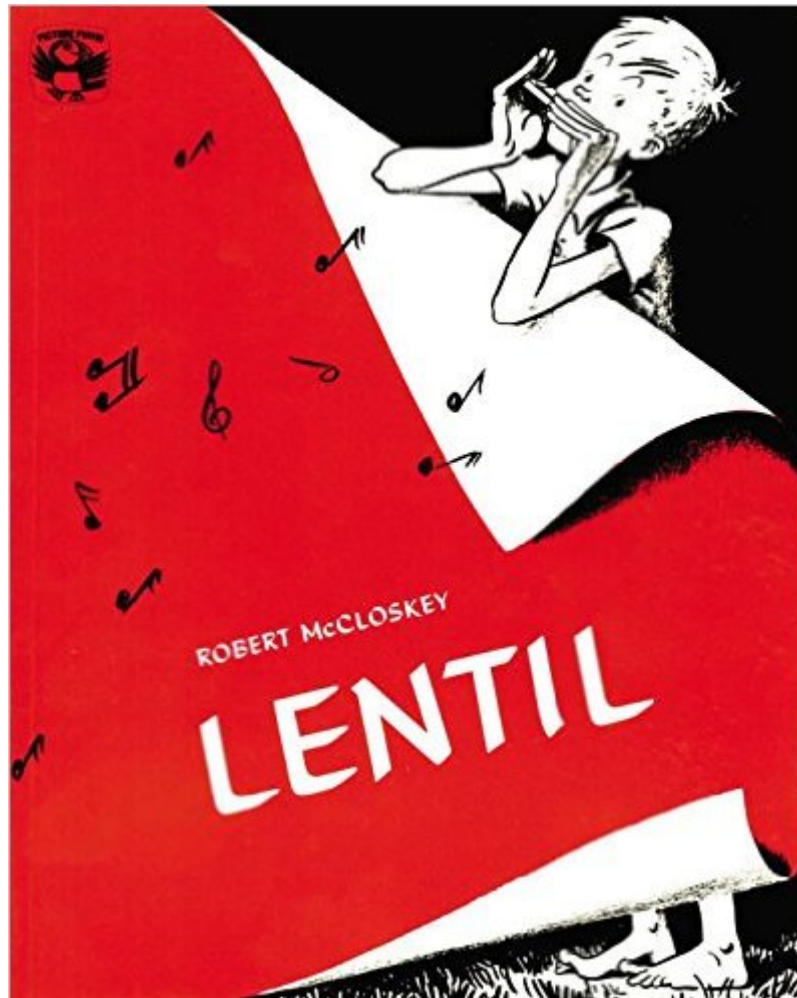


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# Lentil (Picture Puffin Books)



## Synopsis

Lentil's harmonica playing saves the day when calamity threatens the homecoming celebration for the leading citizen of Alto, Ohio.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD890L (What's this?)

Series: Picture Puffin Books

Paperback: 64 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books (April 27, 1978)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140502874

ISBN-13: 978-0140502879

Product Dimensions: 7.1 x 0.2 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #51,724 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

[Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > City Life](#) #185 in [Books > Children's Books > Arts,](#)

[Music & Photography > Performing Arts](#) #15942 in [Books > Reference](#)

Age Range: 3 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 2

## Customer Reviews

This is an excellent book for the musically inclined child whose singing voice is a little less than melodious. In the book, the vocally challenged Lentil finds his mantra through the harmonica and ends up saving the day with it. My father gave me this book along with a harmonica when I was seven years old in response to my wobbly warbling, and I've been playing harmonica and many other instruments ever since. I just can't 'harp' enough on how great of inspiration this book was to me and could be for other vocally vexed children. -stephen

This is a lovely story set in a town in Ohio during the '40s. Lentil learns to play a harmonica and there are sweet scenes of small town life as well as a marching band. My 3.5 year old son loves this book, along with all of McCloskey's books. What has been wonderful for us about this book is the character of "Old Sneep", who grumbles and does mean things. This has really hit home with my son regarding our teaching of having a joyful heart and not complaining. Great literature at its best.

As a retired preschool/ daycare administrator I never hesitate to say that McCloskey is one the all-time great writers . Lentil has always been one of the best books to read at story time . You can't go wrong with buying this story for your favorite 4 or 5 year old, but even my 9 year old grandsons love this tale, and it got them interested in playing a harmonica!

My daughter's favorite book. We used this book with FIAR and it ended up being our daughter's favorite book. It has so many great aspects to delve into. War hero, young man....old "Sneep". Just a great book

This is a great nostalgic book for a middle America that really doesn't exist anymore. A small town in central Ohio supported by a robber baron with a kid who plays the harmonica and runs to school in the morning - it doesn't get anymore nostalgic than that. And the fun of Old Sneep (sucking on a lemon), the great Colonel Carter, and, of course, Lentil (with his harmonica) really makes this a great book. It's also substantive without being too long, which is nice for parents who have to read lots of books to their kids.

This is an old 'classic' book, illustrations are black and white but still very adorable. Lentil is a little boy that wants so bad to sing; but he simply can't. So he saves his money and gets a harmonica and teaches himself to play. He plays it everywhere he goes. A big parade to welcome a special town man coming to town is scheduled but when the train arrives with the man the band can't play! But Lentil brings out his harmonica and saves the day!

Like a 10-year old Jimmy Stewart (with a dash of Woody Guthrie thrown in) Lentil is an American Hero in that straight-backed, flinty but cheerful Depression-era style. He has ears that stick out, a relaxed, gawky gait, and a crooked grin. Like Stewart, Lentil has a way of facing adversity head-on, with a wink and a nod as if to say, "Aw, shucks. We'll figure this out. Times are tough but we'll make it!" Sort of perfect for the big economic meltdown of 2009, isn't it? At its heart, this book is about ingenuity and self-sufficiency. But your child won't really know that, since it's also a crackingly good, fast-paced story with enough humor and weird little details to demand multiple readings. I wouldn't call it "tough," exactly, but it's so far from the saccharine sweetness that afflicts current children's literature that in comparison, Lentil can seem more like a collection of Walker Evans photographs than a kid's book. Depicting the town of Alto, Ohio, as a dusty little burg populated with clapboard

buildings and stray cats, a place where nobody has much, but everyone is strong, McCloskey paints an almost documentary-style picture of small-town America in the 30's. Of course, since his incredibly evocative pencil drawings leap off the page with such humor and humanity, there's never a risk of declining into maudlin sentiment or (shudder) *Teaching Big Lessons*. The story starts off with a big obstacle for our hero: Lentil is so musically disinclined, he's forbidden to sing in music class. His voice scares the local cats and dogs. The poor kid can't even whistle! But does he let it get him down? No. Does he give up on the idea of making music? Wouldn't hear of it! No, Lentil saves up his pennies and gets himself to the store to buy a harmonica. Keeping with the self-sufficient theme, Lentil's family appears nowhere in this book. (I kind of imagine his father hitching a ride on the Burlington Northern to look for work while his mother sweeps dust off the porch and gazes worriedly into the distance. But that's just me.) Continuing on his path to self-reliance, he practices his harmonica constantly, including during his walks to and from school. Your kids will note that not only does Lentil carry his books on a leather strap (no backpack), the kid doesn't even have SHOES. And yet, he is ridiculously happy. Yes, this book raises as many questions as it does answers, something that I consider a key to its success. I still remember demanding: "So, sucking on a lemon in front of a marching band will make it impossible for them to play their trumpets? Really?" Now, I don't want to give too much away, but the entire plot hinges on this point: a grumpy old guy loudly sucks on a lemon and causes an epidemic of mass puckering, destroying Alto's big parade and leaving only one option for our modest, shoeless, harmonica-wielding hero: **SAVING THE DAY**. Something all kids can relate to. As the closing line puts it so succinctly: "You never can tell what will happen when you learn to play the harmonica." But be warned: if you don't already own one, buy one before you read this book to your kids. Trust me.

I bought this book for our two youngest children to enjoy as our local library doesn't have it on their shelves. The pictures are beautiful and the story is just as charming. It is a good book to purchase for younger children who may be experiencing some insecurity when it comes to keeping up with their peers' accomplishments. This story focuses on the importance of music (as a means of self-expression and celebration of life), the ability to remain focused when all doesn't go as planned (Lentil saves the day when he plays his harmonica at the Homecoming Celebration for Col. Carter), and acceptance of accomplishments of others (Even old Sneep is happy about the hospital that Colonel Carter is having built for the townspeople).

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