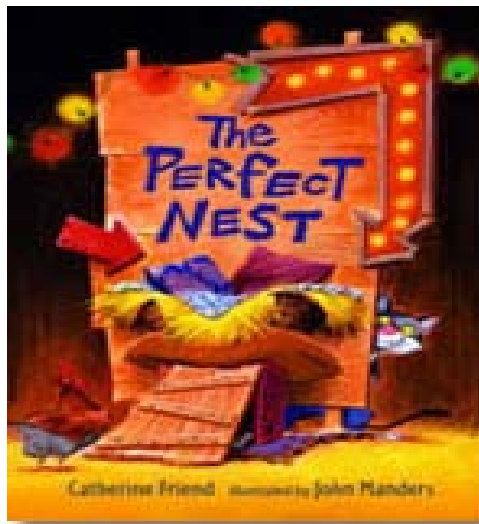


YHBA Novel Resource 2009-2010
For the picture book,

The Perfect Nest



Written by Catherine Friend
Illustrated by John Manders

Published by Scholastic Inc. (www.scholastic.com) by
arrangement with Candlewick Press (www.candlewick.com)

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About the Author



According to her website, <http://www.catherinefriend.com/>, Ms. Friend has been both a farmer and a writer for many years despite earning her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Economics. She has worked as an editor, a writing teacher for the Institute of Children's Literature, a library volunteer, and currently gives writing workshops. She has lived on a farm (www.risingmoonfarm.com) for many years raising and caring for sheep, llamas, chickens, ducks, dogs, and cats. With the picture book, The Perfect Nest, Catherine Friend is able to share her love of farm life and animals with her young readers.

Other Books Written by Catherine Friend

- *The Compassionate Carnivore*, Da Capo Press, May 2008.
- *The Crown of Valencia*, Bold Strokes Books, November, 2007.
- *The Spanish Pearl*, Bold Strokes Books, May, 2007.

- *The Perfect Nest*, illustrated by John Manders, Candlewick/Walker, Feb. 2007.
- *Hit By a Farm: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Barn*, Marlowe & Company, 2006.
- *Eddie the Raccoon*, illustrated by Herbert Wong Yee, Candlewick/Walker, 2004.
- *Silly Ruby*, illustrated by Rachel Merriam, Candlewick/Walker, 2000.
- *Funny Ruby*, illustrated by Rachel Merriam, Candlewick/Walker, 2000.
- *The Sawfin Stickleback: A Very Fishy Story*, illustrated by D. Yaccarino, Hyperion, 1994.
- *My Head is Full of Colors*, illustrated by Kiki. Hyperion Books for Children, 1994, 1995.

Awards and nominations received by Ms. Friend's other books

-*The Compassionate Carnivore* has won a 2009 [Minnesota Book Award](#) for general non-fiction.

-March 1, 2007, [The Loft Literary Center](#) announced Catherine Friend is the winner of the 2007 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Writers, Loft Award in Children's Literature/Older Children, for her middle grade manuscript, *Barn Boot Blues*.

-Catherine's proud to announce that in June, *Hit By a Farm* won the [2007 Golden Crown Literary Award](#) in the Anthology/Essay Category.

- *The Spanish Pearl* and *The Crown of Valencia* each won a [2008 Goldie Award](#) at the 2008 Golden Crown Literary Society Convention.

-*The Spanish Pearl* has been nominated for a [2008 Gaylactic Spectrum Award](#).

Awards and Nominations for The Perfect Nest

- *The Perfect Nest* has been nominated for the [2008 California Young Readers Award](#) and it is one of four finalists in the Children's Literature category for the [2008 Minnesota Book Awards](#).
- *The Perfect Nest* was a finalist for Canada's 2007 Debbie Zimmerman Early Years [Niagara Literary Award](#).
- *The Perfect Nest* has been named to a number of state reading lists for 2008-2009.

About the Illustrator



According to his website, www.johnmanders.com, John has studied at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, the School of Visual Arts in New York City, and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Although born in Albany, New

York, John has made Pittsburgh, PA his home as an adult. He founded the Pittsburgh Society of Illustrators and became the society's first president. He is an animal lover who owns an African gray parrot named Sherman and has organized a Bow Wow Meow art auction for a Pennsylvania animal rescue group. John Manders uses gouache painting in his illustrations and says "that his illustrations' reflect his sort of cartoony and wise-guy personality."

(http://www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Manders_John.html)

Other Books Illustrated by John Manders

- King Snake by Wendy Shotbloom
- The Dragon's Scales by Sara Albee
- What You Never Knew About Fingers, Forks & Chopsticks by Patricia Lauber
- Dirt Boy by Erik Jon Slangerup
- What You Never Knew About Tubs, Toilets & Showers by Patricia Lauber
- Clarence the Copy Cat by Patricia Lankin
- Quiet Night by Marilyn Singer
- Lewis and Clark: A Prairie Dog for the President by Shirley Raye Redmond
- Minnie's Diner: A Multiplying Menu by Dayle Ann Dodds
- Prancing, Dancing Lily by Marsha Diane Arnold
- Henry & the Buccaneer Bunnies by Carolyn Crimi
- What You Never Knew About Beds, Bedrooms, and Pajamas by Patricia Lauber
- Senor Don Gato: A traditional Song by anonymus

- Fergus and The Night-Demon by Jim Murphy
- The Soldier's Night Before Christmas by Trish Holland and Christine Ford
- Pete & Fremont by Jenny Tripp
- Such a Prince by Dan Bar-el

Annotation

Pairing her love of writing with her experiences of living on a farm, author Catherine Friend delivers a humorous story about scheming for one thing and ending up with another. This is the story of Jack the farm cat who is hungry for an egg omelet. In devising a plan to build the perfect nest to attract an egg laying bird, Jack neglects to think of what he will do if the birds refuse to leave and just sit on their eggs.

Furthermore, Jack has to figure out what to do with newly hatched babies that are looking to him to take care of them! Readers of all ages will delight in this story and the vibrant gouache illustrations of John Manders that make the story jump from its pages and into the heart of its readers.

Genre

Animals, Fiction, and Humorous

Point of View

Third person

Theme

Nest building, caring for animals/pets, eggs, farm animals

The title, The Perfect Nest, is the "perfect title" for this book. Jack the cat thinks he is building the perfect nest to capture eggs for him to eat. In the end, Jack finds out that the nest is really the perfect size and fit for him to care for all the new baby birds that adopt him rather than for bringing him food to eat. While striving for perfection in one area Jack finds it in another.

Conflict

Internal conflict - Jack the cat is looking for a meal, but ends up with 3 baby birds that look to him as a mother figure. What should he do with these babies when all he was trying to do was gather some food?

External conflict - Jack gets the goose, the duck, and the chicken to each leave an egg in his perfect nest, but the birds won't leave the nest so he can get them!

Conflict Resolution

Jack resolves his internal conflict by deciding to use his nest to care for and raise the baby birds on his own.

Jack gets the mother birds to leave his nest by telling them there is a better nest at the next barn down the road.

Characters

Jack - This cat is the main character in the book. He lives on the farm and is trying to provide himself food to eat.

Chicken - This Spanish speaking chicken that leaves an egg in Jack's nest.

Duck - The French speaking duck that also leaves an egg in Jack's nest.

Goose - The all-American goose that leaves an egg in Jack's nest.

Baby goose, baby duck, and baby chicken - The babies that hatch from the eggs left by Goose, Duck, and Chicken who want Jack to take care of them.

Setting

The setting of this story is a barn.

Interest Level

K -3 Perma-Bound Resources

Reading Level

2.5 Perma-Bound Resources

Booktalk

Have you ever been so hungry that you devise a plan to catch your own food? Do you think baby animals are cute? Do you like to read/hear animals talk in different languages? If you answered yes to any of these questions then The Perfect Nest should be the next book on your reading list! The Perfect Nest is the story of a farm cat that is looking for a way to get some eggs so that he can enjoy an omelet. Little does Jack know that his "perfect nest" will lead to some hilarious situations and foreign speaking birds that make for finding his meal a little difficult!

Discussion Questions

Pre-reading:

Have you ever tried to catch your own food to eat?

What do you think the perfect nest for a bird should look and feel like?

Do you think you could care for babies that weren't your own?

During reading:

Pages 1 & 2 - Looking at the pictures on these pages, what did Jack use to make his nest?

Page 3 - When you look at the chicken seeing the nest for the first time, what do you think she is thinking?

Pages 5 & 6 - Do you know what the words "caramba" and "Sacre bleu" mean?

Pages 7 & 8 - Looking at the pictures on these pages, do the animals look like they were drawn to be real animals or more cartoonish animals?

Pages 9 & 10 - Do the duck and chicken look happy to be kicked out of the nest by the goose?

Pages 11 & 12 - What is Jack holding and how would you use them to make an omelet?

Page 13 - Why do you think the author writes some of the words in bigger, darker letters than the rest of the page? How does she want us to read them (quietly, softly, loudly, angrily, happily)?

Page 16 - Why would Jack cry "Wolf" to try to scare the birds off the nests?

Page 18 - Do you think the illustrator drew the birds walking the way animals walk or do they look like us in the way they are walking?

Page 19 - Do you notice anything happening to the small egg? Do you have a prediction/guess about what might happen next to the egg?

Pages 21 & 22 - Each bird says mom a different way/language, can you tell me/point to how each bird says it?

Page 23 - Look at Jack's face in this picture, what do you think he is thinking?

Pages 25 & 26 - Why is Jack hiding from the baby birds?

Pages 27 & 28 - Do you think that Jack is enjoying having the baby birds in his life?

Page 29 - If you were Jack, would you take care of the baby birds?

Page 31 - Why does Jack think that he really did make the perfect nest?

Post-reading:

How did Jack the cat try to catch his own food?

Did you think Jack made the right choice in choosing to be the baby birds' mommy? Why do you think that?

Can you think of any other ways that Jack might try to find food next time?

Language

(Spelling & Vocabulary)

Gathered (page 2) - collected different things

Cozy (page 2) - warm & snuggly

Attract (page 3) - make something want to come to something else

Omelet (page 3) - something you make at breakfast to eat that uses eggs in it and looks a bit like a yellow taco and can be filled with cheeses, vegetables, and/or meat

Caramba! (page 5) - a way of showing surprise in Spanish

Sacre bleu (page 6) - a way of showing surprise in French

Waddled (page 6) - how a duck walks

Lumbered (page 7) - to walk slowly and awkwardly

Squished (page 14) - squeezed 2 or more things together

Hola (page 21) - Hello in Spanish

Mama (page 21) - mom in Spanish

Bonjour (page 21) - hello in French

Maman (page 21) - mom in French

Shivering (page 29) - the way your body shakes to try and stay warm when you are cold

Buenas noches (page 31) - good night in Spanish

Bonne nuit (page 31) - good night in French

Indiana Academic Standards met by Novel Content

KINDERGARTEN

Reading k.1.22, K.2.1, K.2.2, K.2.3, k.3.3, K.3.5,

First Grade

Reading 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.2.7, 1.3.3, 1.3.5,

Second Grade

Reading 2.3.5, 2.3.7

Third Grade

Reading 3.3.3

Anticipation Statements

BEFORE		The Perfect Nest By Catherine Friend	AFTER	
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		It is okay to trick people to get something you want.		
		Eggs are needed to make omelets.		
		If someone leaves something at your house you should take good care of it.		
		Baby ducks, chickens, and geese hatch from eggs.		
		Animals cannot take care of other types of baby animals.		

Art Medium

Gouache

b. Gouache paint is a water color paint that you can't see through like traditional water color paints. It is a thicker paint like poster paint. John Manders like to use this paint in his pictures because of the paint's thickness which doesn't allow other colors to show through.

- c. I feel that Mr. Manders used this type of paint to give the story more of a cartoon type feel. The color is bolder and richer. Jack acts more like a human than a cat, so the pictures need to have a humorous quality to them. Mr. Manders is able to do this by making his pictures life like yet the color tone provides a sense of whimsy to the pictures.
- d. I think this story is very humorous and full of life. I feel that the illustrations enhance this mood because of the richness of the colors and the attention to detail in each picture. He gave each character a distinct personality by the way he drew and painted them.

Read-Alikes

Silly Ruby by Catherine Friend
Funny Ruby by Catherine Friend
Egg-napped by Marisa Montes
The Easter Egg Farm by Mary Jane Auch
Goose by Molly Bang
Goose's Story by Cari Best
The Egg by Pascale Bourgoing
I Know A Place by Karen Ackerman
Are You My Mother? By P.D. Eastman
No Ducks in Our Bathtub by Martha Alexander

Across the Curriculum Connections

Math

As a class, ask the students the following questions. Have the students fill in their tally marks as a group. Then allow them time to make a bar graph from the information they have collected. After the graphs are completed have the students answer the question below the graph. As a class, share your answers.

How do you like your eggs?

As a class we are going to record how each of us likes to eat our eggs. On the chart below, use a tally mark to show how each classmate likes to eat their eggs.

Different ways to eat eggs	Tally marks for each student
Scrambled	
Hard boiled	
Fried	
Over easy	
In an omelet	

Use the information from the chart above make a bar graph below.

14					
12					
10					
8					
6					
4					
2					
	Scrambled	Hard boiled	Fried	Over easy	In an omelet

Using your bar graph, answer the following questions.

1. What was the favorite way to eat eggs in our class?

2. What was the least favorite way to eat eggs in our class?

3. How many students liked to eat scrambled eggs? _____

4. How many students liked to eat hard boiled eggs? _____

5. How many students liked to eat fried eggs? _____

6. How many students like to eat their eggs over easy? _____

7. How many students like to eat their eggs in an omelet? _____

Supplies needed for this activity:
Pencil and crayons

Indiana Math Standards met by this activity:
Second grade math - 2.1.1, 2.1.11, 2.1.12

Activity Two

Art & Science

For this activity, each student will be asked to create their own "perfect nest." Using worksheet resources #2 & #3 from the Point Reyes Bird Observatory Education Program (found at <http://www.prbo.org/cms/docs/edu/activity4.pdf>) talk about the various types of nests that birds make. Point out that most waterfowl birds (the types of birds in our story, The Perfect Nest) make platform nests. Discuss with the students that birds need their nests to be sturdy and comfortable. Read or share some excerpts about nest building from some of the books listed below. Brainstorm as a class a list of materials that they might use in making their own perfect nest. Provide or have each child bring in the items they want specifically for their nest.

Suggested materials would be:

Cardboard, poster board, paper scraps or shredded paper, cotton balls, string, yarn, thread, fabric, clay, mud, grass, leaves, sticks, etc.

Non-fiction & Picture books about nests and/or birds to browse for ideas would be a good idea as well.

Whose nest is this? By Heidi Roemer

A Nest Full of Eggs by Priscilla Belz Jenkins and Lizzy Rockwell

Birds, Nests, & Eggs by Mel Boring

After all the materials are gathered, have the children construct their own nests.

To further extend this activity depending on age, the students could share about their nests with oral presentations and/or written activities.

Indiana Standards met by this activity:

Kindergarten:

Art - K.6.1, K.6.4, K.6.5

Science - K.3.1, K.6.1

First Grade:

Art - 1.6.4, 1.6.5

Science - 1.1.1,

Second Grade:

Art - 2.6.4, 2.6.5

Science - 2.4.2, 2.4.5,

Book Activities

Activity One

Individual activity

After reading The Perfect Nest, have each student write about what they think would happen next in the story. The following questions could be posed to spark their imagination:

Do you think that baby chick, baby duck, and baby goose's mothers might return to the farm and want them back?

Would the baby chick, baby duck, and baby goose want to go with their real moms or stay with Jack?

How do you think Jack will take care of all these new babies?

Since Jack was unsuccessful in getting eggs for his omelet, what will he have for dinner?

This activity could be done as a new journal write or as a new writing piece that each child can take through the editing process. It could also be expanded so that each student presents their piece to the class orally.

The only materials needed for this activity would be a writing instrument and paper or each student's journal.

This activity could be adapted for younger students (Kindergarten) by having them draw a picture about what happens next. The pictures could be presented to the class to practice oral presentations. In this adaptation, the students would need paper and crayons or colored pencils.

Standards

Writing K.4, K.4.1, K.4.3, K.4.4, K.4.5, K.5, K.5.1, 1.4, 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.5.1, 1.6, 1.6.1, 1.6.2, 1.6.6, 1.6.7, 1.6.8, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6
Listening and Speaking K.7, K.7.1, K.7.2, K.7.5, 1.7, 2.7, 3.7
Reading 1.3, 2.3, 3.3

Activity Two

This can be used individually, in pairs, or as a whole class activity.

After reading The Perfect Nest, have the students write their own recipe for making an omelet. Prior to writing, show the students some examples of recipes and explain to them why recipes are important. Point out the numbers showing the quantity of an item and the units of measurement used in cooking.

Materials needed would be paper, writing instruments, cookbooks, and/or recipe cards.

Standards

Writing K.4, K.5, K.6, 1.5.1, 1.5.4, 1.5.5, 1.6, 1.6.1, 1.6.2, 1.6.6,
1.6.7, 1.6.8, 2.5.1, 2.5.6, 2.6.1, 2.6.2, 2.6.3, 2.6.7, 2.6.8,
3.5.2, 3.5.5, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3,
Math K.1, 1.1, 2.1, 2.1.9, 3.1

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Reading Levels found at Perma-Bound

www.perma-bound.com

Indiana State Standards

<http://dc.doe.in.gov/Standards/AcademicStandards/index.shtml>

Read-Alike information from Miami University

<http://www.lib.muohio.edu/pictbks/search/alpha.php>

Building Bird Nest Teacher Resource Packet #4 from Point Reyes Bird Observatory Education Program

<http://www.prbo.org/cms/docs/edu/activity4.pdf>

