



2003

Bill in a China Shop

AnnMarie Hamar

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Hamar, AnnMarie (2003) "Bill in a China Shop," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 3 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol24/iss3/2>

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Weaver, Katie. *Bill in a China Shop*. Illustrated by Tim Raglin. Bloomsbury, 2003. ISBN 1582348324. \$16.95. NA pp.

Reviewer: AnnMarie Hamar;

Reading Level: Preschool;

Rating: Excellent;

Genre: Humorous Poetry;

Subject: Bulls--fiction; Rhyming Stories; book—reviews;

Bill is an elegant, Victorian gentleman who has a soft spot for fine china, especially tea cups. Unfortunately, Bill is also a bull. Every china shop he sees has a sign on the door that says, "No Bulls Allowed." Bill is delighted when he finally sees one door with no such sign. Once inside this shop, he sees a delicate tea cup that he simply must have. Getting from the door to the tea cup is not easy for a bull. No matter how careful he tries to be, Bill manages to break almost everything in sight, much to the dismay of the shop clerk who keeps telling him he has no place there. Three ladies enter the shop and, seeing Bill's distress, scold the clerk. They not only buy the tea cup for Bill, they pay for the damage he caused. As a show of thanks Bill invites the three to his house for tea, served in fine porcelain tea cups of course. Bill's story is told in rhyme that flows smoothly and is never forced. The illustrations are the strong point of the story. Bill is endearing with his bulky body in an exquisitely tailored pinstriped suit and top hat. Tim Raglin's humorous and often empathetic ink and watercolor drawings successfully capture Bill's anxiety as he tries not to break any china. The delightful illustrations and the charming character of Bill the Bull are the reason to pick up this book.