



Pictus Orbis Sambo, The: A Publishing History, Checklist and Price Guide for the Story of Little Black Sambo

Books Reviewed:

[Pictus Orbis Sambo, The: A Publishing History, Checklist and Price Guide for the Story of Little Black Sambo](#) [1]

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[Nick Tucker](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This year sees the centenary of Helen Bannerman's famous and later infamous picture book **The Story of Little Black Sambo**. Originally written and illustrated for her own children, it was an immediate success on publication, predating Beatrix Potter in its use of a small format with brightly coloured pictures accompanying a minimal but highly effective text. One of the first picture books with a black hero who was both resourceful and ultimately successful, it fell on hard times during the 1960s when the main character's name and exaggerated Negroid features were accused of fostering racial prejudice. Schools and libraries ceased to stock a title that had become so controversial, and while it remained on sale its popularity virtually disappeared.

For those who would like to read more about the book, its remarkable author and a history of the arguments surrounding it, Barton has now produced a vast, authoritative study of what is still one of the most famous titles in children's literature. Separate chapters deal with the book's ancestry in terms of other publications featuring black characters and how the story appears in the many different illustrated versions published over the last century. It makes for a fascinating study, but move soon if you want a copy: this edition is limited to only 1000 copies.

Running Order:

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Links:

[1] <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/pictus-orbis-sambo-the-a-publishing-history-checklist-and-price-guide-for-the-story>

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