



Simpler World



In the spring, Sarah and Grandpa plant a garden. They water, and Grandpa's garden grows and grows. One day, Sarah comes for lunch. To her surprise, everything is from Grandpa's garden—mint tea, salad, spaghetti sauce, zucchini bread. They finish their lunch and sit out in the sun by the garden. It's a simple story of timeless joys.

It's not always that simple in the books of Judith Goldberg Caseley, the author/illustrator of 14 children's titles published by Greenwillow Books

Grandpa's Garden Lunch © 1990 by Judith Caseley; published by Greenwillow Books, a division of William Morrow & Company.

(among them, *Grandpa's Garden Lunch*). In *Harry and Willy and Carrothead*, three friends learn of friendship and prejudice. *When Grandpa Came to Stay* is a tale of death and grieving. *Ada Potato* is about confronting bullies.

Caseley's illustrations, on the other hand, are unerringly simple—instantly appealing scenes in soft watercolors and light outlines. Clever background and border details lend a richness that entertains even the adult through multiple readings. Caseley's characters are uniformly friendly (and a little extra round).

Caseley, also the author of a young-adult novel, *Kisses*, graduated from the College of Visual and Performing Arts in 1973. She was a greeting card artist prior to creating *Molly Pink*, the story of a child

whose stage fright disappears when family members in the audience remember to avert their gaze.

In her work, certain values recur: the comfort of family relations, the importance of empathy, and a faith that true-hearted behavior creates the happiest ending. She calls *When Grandpa Came to Stay* her "most satisfying story." Benny is delighted to have Grandpa move in, until one day Grandpa misses his dead wife and breaks into tears. "I don't like Grandpas who cry," Benny says and runs into his room.

"It's one that makes adults cry," Caseley says—while helping children to accept and understand.

—DANA L. COOKE