

Title		It Might be an Apple			
Author (Text & Illustration)		Shinsuke Yoshitake			
Publication Year		2015	Publisher	Thames & Hudson	
Original Version		Japanese translation available			
Words	678	Pages	32	YL Level	N/A
Synopsis					
<p>When the boy comes home from school, he finds an apple on the kitchen table. "It's an apple," he immediately thinks, and then he starts to question himself. "No, wait a minute, maybe it's not an apple." "Maybe it's a huge cherry." "Maybe it's a curled-up goldfish." And his ideas keep coming, "This might be an egg of some kind" "This is a planet that crashed into the earth with 3mm-tall apple aliens crawling around on it." And finally, lost in deep thought, he wonders, "Maybe this apple has seen the history of the earth from the beginning of time until the present day." This is a book that makes you want to keep on turning the pages to see how this series of increasingly wild speculations will be resolved.</p>					
Introduction					
<p>Shinsuke Yoshitake is an extremely popular picture book author who constantly comes up with new work. He has a patented method of adding a touch of deconstructive approach (i.e., looking at things that are considered unique and absolute in an unconventional way; a new and unusual perspective of the world) to his goofy art style and simple text, and <i>It Might Be an Apple</i> is a picture book that is true to his signature style. He published numerous unpredictable yet heartwarming picture books such as <i>Can I Build Another Me?</i> <i>What Happens Next?</i> <i>The Boring Book</i>, <i>The I Wonder Bookstore</i>, and <i>Still Stuck</i>; however, I don't think there are any that surpass "Apples" yet. While all of the aforementioned picture books have already been translated into English, <i>It Might be an Apple</i> still stands out.</p> <p>The greatest feature of <i>It Might be an Apple</i> is that it gives readers, even elementary school students, a postmodern way of looking at things—that is, what you see and possibly take for granted is not all there is to something, that a subtle change in perspective can make you see things quite differently. As the boy makes various theories about the apple, the reader naturally begins to think that there might be other plausible interpretations.</p> <p>In fact, "What you see with your eyes is not necessarily real" is a phrase that appears in Haruki Murakami's story, "A Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" published shortly after the Great Hanshin Earthquake and the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995. After the Great Hanshin Earthquake, many Japanese people lost their belief in a firm, unshakable, indestructible world and the sarin gas attack served as a reminder of the dangers of "goodness" and "justice." "A Super-Frog Saves Tokyo" is a masterpiece that describes how to live in a world that has lost such absolute</p>					

values. With the rapid spread of social networking sites since then, "what you see with your eyes is not necessarily real" has started to become universally accepted principle. Although we know that the images and videos posted on Facebook and Instagram do not always reflect reality; however, we still enjoy them. Every day, we are bombarded with "untrustworthy" information in the form of fake news and alternative facts. It is easy to be frustrated with living a world wherein we don't know who or what we can trust.

It Might be an Apple serves as a remedy during these rather uncertain times. This book will teach you to turn a situation of "What you see is not necessarily true" into something positive and amusing. It might even make you wonder whether it would be nice to consider an alternative interpretation of things...

The best part in the Japanese version is the page that lists down the apple's siblings in the Japanese alphabetic order, "Ango, Ingo, Ungo..." with 50 different apple-like pictures. In the English translation, this is accordingly replaced with English versions. The author drew an apple-like shape associated with the Japanese sound "Ango" in the Japanese version, but the English version has words associated with the picture there. Readers should note that the Japanese and English sounds associated with one form are different.

Related work/Reference URL

[Other recommended picture books by Shinsuke Yoshitake]

- *Can I Build Another Me?* (Thames & Hudson, 2016) (Japanese translation available)
- *Still Stuck* (Thames & Hudson, 2017) (Japanese translation available)
- *What Happens Next?* (Thames & Hudson, 2016) (Japanese translation available)
- *The I Wonder Bookstore* (Chronicle Books, 2019) (Japanese translation available)
- *The Boring Book* (Chronicle Books, 2019) (Japanese translation available)

Notes

A portion of this text is a substantially revised version of the draft frontispiece, "Seeking Inspirational Picture Books" [Ehon o Sagashini] [11] from *English Teachers' Magazine*, February 2020 (Vol. 68, No.12), Taishukan Publishing Co., Ltd.

(Text: Motoko Fukaya)