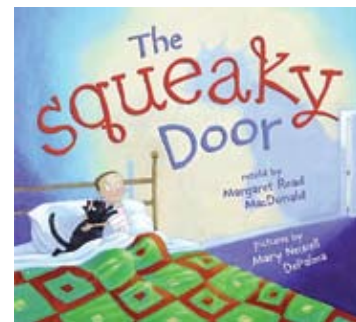


The Squeaky Door

Retold by Margaret Read MacDonald
HarperCollins Publishers, 2006



The *Squeaky Door* is a retelling of a Puerto Rican folk tale. The story is based on the song “La Cama.” There are many versions of this folk tale, including ones from Puerto Rico and Chile. In one telling, the bed squeaks, but in this retelling, it is the door that frightens the sensitive little boy. This book’s humor and charm will delight children and adults alike.

This book tells the story of a little boy’s first night trying to sleep in a bed alone and away from his grandparents while visiting Grandma. Grandma encourages the boy to be brave as she tucks him into bed. As Grandma finishes the bedtime ritual, she closes the door, which squeaks and scares the boy. To soothe the boy, she adds more and more animals from their live farm animals and pets. Each time, the door squeaks and wakens everyone in the room. Eventually, Grandma discovers the solution to the problem of the squeaky door.

The illustrations are bright and inviting, enticing the reader to laugh and repeat its many sounds. It is enjoyable watching the crowd in bed grow as the story progresses and Grandma places each animal into the bed with the little boy. Each animal even has its own set of pajamas.

Grandma is a superwoman in this

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story, who can carry animals, comfort a little boy, and fix beds and doors while smiling the entire time. The boy is a pleasant, innocent young person. Grandpa, meanwhile, peacefully sleeps through all of the night’s adventures.

There are many ideas that music teachers can explore with this book. Fans of other nighttime books like *Mortimer* will love this story. There is a cumulative aspect as each new animal is added to the bed and Grandma kisses them all good night. Students can enjoy changing the animals in the story and exploring other squeaky items that can be found in a bedroom.

There are the many sounds of the animals in the story, as well as the squeaky door that draws out its long “squeeeak!” Children won’t be able to

stop themselves from calling out the boy’s protest that he will not be scared to be in his own bed and performing the cries of the boy and the animals.

There are short phrases in the story that are repeated and can be given their own sound effects. For example, Grandma kisses the boy and each animal goodnight. Each kiss is given the sound “Smack!” at the end of the sentence. The pig receives a moment of revulsion “Yuck” before it too is kissed “Smack!” Grandma’s way of tiptoeing to the door, turning off the light, and closing the door can be arranged into a rhythmic chant exploring quarter notes, quarter rests, and eighth notes. “So, Grandma tip...toed...out” could be performed with quarter rests or given sound effects on the dotted portions. This pattern could be continued through the rest of the bedtime ritual. It also could be revisited as Grandma fixes the squeaky door.

MacDonald and DePalma weave an endearing folk tale that will have young students joyously asking for more while exploring its many musical and story elements. ■

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