

Title		Come Away from the Water, Shirley			
Author (Text & Illustration)		John Burningham			
Publication Year		1977	Publisher	Random House Children's Publishers UK	
Translated Versions		Japanese translation available			
Words	130	Pages	32	YLLevel	2.4
Synopsis					
<p>The story revolves around a holiday that the young female protagonist, Shirley, and her parents spend at the beach. Setting up a deck chair, Shirley's mother knits diligently, drinks tea, and relaxes. Her father opens a newspaper while smoking a pipe, but dozes off to the lullaby of the waves. Time flows peacefully. While relaxing, they tell Shirley to play with the other children and not to hit her friends with the stones she was throwing, among other things.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Shirley is alone in a fantasy world where she fights with pirates, gets a pirate flag, and finds a map of a treasure island, along with a dog she met at the beach. By the time she finds the treasure chest and triumphantly returns like a queen, it is almost dark, and time for her to go home. Shirley eventually returns to the real world and goes home with her family.</p>					
Introduction					
<p>The author, John Burningham (1936 – 2019), was an English illustrator. He won the Kate Greenaway Medal for illustration and produced many popular works. <i>Courtney</i> and <i>Would You Rather...</i> are other works of his, which are introduced on this website.</p> <p>This picture book has two-page spread that illustrates the world inhabited according to adults and children. The left page depicts the real world and includes images of Shirley's parents as well as their dialogue, while the right page shows Shirley's imaginary world entirely through pictures. Young children often move back and forth between the real and fantasy worlds. You've probably seen children posing as characters from children's TV shows (e.g., Gorengers or Shinkengers) or battling against invisible enemies and challenging them to fight. Like most children, Shirley seems to love stories that involve pirates. Gazing at the sea, she dreams of rowing away in a small boat from the shore, boarding a pirate ship, and going on a great adventure.</p> <p>Absorbed in this fantasy world, Shirley sees her parents looking straight at her. Despite being in her fictional world, she knows that her parents are always with her and watching over her</p>					

though she may feel nagged at times (and she even pretends not to hear them), she is able to freely move between the different worlds because of the security she feels from having her parents nearby.

This effective use of left- and right-page spreads in this work illustrates people who may be in the same place, but are different worlds, and makes for an interesting exploration of whether the worlds of adults and children (or others) ever intersect from a reader's perspective. Although seemingly short and simple at first glance, the story allows for multiple readings and interpretations, depending on the age and the perspective of the reader. If you read the 1977 first edition, you will see how Burningham was a pioneer among postmodern picture book writers such as Anthony Browne.

Notes

A portion of this text is a substantially revised version of the draft frontispiece, "Seeking Inspirational Picture Books" [Ehon o Sagashini]" [5] from *English Teachers' Magazine*, October 2019 (Vol. 68, No.5), TAISHUKAN Publishing Co., Ltd.

(Text: Yuka Kusanagi)