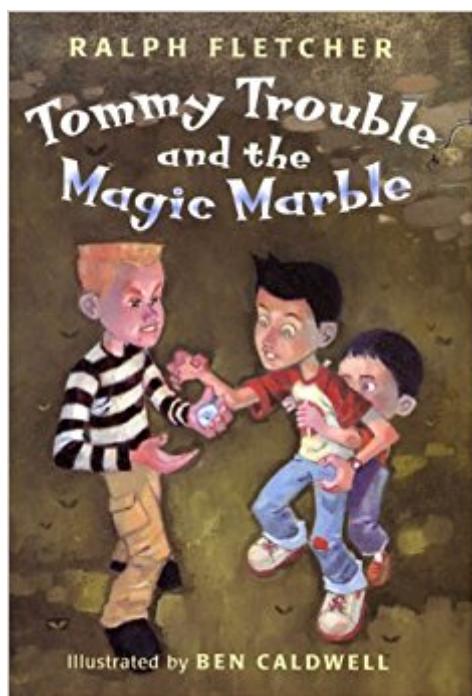


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# Tommy Trouble And The Magic Marble



## **Synopsis**

In the living room Tommy sat on the time-out rug. Mom made him sit there whenever he got into trouble. And it was all his pesky younger brother Bradley's fault. When big, tough Spencer offered to sell Tommy an unusual playing marble for ten dollars, Tommy recruited Bradley to help him pick Mom's prize-winning roses. For that Tommy ended up on the time-out rug. Bradley was nothing but trouble. And always at his side! Tommy was so furious he started throwing rocks at a beehive. But it was Bradley who was stung by the angry bees and had to be rushed to the hospital. Tommy sat himself down on the time-out rug and thought. Maybe owning the magic marble wasn't as important as having a little brother who thinks you're someone special .... Ralph Fletcher has created an entertaining, fun-filled story that is sure to appeal to children who have graduated from beginning readers. Be it an older sibling, a younger one, or an only child, readers will be taken with this book's well-defined characters, crisp dialogue and fast-moving plot. Ben Caldwell's humorous illustrations add even more to the fun.

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 64 pages

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Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 1-3-In this transitional reader, eight-year-old Tommy, a born collector, needs \$10 to purchase a "magic marble" from an older boy. Spencer tells him that it has a net at its center that catches bad dreams. The gullible boy's unsuccessful schemes for getting the marble include picking flowers from

his mother's prize rose garden to sell to a neighbor and trading his little brother's snake for it. However, when Spencer makes fun of his sibling, Tommy finally decides that the magic marble is not worth the trouble. It's unlikely that this slight story line will hold readers' interest, and while marbles still hold a certain fascination for this age group, they are way down on a list headed by Gameboys and Pok mon cards. Rudimentary black-and-white cartoons capture the characters' moods but occasionally appear out of proportion. Overall, Fletcher's book lacks the humor or adventure of Barbara Park's "Junie B. Jones" series or Mary Pope Osborne's "Magic Tree House" books (both Random). Stick with these more appealing choices or others like them. Steve Clancy, Colonial Village Elementary School, Niagara Falls, NY Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 3^4, younger for reading aloud. Tommy loves to collect things, so when Spencer Ross, the neighborhood sharpie, offers to sell a marble that supposedly guarantees protection from nightmares, Tommy wants it--even though the price tag is a steep \$10. Tommy tries various schemes to raise the cash, but they all fail. In frustration, he throws a rock at a beehive, which leads to his little brother's getting stung. Racked with guilt, Tommy has a bad dream that night, which reveals the marble to be a fraud. Fletcher ably captures the affection and the squabbling between siblings, and he dusts the chapter-book text with plenty of dry humor. Today's children may have trouble relating to a story that ends with a game of marbles (does anyone play marbles these days?), but they'll still find lots to enjoy and think about. Ben Caldwell's black-and-white drawings are a plus; they have an angularity that nicely straddles the line between realism and cartoons.

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Tommy and his little brother want to buy a big special marble from a tough kid down the street. But first, they need to find out how to get the money - without trying to sell mom's prize roses! His brother and he find a snake and try to make a trade with that. Several episodes fill the hunt to get such an exciting marble. Each episode is its own chapter and seems to end with Tommy getting into trouble. A nice introduction to chapter books, because the chapters are kept short. Furthermore, kids can relate to Tommy's adventures because the logic he uses is common for 9 year olds. This book is a slight departure from Fletcher's usual intermediate novels but is none the less enjoyable. Why 4 stars?: I liked this book from a teacher's standpoint because of its value as an introductory chapter book and realistic characters (something found in all of Fletcher's books), however, I didn't find the story to be very interesting. This could keep kids from continuing in it and getting a negative feeling

about chapter books. Still, most children will still enjoy it and so it does belong in a classroom. It is already in mine.

This was purchased as a gift for our grand nephew who lives overseas. It is perfect... a nicely kept used book that was very reasonably priced and especially fun for him! His grandparents had suggested it for him.

This is an enjoyable easy chapter book, ideal for a second grader. The AR level is 2.6. Students with a younger sibling will particularly relate to the situations with Tommy and his younger brother Bradley.

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