



2005

Soft House

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Tidwell, Sandra L. (2005) "Soft House," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 4 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol26/iss4/2>

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Yolen, Jane. *Soft House*. Illustrated by Wendy Anderson Halperin. Candlewick Press, 2005.
ISBN 0763616974. \$15.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Toddler, Preschool, Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Picture Book;

Subject: Play--Juvenile fiction; Brother and sisters--Juvenile fiction; Cats--Juvenile fiction;
Books--Reviews;

Blankets and a flashlight are all you need to play "soft house." Yolen captures the feelings of Alison and her little brother Davey when they find themselves at a loss for what to do on a rainy day. Davey bravely ventures down the long hallway to gather the blankets. Alison gets the flashlight. Then the tricky business of building the house by draping the blankets over the living room couch and chairs and positioning couch cushions and pillows begins. Finally the "soft house" is complete and the children crawl inside. Freshly baked peanut-butter-crunch-chocolate-chip cookies, furnished by their mother, are the finishing touch to their afternoon of checkers, reading, playing with building blocks and other small toys under the magical illumination of a flashlight.

Regular indoor games and activities take on new vitality and interest when inside one of these smaller specially designed play houses. Halperin's realistic and detailed pencil and watercolor illustrations in soft colors bring a cozy feeling to the story. Many page spreads are a collage of illustrations. Especially beautiful is the last page spread which highlights the variety of the children's play inside their "soft house." *Soft House* is a positive story of the strengthening of a brother-sister relationship as they solve their disappointments with the weather and spend a memorable afternoon together indoors. When sharing this story with your children and grandchildren, be prepared to give parameters for building soft houses within your home, for they will surely want to try, even if it's sunny outside!