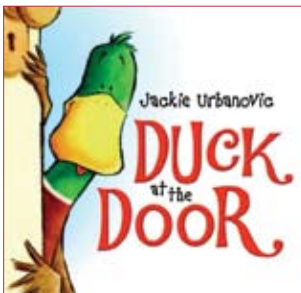


# The Reading Chair



***Black & White*, by Tana Hoban. 2007. New York: HarperCollins. 15 pp. ISBN 9780061172113. Ages birth to 3.**

The late Tana Hoban revolutionized children's books by introducing photographic images in place of illustrations. Her skill as a photographer comes through in all of her books, which seem strikingly simple but are subtly complex. This new board book, published in the year after her death, combines previous titles *Black on White* and *White on Black* into one innovative foldout book. When the board pages unfold into a zig-zag, it can stand up along the floor or in a crib. It's perfect for newborns, whose eyes don't yet respond to colors, but it will captivate older infants and toddlers alike. Hoban's art is beautiful, and adults will appreciate it as well.

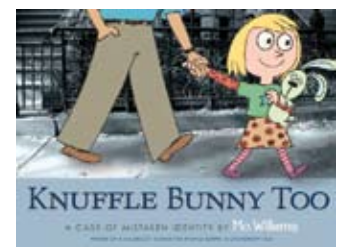


***Duck at the Door*, by Jackie Urbanovic. 2007. New York: HarperCollins. 32 pp. ISBN 9780061214387. Ages 3 to 6.**

In this quirky story a woman and her endearing house animals adopt a cold duck named Max, who didn't realize that he should have flown south for the winter. Max makes himself at home, sometimes more so than the other animals would like. He takes over the kitchen, dominates the remote control, and insists on sleeping on top of Brody, the dog. This book unobtrusively covers many "hot" topics—adoption, belonging in a family, and the changing seasons, just to name a few. The story is well paced and tightly woven; the language is interesting; and the characters have distinctive personalities. The expressive illustrations are bold and warm, and they will give young readers lots to look at. An all-around great read!

***Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*, by Mo Willems. 2007. New York: Hyperion. 44 pp. ISBN 9781423102991. Ages 3 to 6.**

Bucking the trend, Mo Willems nails this sequel. *Knuffle Bunny Too* is at least as well crafted as the original *Knuffle Bunny* and offers readers another exciting adventure with Trixie. This time, the drama revolves around Trixie's realizing that she's not the only pre-K student with a Knuffle Bunny.



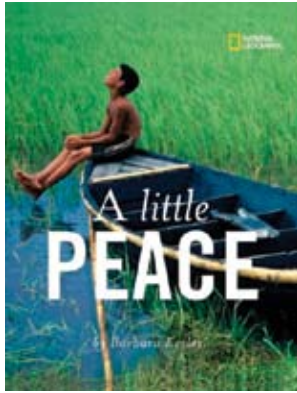
To make matters worse, she accidentally takes the wrong one home.

Set against a backdrop of photographs from Willems' Brooklyn neighborhood, cartoon art lights up the pages, and brilliant, sparse text brings the story to life. Children will be drawn to the book because of its excellent dramatic pacing, its accessible artwork, and its handling of a subject that is scary for every child: finding a place and a friend at school. Willems wouldn't be content to leave it just at that. For the grown-up reader, he includes numerous wry jokes. Adults won't mind at all when they hear, "Read it again!"

**Isabel Baker**, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of preschool children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children's librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.

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Chair illustration by Diane Greenseid.

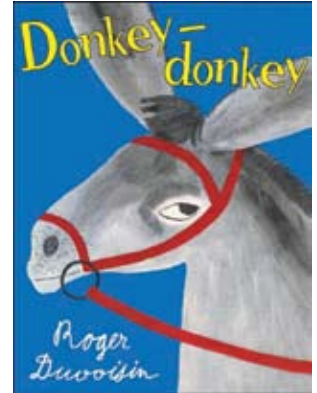


***A Little Peace*, by Barbara Kerley. 2007. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society. 32 pp. ISBN 9781426300868. Ages 3 to 8.**

Kerley's third photojournalistic children's book is as stunning as her first two, *A Cool Drink of Water* and *You and Me Together*. As always, her text reads like poetry and is set against gorgeous photographs from around the world. The book's first pages announce, "All it takes is one hand, one smile, a single voice, to give a wave, say hello, and spread a little peace." Kerley summarizes the message of her book on the back jacket flap: "I believe that peace doesn't just rest in the hands of politicians and world leaders. We all have the power to make the world more peaceful." This book may inspire children to do just that. Beautiful and complete.

***Donkey-donkey*, by Roger Duvoisin. [1940] 2007. New York: Knopf/Random House. 48 pp. ISBN 9780375840654. Ages 4 to 7.**

First published in black and white in 1933, this classic in full color in 1940 was popular for four decades before it went out of print. Now it's back, and it feels as fresh as ever. In this story of ear-envy, Donkey-donkey tries holding his ears in the fashion of various other animals on the farm—drooping like Hector the dog, sideways like Fuzzy-fuzzy the lamb, and forward like Rosa the pig. But he finds himself (his ears, that is) having one otological mishap after another.



The message of this story is that it's best to be oneself, and Caldecott Medal-winning Duvoisin delivers it with compassion and humor, without being sentimental. He knows how to pace a story, give rhythm to the language, and create inviting, bold illustrations.

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