



The Eleventh Hour: A Curious Mystery

By Graeme Base

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When Horace the elephant turns eleven, he celebrates instyle by inviting his exotic friends to a splendid costume party. But a mystery is afoot, for in the midst of the games, music, and revelry, someone has eaten the birthday feast. The rhyming text and lavish, detailed illustrations each provide clues, and it's up to the reader to piece them together and decide whodunit!"The fun of poring over the pictures is matched by the enjoyment derived from the textwitty, ingenious verses." -- *Publishers Weekly*Graeme Base is the author of many award-winning books for children, including *Animalia* (Puffin), *The Sign of the Seahorse*, and most recently, *The Discovery of Dragons*.

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The Eleventh Hour: A Curious Mystery By Graeme Base Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Reading *The Eleventh Hour* is like running a marathon: one finishes exhausted but satisfied. Graeme Base, creator of the popular *Animalia*, has crafted another intricately wrought, gorgeously illustrated picture book, this time a mystery in verse. When Horace the Elephant decides to throw himself a party for his 11th birthday, he never suspects a crime will be committed by lunchtime. Who has stolen the birthday feast? As with any good mystery, everyone is guilty until proven innocent. The proof lies in the myriad clues embedded in each glorious illustration. Young sleuths will delight in decoding the complex messages that pop up in unexpected places.

Graeme Base used the buildings he saw during his travels through Africa, Asia, and Europe to design and decorate Horace's fantastic house. Astute readers may recognize Roman cathedrals, Scottish palaces, and stone carvings from India. Best of all, secreted in these walls are cryptic messages in Egyptian hieroglyphics, anagrams, and even Morse code to challenge the perceptive and deductive abilities of any reader "of tender years or long in tooth." *The Eleventh Hour* is a brilliant, rigorous, creative romp that no child (or adult) should miss. (*All Ages*)

From Publishers Weekly

As in Base's *Animalia*, his lush, intricately detailed illustrations in *The Eleventh Hour* comprise a sort of visual hide-and-seek. Here, the stakes are clues to the solution of a mystery: Who has surreptitiously eaten the feast prepared for Horace the Elephant's 11th birthday party? The culprit could be any of a number of exotically costumed animal guests, from a pig dressed as an admiral to a pair of giraffes in tutus to a zebra gone punk. The fun of poring over the pictures for hidden messages and significant particulars is, happily, matched by the enjoyment derived from the text--witty, ingenious verses that ably skirt the singsong or mundane. It will take an exceptionally persistent sleuth to deduce the thief's identity; many readers may resort to breaking the seal to the "top secret" solution. Thus enlightened, those returning to the scenes of the crime may still find some clues difficult to discern; in particular, the large number of concealed "mice" are almost impossible to make out. But it is, as Base points out, the thrill of the chase that matters most; and on this count the work scores high marks. All ages.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 3-6-- This picture book is a puzzle mystery written in verse. When Horace the elephant turns 11, he decides to throw an elaborate birthday party and invites 11 friends. The animal guests arrive in costume, and entertain themselves with a variety of activities until it is time to eat. When the 11th hour arrives, however, they are horrified to find that the entire feast has been eaten. All guests protest their innocence, and Horace comes through with sandwiches to save the day. What remains is for readers to discover the culprit. "The Inside Story," a sealed section of pages containing the solution to the mystery and explanations of the plethora of clues and puzzles in the book, follows the story. Intricate watercolor and acrylic paintings in vibrant colors crowd each page, assaulting readers with activity and detail. Both text and paintings are framed by black-and-white decorative borders that provide still more detail. After either breaking a code through careful observation (very, very careful, one must assume) or checking "The Inside Story," readers will uncover the identity of the villains. They are hidden everywhere: in the borders and in the body of the illustrations, but only very patient, persistent children will be motivated to detect every one of them. --

Corinne Camarata, Port Washington Public Library, NY

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marilyn Daniels:

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Lucille Roller:

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Mae Bushee:

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