

Everybody Needs a Rock by Byrd Baylor.
Aladdin Books

Everybody
Needs a Bpck

by Byrd Baylor
Illustrated by Valerie Sinclair

Everybody
needs
a rock.

I'm sorry for kids
who don't have
a rock
for a friend.

I'm sorry for kids who only have TRICYCLES BICYCLES

HORSES ELEPHANTS GOLDFISH

THREE ROOM PLAYHOUSES
FIRE ENGINES
WIND UP DRAGONS
AND THINGS LIKE THAT

if they don't have a rock for a friend.

if somebody says,
"What's so special
about that rock?"
don't even tell them,

I don't.

Nobody
is supposed
to know
what's special
about another person's rock.

All right. Here are the rules:

RULE NUMBER 1

If you can, go to a mountain made out of nothing but
a hundred million small shiny beautiful roundish rocks.

But if you can't, anyplace will do.
Even an alley. Even a sandy road.

RULE NUMBER 2

When you are looking at rocks don't let mothers or fathers
or sisters or brothers or even best friends talk to you.

You should choose
a rock when everything is quiet.

Don't let dogs bark
at you or bees buzz at you.

But if they do, DON'T WORRY.

(The worst thing you can do is go
rock hunting when you are worried.)

You may have to sit on the ground with your head almost touching the earth.

You have to look a rock right in the eye.

RULE NUMBER 3

Dont get a rock that is too big.

You'll always be sorry. It won't fit your hand right and it won't fit your pocket.

Dont choose a rock that is too small.It will only be easy to lose or a mouse might eat it thinking that it is a seed.

Otherwise, don't blame me if you can't find it.

A rock as big as an apple is too big. A rock as big as a horse is MUCH too big.

(Believe me, that happened to a boy in the state of Arizona.)

The size must be perfect, and has to feel easy in your hand when you put your fingers over it. It has to feel jumpy in your pocket when you run.

Some people touch a rock a thousand times a day.

There aren't many things that feel as good as a rock- if the rock is perfect.

RULE NUMBER 6

The shape of the rock is up to you.

(There is a girl in Alaska who only likes flat rocks.
Don't ask me why. I like them lumpy.)

RULE NUMBER 7

Look for the perfect color.

That could be a sort of pinkish gray with bits of silvery shine in it. Some rocks that look brown are really other colors, but you only see them when you squint and when the sun is right.

Another way to see colors is to dip your rock in a dear mountain stream if one is passing by.

The thing to remember about shapes is this:
Any rock looks good with a hundred other rocks around it on a hill. But if your rock is going to be special it should look good by itself in the bathtub.

RULE NUMBER 9

Always sniff a rock. Rocks have their own smells.
Some kids can tell by sniffing whether a rock came from the middle of the earth or from an ocean or from a mountain where wind and sun touched it every day -for a million years.

You'll find out that grown-ups can't tell these things. Too bad for them. They just can't smell as well

as kids can.
RULE NUMBER 8

Don't ask anybody to help you choose. I've seen a lizard pick one rock out of a desert full of rocks and go sit there alone.

I've seen a snail pass up twenty rocks and spend all day getting to the one it wanted. You have to make up your own mind You'll know.

All right, that's ten rules. If you think of any more write them down yourself. I'm going out to play a game that takes just me and one rock to play.

I happen to have
a rock here in my hand.