens, fittingly, from top to bottom instead of from side to side, making it perfect for story-time sharing. Stephanie Zvirin

A little one of my acquaintance checked this book out from the library, and liked it so much she wanted her own copy. I obliged. I won't recount the story, which is well covered in the book description. (This is a short children's book, after all.) While I wasn't happy to see the bear portrayed as a lazy layabout, I thought it was a cute book. Some have criticized it as glorifying the hare for tricking the bear. But the world is full of tricksters, and another message is that you should understand a deal before you agree to it. The hare and his family worked hard. And so, eventually, did the bear. So chill and have some fun with this book.

We used this book as a springboard for education about Michigan's vegetable farmers at our corn maze last year. Teachers loved the book, many had used it for years to teach 4-8 year olds about crops growing on top, in the middle and on the bottom of a plant. We had stations throughout our maze with veggie information. Young visitors had a card with a game to do as they found the stations, so when they emerged from the maze their field trip was both aMAZEingly fun, as well as meeting science and nutrition curriculum goals.

My kindergarteners enjoyed this book. They learned A LOT about how vegetables grow cute story for younger children. (K-2nd grade) explaining how we eat the roots of plants sometimes, and sometimes we eat the tops, and sometimes we eat the middle!

Very engaging book for learning about plants and how they grow.

I love this book. I read it to my preschool class every year. I needed a new copy. The one at school is missing. I can't go a year without reading it to my class

My students adored this story!

This is a great book to teach diligence. I read it to my kids when they were little, now I bought it for my classroom. Came in great condition.

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