



The Reading Chair

***Pocketful of Posies: A Treasury of Nursery Rhymes*, by Salley Mavor. 2010. New York: Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt. ISBN 9780618737406. 64 pp. Ages birth to 7.**



With a mix of well-known favorites (“Little Bo-Peep”; “Rain, Rain, Go Away”) and those somewhat more obscure (“Pease-Porridge Hot”; “Boys and Girls, Come Out to Play”), this comprehensive tome of over 60 rhymes offers a nice mix for every reader. Mavor’s illustrations are the highlight of this collection.

As a design student, Mavor rediscovered her childhood interest in sewing. Readers will want to take their time examining each thoughtful element of her sewn-fabric collage illustrations, made from a base of rich wool felt and layered with materials such as acorns (for hats), buttons and beads (for wheels and green peas), and pieces of wood. Different types of stitching mimic roof shingles, leaves, and even animal fur. With about one rhyme per page, readers can take their time with each picture while they enjoy the rhymes.



***Do You Know Which Ones Will Grow?* by Susan A. Shea. Illus. by Tom Slaughter. 2011. Maplewood, NJ: Blue Apple Books. ISBN 9781609050627. 38 pp. Ages 3 to 6.**

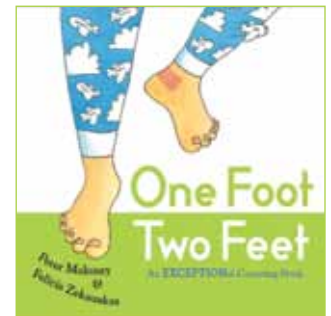
Stretch the imagination with this lift-the-flap book that asks children to consider the difference between the animate and inanimate things around them. “If a duckling grows and

becomes a duck, can a car grow and become . . . [lift the flap] a truck?” It is predictability at its best. Children know that cars don’t become trucks and that watches don’t grow into clocks, but they will enjoy the guessing game as they anticipate Shea’s creative twists on what it means to grow.

This is an impressive children’s book debut for Shea, whose text conveys big ideas without wasting a word. Accomplished artist Tom Slaughter brings life to Shea’s concepts with brightly colored pictures and inventive uses of paper flaps that turn a stool into a chair, a cupcake into a cake, and a washcloth into a towel. Thick paper adds to the quality of this brilliant book.

***One Foot, Two Feet: An EXCEPTIONal Counting Book*, by Peter Maloney and Felicia Zekauskas. 2011. New York: Penguin. ISBN 9780399254468. 40 pp. Ages 3 to 6.**

Good math books for preschoolers are not easy to find. This excellent title combines basic counting with an age-appropriate lesson in irregular plural nouns. Die cuts reveal just one of each item (“One Foot”) and cleverly encourage readers to guess how many will appear on the next double-page spread (“Two Feet”). The numbers grow, page by page (“One Mouse” / “Three Mice,” “One Goose” / “Four Geese.”), accompanied by clear and colorful illustrations. This book counts up to 10, which is perfect for preschoolers who want to master the counting game.



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.

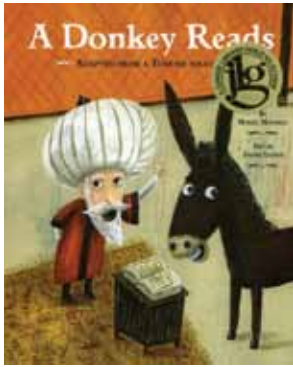
Miriam Baker Schiffer, MFA, is a writer in Brooklyn, New York. She consults on book selection for The Book Vine, in McHenry, Illinois.

Chair illustration by Diane Greenseid.

An archive of The Reading Chair columns is available online at www.naeyc.org/jc/columns.

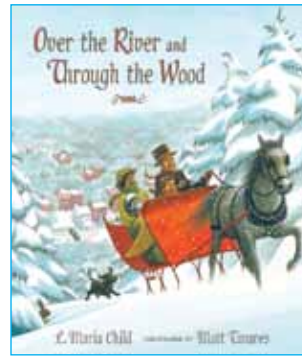
***A Donkey Reads*, by Muriel Mandell. Illus. by André Letria. 2011. Long Island City, NY: Star Bright. ISBN 9781595722553. 32 pp. Ages 5 and up.**

In this adaptation of a Turkish folktale, a poor villager runs into trouble with a mean Mongol ruler after the villager offers the most valuable possession he has, his old donkey, as a required tribute. The ruler threatens to beat him for the insultingly meager gift.



To everyone's shock, wise man Nasreddin Hoca steps in. He claims that it is a special donkey indeed, one capable of learning to read. The ruler wants to see it with his own eyes, and he wants to see it within a month. Nasreddin sets to work. Children will enjoy watching him use cleverness and a bit of humor to achieve remarkable results. The power of wits over brute strength is an age-old theme in children's literature.

Mandell tells a good story with excellent tension. Portuguese illustrator Letria uses a rich palette and chunky brushstrokes to portray the folksy townspeople. He paints the Mongol ruler as an overpowering figure and Nasreddin Hoca as a petite man dwarfed by his oversized turban, reminding readers that greatness comes not from physical strength but from the spirit within.



***Over the River and Through the Wood*, by L. Maria Child. Illus. by Matt Tavares. 2011. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press. ISBN 9780763627904. 32 pp. All ages.**

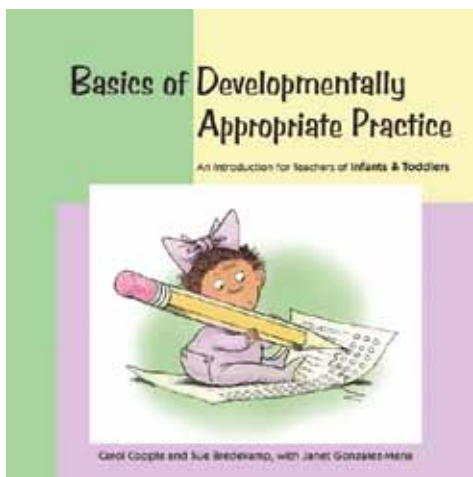
This American song is about a family coming together in winter to celebrate Thanksgiving. Lydia Maria Child, a social activist who opposed slavery and

supported women's and Native Americans' rights, published the song in 1844 under the title "A New-England Boy's Song about Thanksgiving Day." It remains a beloved part of our culture today, but like so many classic songs, children may not know or understand all of the verses.

Tavares's illustrations make the characters real and help readers imagine each line by providing a visual complement. He adds his own subplot, and children will enjoy pointing it out from page to page. Tavares's watercolor, ink, and pencil illustrations evoke the quaint charm of an American town many years ago. His characters' animated facial expressions and body language (including that of the family dogs) bring fresh energy to his paintings and the song.

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