

PICTURE BOOKS

**Chubby Wubbles**

M. J. Abrams

Trafford Publishing

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Four Stars (out of Five)

Scurry, scamper, and waddle with a feisty ferret called Chubby in this cute, action-oriented picture book.

A lonely young ferret gets a new owner and more adventure than he bargained for in this real-life tale that will appeal to all ages. A story of unfolding friendship, *Chubby Wubbles* is told in simple text and wonderful color photographs.

Renamed Chubby, the ferret is happy and content with being Jeffrey's pet. This slim book conveys the friendship between the two, as an omniscient narrator ticks off the many funny nicknames attached to Chubby and his interest in wrestling with his owner's shoes. Other times, it's Chubby himself who voices his concerns: "I wonder if he visits with another ferret when he leaves the house?"

The birds, squirrels, and geese residing near a close-by pond pique Chubby's interest when he's walked on his leash, and he often daydreams about becoming friends with them as well.

Then, one day, Chubby disappears. Young audiences shouldn't be alarmed for long, however, as the tale unfolds from both the animal and human perspectives, heading toward a happy conclusion.

Photographs of the young, doe-eyed ferret and his environs are prominently displayed on each page, making for a fun "aww!" factor for children.

The story flows at a good pace, and the writing is very descriptive, with a lot of action and active words. Chubby doesn't just move around—he scurries, scampers, and waddles—unless, of course, he's fallen asleep, which readers are told he can do almost anywhere, "but he liked his own bed most of all."

Children will identify with the young ferret's wonder at the world, innocence, and unbridled curiosity, which lead him into potential disaster. Jeffrey is a kind caretaker who, by

his actions, shows how much Chubby means to him, so it's a mutually beneficial relationship.

Author M. J. Abrams retired after four decades at Ford Motor Co. Not a pet owner, he nonetheless took over the care of his son's ferret when the son left for a long-distance job. Recalling the fun interactions between the two, Abrams was inspired to write this book, his first. The author also includes a website featuring more photos of the real Chubby.

A little distracting is the lack of punctuation around the dialogue in some spots, but kids will probably only notice Chubby's inquisitive personality because "Jeffrey often found missing stuff in the strangest places."

*Robin Farrell Edmunds*