



## Be Good to Eddie Lee

By Virginia Fleming

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"What makes Fleming's first book so effective are the carefully selected details and authentic portrayal of the children's attitudes -- as well as Cooper's luminous art, summoning up all the enchantment of a lovely summer day and presenting Eddie Lee as believably endearing". -- *Kirkus Reviews*, pointer review

"(A book) that can lead children away from harmful stereotypes and labels". -- *Book Links*

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## Be Good to Eddie Lee By Virginia Fleming Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this touching picture book, a girl discovers a new capacity for friendship when she spends some time with a neighbor boy who has Down's Syndrome. Christy's mother has told her to "be good to Eddie Lee," because he is "lonesome" and "different." Christy, however, would rather go wading with her friend JimBud than be pestered by Eddie Lee. But when Eddie Lee, uninvited, follows the two kids, Christy reluctantly includes her neighbor and is pleasantly surprised at how the afternoon turns out. Fleming's story accurately captures the attitudes and behavior children often adopt when it comes to tolerating peers who are different. Her characters ring true without being stereotypes and her message about acceptance and friendship is poignant, not heavy-handed. Shimmering with summer sunlight, Cooper's oil washes depict a lush and pastoral setting. Sensitive portraits of all three children provide a depth of emotion that supplements the spare, perceptive text. Eddie Lee's facial features clearly identify his mental and physical challenges, but his portrayal remains positive, realistic and non-threatening. This successful collaboration is a rarity for its potential to entertain, educate and encourage deeper consideration for others. Ages 4-8.

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From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 2-On the first day of summer vacation, Christy follows her friend JimBud to a nearby pond, looking for something to do. When Eddie Lee, a child with Down's syndrome, follows them, Christy tells him to stay home, and JimBud tries to chase him away. Only when Eddie Lee leads the girl to a hidden place to show her frog eggs and water lillies does she fully grasp that everyone is special and has unique, individual gifts. Cooper's attractive, full-page borderless scenes of the rural South- waist-high, straw-colored weeds; a clear, rippling stone-bottomed brook; hazy green woods and water-are painted in oil wash, but have the smudgy appearance of oil pastel. Clearly the focus of the illustrations is the insightfully realistic portraits of Eddie Lee, and it is Cooper's artful accompaniment to the text that truly brings out the author's positive message. Berniece Rabe's *Where's Chimpy?* (Albert Whitman, 1988) is aimed at three to five-year-olds, as is Cairo Jasmine's *Our Brother Has Down's Syndrome* (Annick, 1985). *Be Good to Eddie Lee* is welcome for slightly older children, but mostly for the realism it exudes rather than the somewhat contrived story.

*Susan Scheps, Shaker Heights Public Library, OH*

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From [Booklist](#)

Ages 5-8. Christy begins to see and appreciate the beauty of her rural environs under the guidance of Eddie Lee, a young neighbor with Down's syndrome. At first, Christy only tolerates Eddie Lee's companionship at her mother's insistence; she would rather spend her long summer days exploring the woods with pal JimBud. But Eddie Lee persistently follows the pair and ingeniously demonstrates his superior knowledge of and sensitivity to nature. He shows Christy how to catch a salamander, where to find frog eggs and a hidden lake of water lilies, and, most importantly, when to leave creatures undisturbed. A single scene in which Eddie Lee and Christy compare their distorted images in a rippled pond seems unnecessarily heavy-handed, but the portrayal of Eddie Lee as a wise and independent youngster easily overcomes this flaw. Impressionistic oil wash paintings fairly glow with the sunshine that filters through the wooded scenes, a technique that also softens the features of Eddie Lee and his friends, diminishing their physical differences. This title will undoubtedly be valued for its Down's syndrome theme, but detailed references to the pyracantha bush, the belted kingfisher, and the "beaver-gnawed birches," supported by Cooper's luminous paintings, also recommend it as a nature story. *Elizabeth Bush*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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