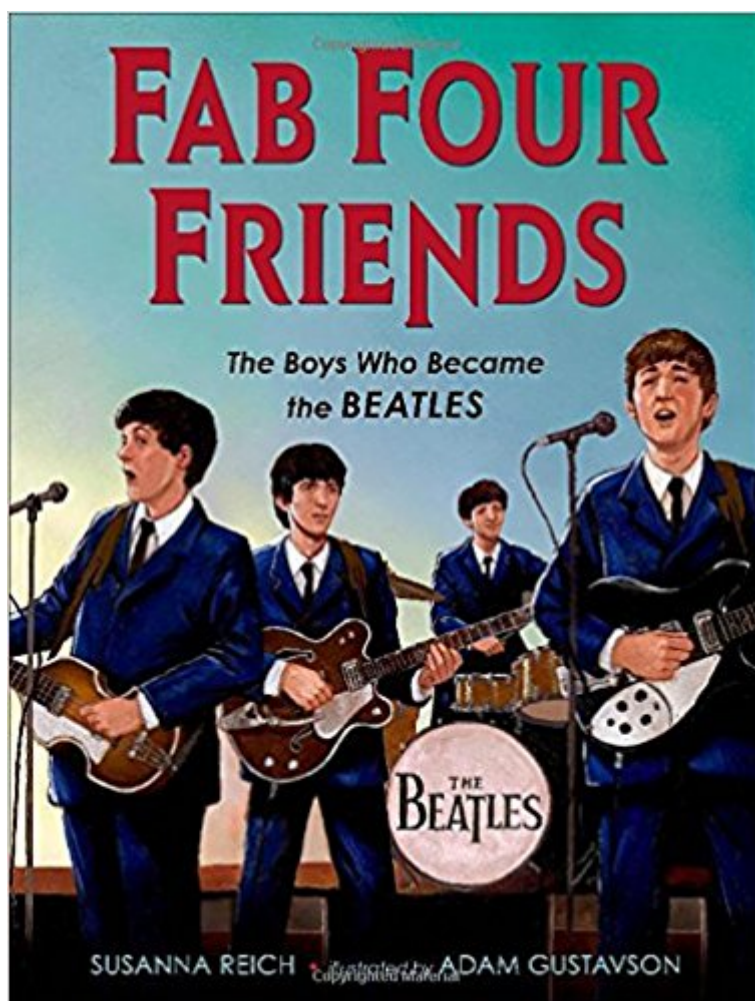




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Fab Four Friends: The Boys Who Became The Beatles



Synopsis

In 1957 in Liverpool, England, a young lad named John Lennon and his band played music at a local church fair. In the audience was Paul McCartney, who liked what he heard and soon joined the group. Paul's friend George Harrison kept showing up at rehearsals until the older boys finally let him in. Eventually they found the perfect drummer, Ringo Starr, and the perfect name: The Beatles. Told through a lyrical text and stunning paintings, this book spotlights four ordinary boys growing up amid the rubble of postwar England who found music to be a powerful, even life-saving, force.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 880 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

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Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 5

Customer Reviews

Gr 2-5 — This beautiful picture book is an affectionate tribute to the Fab Four, describing their childhoods and adolescence and concluding right as they began their rise to fame. Though on the lengthy side, the text is conversational and includes details that humanize the band. As Reich states in her author's note, she's a longtime Beatles devotee, and her enthusiasm is obvious from her copious research: there are quotes from the four sprinkled liberally throughout, all cited in the back matter. Positively dripping with nostalgia, the rich oil paintings have a retro, Norman Rockwell-esque flavor, depicting classic scenes (the Beatles in their early days, kitted out in leather) as well as re-creating moments from the boys' childhood, such as John Lennon dancing with his mother, Julia. Gustavson makes expert use of shadow and light, and there are some truly

striking images here. This is a gorgeous love letter to an unforgettable band, though adult fans will most likely appreciate this effort more than children. While potentially unfamiliar terms—such as Teddy boy or scousers—are defined in the glossary, they may prove off-putting to those unfamiliar with 1960s England; educators may want to provide background for readers. Pair this title with Mick Manning and Brita Granström's slightly more comprehensive *The Beatles* (Frances Lincoln, 2014) for a unit on Beatlemania. VERDICT An attractive offering, ideal for those seeking to introduce older elementary school students to the quartet. —Mahnaz Dar, School Library Journal

A Bank Street College Best Book of the Year “Gustavson's naturalistic oil illustrations capture individual band-members' personalities and fans' excitement, complementing the well-orchestrated text. The Horn Book “[A] grand and archetypal tale . . . the closing cornucopia of Beatles books, audio, video, and websites will also help to fill in the blanks. First steps on the long and winding road. —Kirkus Reviews “Reich concentrates on the qualities that brought them together, focusing especially on their humor, their work ethic, and their consummate musicianship. Gustavson's luminous oil paintings capture likenesses and personalities that are utterly recognizable, even when the bandmates are just little boys and teens. —Booklist “A fine recipe for pleasure: Julia Child, the culinary arts, Paris and a lucky cat. Magnifique! —Kirkus Reviews, starred review on *Minette's Feast* “[A] charming conceit. —Booklist, starred review on *Minette's Feast* “...feast for the senses —School Library Journal, starred review on *Minette's Feast*

I have been a fan of the Beatles since the early 1960s. I thought I knew most everything about them. I was wrong. I found the book very educational and inspiring. I knew they grew up poor, but did not know all the other adversities they had to overcome. Mr. Gustavson's illustrations are great and add bring more life to the book and are a great compliment. I am an avid fan of his work and have a large collection of his books. I bought copies for my grandchildren. I cannot wait for his next book.

Love the illustrations. This book came in perfect condition and the quality exceeded my expectations. I'm Happy!

Great story and brilliant illustrations! A win-win!

When I was 15, I read Hunter Davies's bio of the Beatles, and decided that day that I wanted to become some sort of artist. Reading Susanna Reich's *FAB FOUR FRIENDS*, I got that same feeling all these years later. Telling the story of each Beatle individually, and then as their part in the group, we get a feel for each piece of the puzzle that each member brought with them. Reich starts a story that we know will end with world-wide fame, but somehow brings us back to a time when they were young and success was still far away and uncertain, But it's the feeling of being a teenager and finding kindred spirits, of being young enough to think anything is possible, and being just old enough to begin to make it happen, that the author makes come alive in the pages of this book. The art is likewise as good. Not showing venues like the Cavern or the Art Institute or the homes of the Beatles directly, you get a feel for the city that was large and unsympathetic at times, the very modest homes, and the cramped cheap clubs they played in. One picture of a double-decker bus at night is brilliant, We know that George Harrison is playing his audition piece for John, with Paul beside him, But we see it from the outside of the bus, just three teenagers riding home and probably having to scrounge for the fare. I hope some kid comes across this book, and gets a chance to hear their music, and the music that inspired their music, and makes that kid decide he or she wants to become some sort of artist.

Summary: Most kids today have heard of the Beatles, but many would be hard-pressed to come up with the names John, Paul, George, and Ringo, let alone give any details about the Fab Four. This book goes back to the early days of the four lads growing up in post-war Liverpool. Each band member is given a few pages for his own story, with all the tales eventually coming together with the formation of the Beatles. The book ends shortly after October 1963, just as Beatlemania was beginning to sweep the globe. Back matter includes an author's note telling of her love of the Beatles that began in childhood, a glossary, notes on the many quotes in the text, and additional resources. Grades 2-5. Pros: The Beatles are such a phenomenon, it was interesting to read each boy's story and see them as struggling teenagers who were deeply devoted to music. The illustrations perfectly capture the various personalities of John, Paul, George, and Ringo. Cons: Kids whose grandfathers are younger than Paul and Ringo may not appreciate the Beatles enough to wade through this lengthy picture book.

Who knew? I thought I knew everything about the Beatles---I certainly read enough *Sixteen*

Magazine articles about them in the 60's---but I find, after reading this picture book, that I really knew very little. All four came from poverty and troubled families and I find that very interesting. All four found their way to the Beatles in a less than direct way and I find that very interesting. All four were gifted in unique ways and I find that very interesting. So, who knew? Great children's picture book about four fabulous friends.

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