

Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me

By Eric Carle • Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1991



Reviewed by
Sharon Mazion

As I perused children's books at our local bookstore, my finger slid through the shelves, suddenly stopping in the Eric Carle section. The minute I picked up *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*, I knew this book had a place in my library. As I paged through the story, my eyes devoured the visual feast and my heart was charmed by a simple, but daunting, request from a child to his or her parent.

The story opens with a little girl named Monica, who is gazing out at the nighttime sky. She spies the moon and, wishing to play with it, asks her father to get it for her—a simple task, or so it seems to a child! Naturally the father embarks upon this challenging task. He gets out his very long ladder and treks to a high mountain where he sets it up. Fearlessly, he climbs right up to the moon, only to find out it is too big for him to manage. The moon consoles the perplexed father by encouraging him to wait as it wanes smaller. Sure enough, when the moon is the right size, the father plucks it from the heavens and returns home to present his daughter with the precious gift.

There is no mistaking Carle's symphonic use of color and collage style in this touching tale. He creates illustrations by hand-painting papers, which he then cuts and layers to fashion brightly colored scenes and images. In this book, Carle blends and creates intense, vibrant colors with thick layers of paint and dynamic brushstrokes. This masterful command of color deftly sets the cool quietude of evening. Carle's creative use of flaps and foldouts provide entertainment and anticipation for the reader while adding magnitude and motion to this tale of extremes. The pages expand, extend, and ascend as Papa brings out

his ladder, and climbs to the heavens on his precarious journey. I love listening to my students' squeals of delight as I open flaps to reveal Papa carrying a four-page-long ladder, or even better, the hushed awe that envelops the children as the moon expands before their very eyes!

The possibilities for extension in the classroom unfold as easily as the artist's illustrations. This book provides the perfect opportunity to explore higher and lower, as Papa takes his ascending and descending journey. (After all, what child wouldn't love to stand a xylophone on end and see that very high mountain appear in her very own hands!) Though the text is beautifully written, it begs for a

musical score. Exploration of hand percussion and classroom instrument sounds easily offer children the opportunity to create a sound palette as exquisite as the artist's images. Even the multitude of stars in the book liner, suggest singing one of the many simple but beautiful "star songs" in a child's repertoire. Don't ignore the movement opportunities either. Monica jumps and dances with the moon, almost imploring the children in your room to join her.

Papa gives Monica the chance to dance and play with the moon. Don't miss the opportunity to let the boys and girls in your classroom come out to play with this truly timeless and beautiful classic from Eric Carle.

