

Strega Nona : an old tale

Tomie dePaola Wins ALA Award!



So many wonderful books received awards from the American Library Association earlier this week. You can view the complete list of ALA's Youth Media Awards online. But I wanted to give a big HURRAH! to one of my favorite author/illustrators who received special recognition from ALA for his body of work: Tomie dePaola. DePaola received the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, "honoring an author or illustrator, published in the United States, whose books have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children."

There are so many reasons to love Tomie: his sense of humor, his appreciation of a child's perspective, his beautiful artwork, his versatility. He writes, he illustrates. He works with both fiction and nonfiction, folktales and nursery rhymes, bible stories and poetry. I think I became particularly fond of Tomie when I discovered he shares my Irish/Italian heritage - which he describes in his autobiography 26 Fairmount Avenue, a 2000 Newbery Honor winner.



But I was first hooked by Tomie after reading the folktale Strega Nona, which received a Caldecott Honor in 1976. This folktale, featuring Big Anthony and the magic pasta pot, was one of the first folktales I learned to tell. Especially in the cold of winter, who doesn't wish they could conjure a satisfying dinner just by reciting the magic words:

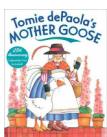
Bubble, bubble, pasta pot

Boil me some pasta, nice and hot,

I'm hungry and it's time to sup,

Boil enough pasta to fill me up.

Big Anthony, despite being warned by Strega Nona that he is not to touch the pasta pot while she is away, can't help trying it out after he overhears Strega Nona issue her magic command. He also learns the second rhyme to make the pot stop boiling, but unfortunately for Big Anthony, he does not see Strega Nona blow the required three kisses to the pot. Strega Nona returns in time to save the town from being flooded with pasta - and Big Anthony has plenty to eat for weeks!



Strega Nona is a fun story to tell or read aloud, but the Tomie book I find myself returning to again and again, whether sharing with my own children, or giving as a gift for new babies, is Tomie dePaola's Mother Goose, his charming collection of 204 nursery rhymes. A potential new favorite is on the horizon, as Tomie's celebration of all creation is scheduled for release next week. If you hurry, you can be the *second* person to place a hold on the library's copy of Let The Whole Earth Sing Praise. HURRAH!

Posted by Lisa C. on January 13, 2011

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26 Fairmount Avenue

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Tomie dePaola's Mother Goose

Let the whole earth sing praise
