



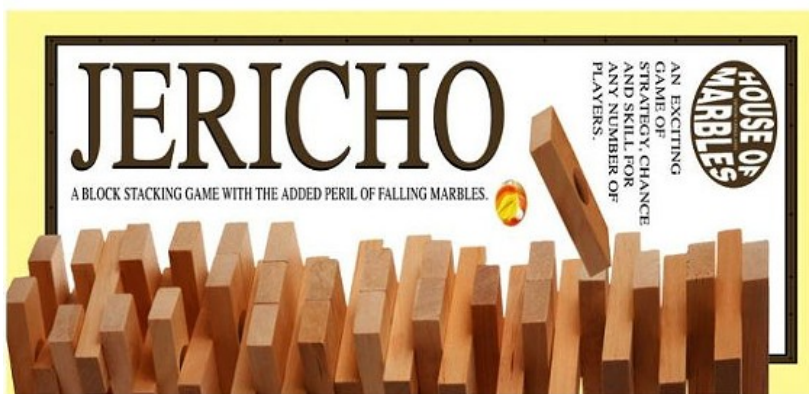
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Epileptic Bicycles and Pessimistic Jenga -- Kid Stores Turn Dark

Posted By Neha Talreja on Wed, Jul 18, 2012



Teen-angst hero *Daria* once asked, "Is life always taudry, stupid, and humiliating? Or is it just a phase?" In San Francisco, no one understands this better than our precocious little beacons of hope -- the children. I recently stepped into the charming, education-minded children's boutique that is **Paxton Gate's Curiosities for Kids** only to come to the horrifying realization that the Darias of the world are coming out earlier than I'd thought.



In case a falling-tower game wasn't already a little bit pessimistic, a new take on Jenga called Jericho (as in the fictional town under nuclear attack in the TV series of the same name) adds another element of doom. The box reads: "With the added peril of marbles!"

Existential Literature

With titles like *Along a Long Road*, *The Doubtful Guest*, *Billy and His Blue Whale Problem*, and *The Epileptic Bicycle*, the new wave of children's books sympathizes with social anxiety, environmental tragedy, and the endless endlessness of the boring misery of childhood. One book describes a seemingly eternal road (page after page literally reads "again...and again...and again"), only for the child to realize his inevitable demise in the next book, like that of the epileptic bicycle.

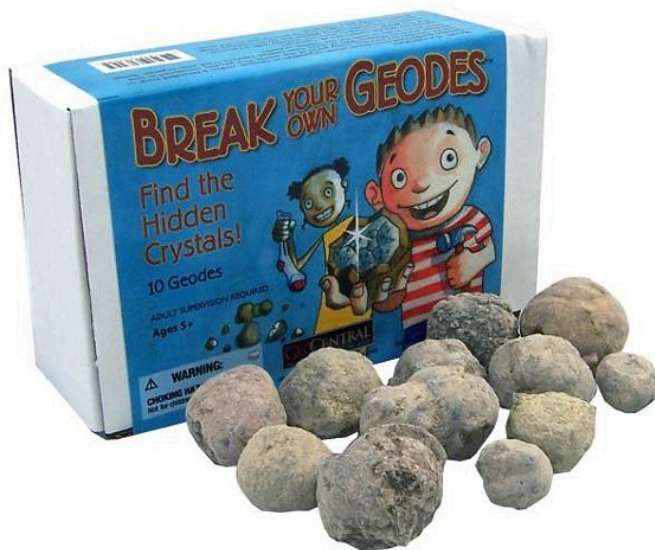


The Road -- always a struggle

I asked a toddler nearby for a book recommendation.

"Well," said the child, "I've found I usually enjoy Kafka-esque literatures far more than an actual Kafka," before his mother tugged on his Opair child leash and led him away.

Half-Empty Promises/Throwing Things



This "Break Your Own Geodes" Kit promises that 90 percent of geodes are filled with beautiful crystals. Children stuck with the other 10 percent will have at least already hammered all of their anger out. A lucky 1 percent will crack open their geodes to find a mansion full of puppies, an ivy-league education, and a yacht.

Stop by the next time you have a baby shower or 5-year-old's birthday party to attend, and give the gift of a perfectly healthy sense of dread.

