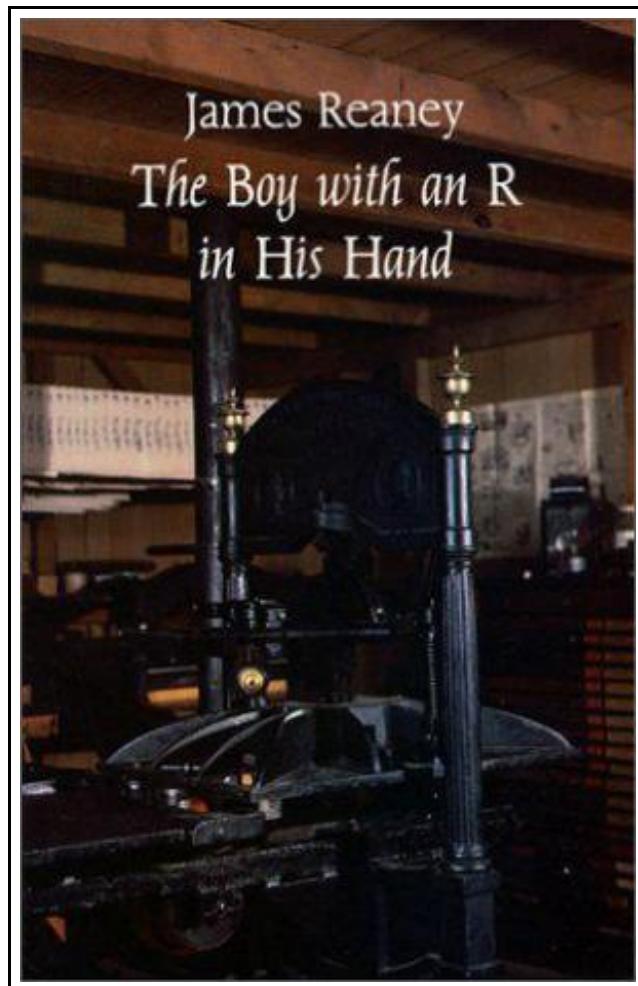


The Boy With an R in His Hand



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Reviews

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(Dr. Brannon Wolf)*

THE BOY WITH AN R IN HIS HAND

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Erin, Ontario, Canada: Porcupines Quill, 1980. Soft cover. Book Condition: New. 2nd Edition. Original printed wraps. 112 pp. Octavo. `It is a pleasure to find that James Reane's first book for children, first published by Macmillan of Canada in 1965, has just been re-issued in a handsome paperback edition, complete with the original illustrations by Leo Rampen. The Boy with an R in His Hand tells the story of two orphan brothers who arrive in York from the Red River Settlement in 1826 and quickly become involved with the complex politics of Upper Canada. Joel, the elder brother, aligns himself with the Family Compact and his overbearing, stuffy uncle, while Alex, more imaginative and courageous, becomes an apprentice to William Lyon Mackenzie at the Colonial Advocate. There he (and the reader) learn in some detail about Mackenzie's press and the art of type-setting. Alex, rather improbably, ``had it set up right, and from that moment on his progress in the skill of type-setting was like a house on fire.'' This is a satisfying, fast-moving story, full of incident and detail about colonial life. It climaxes with the wrecking of Mackenzie's printshop and press by a band of young Tories acting with the implicit approval of the government, at the end of which Alex finds a single capital R, his souvenir of life as a printer's apprentice. Recommended for ages nine and up, as a piece of Canadiana which enlivens history for the young reader.' - Marilyn Rueter, The Devil's Artisan. Printed offset by Tim Inkster on the Heidelberg KORD at the printing office of the Porcupine's Quill in the Village of Erin, Wellington County, Ontario, Canada. Smyth sewn into 16-page signatures.

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