

On the Nightstand

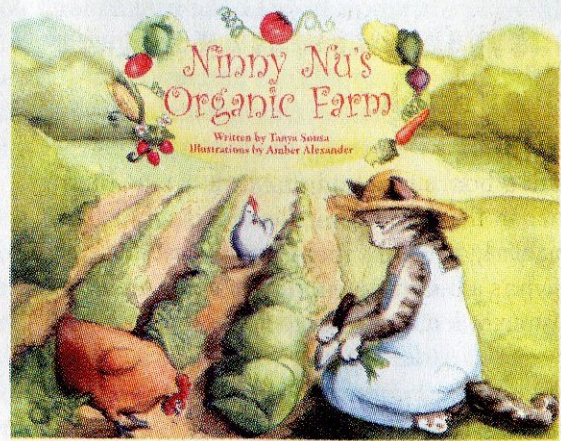
A Bevy of Books

by Stephen Morris

Publishing books for children has to be one of the hardest jobs in the world. Everyone thinks they have a great book for kids within them, and everyone knows someone who's a decent artist. As a result, this is one of the most crowded, most competitive markets on earth.

One of the newest companies to enter the fray is Radiant Hen Publishing that has come out with a three part series of "Agri-Culture Books for Children." Author Tanya Sousa grew up, as she says, hunting for partridge nests, catching frogs, and writing stories." Today she gardens and keeps a flock of egg-laying hens, and these close-to-the land experiences are what shape her stories.

Ninny Nu's Organic Farm, nicely illustrated by Amber Alexander, portrays the contest between conventional Farmer Jack, a rabbit who is not adverse to using pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals, and Ninny Nu, an enlightened cat, to produce the



healthiest, tastiest vegetables, eggs, and other farm products. When the day of judgment comes "although it was shaped a little strangely, the taster took one taste and thought he'd never feasted on a tomato like this before." Ninny Nu, in other words, kicks Farmer Jack's butt.

Similar themes characterize Sousa's other titles *Life is a Bowl of Cherry Pits* (illustrated by Katie Flindall) and "Fairy Feast" (illustrated by Monique Bonneau). Are these great children's books? Certainly they are

On the Nightstand concludes overleaf

On the Nightstand continues

handsomely produced and carry messages likely to be embraced by "friends of the environment." But will they resonate with their intended audience? I have no idea, but I'm sending my copies off to a five year-old named Cassie in Florida to find out. (For more information on these books go to RadiantHen.com)

Karen Speerstra's *Green Devotional: Active Prayers for a Healthy Planet*, (Conari Press, 2010) is an eclectic chorus