

*Book title:* Sam's Cookie

*Author/illustrator:* Barbro Lindgren/Eva Eriksson

*Publisher/Date of Publication:* William Morrow and Company/1982 (English version; Swedish version originally published by Raben and Sjögren in 1981 as Max Kaka)

*Recommending Sources:* Hearne p.38

*Location of Book:* Monroe County Public Library Children's Dept. (Ej Li)

*Average reading time:* about 3 minutes

*Intended audience:* very small children (infants/toddlers)

*Rationale for use with children:* Simple story of a tussle between the protagonist and the family dog over Sam's cookie (peaceably resolved by Sam's mother) is enhanced by uncluttered pen-and-ink drawings that emphasize the expressions of the characters. The child's world is the focus here; Mom intervenes to end the dispute, but only in a cameo appearance. The story follows Sam's feelings, soliciting empathy and recall of similar experiences from the audience.

*Personal appeal:* I love cookies, and so could relate to the hero's attachment to the titular treat. I appreciated the gentle emotional progression of the story (pleasure with the cookie; competition with the dog and fear of its aggression; vindication by Mother against the dog; détente with a new cookie for Sam and a bone for the dog), and the expressiveness of the illustrations.

*Story Preparation:* The book is small. Reading in front of a group may require making sure everyone sits close enough, and moving the book in a slow arc so that all can see the pictures. Since the text is minimal, an adult used to "more story" will need to practice giving small children the time to "read" the story while not losing their attention.

*Illustration Analysis:* As for story preparation, the book is small; it would not work well in front of a large group (at least not in this edition). There are no obscure details to worry about, and margins are ample, so holding the book without covering the pictures should not be a problem. Format with the text is not a problem, with illustrations and simple text on facing pages.

*Text Analysis:* The text is intentionally sparse, more caption than narrative. The story is carried forward more by the pictures than by the language. There is no use of rhyme or rhythm, although the translated text does have "flavors" of its own (I particularly liked "Good, good cookie."). Print is relatively large, and placed opposite the illustration, so it is easy both for the reader to scan and the audience to see. The reader might use a different voice quality for the Mother's line when she scolds the dog, but for this age group and the tone of this story it would be best to keep "effects" to a minimum.

*Potential for adaptations and uses in story hours:* This story could be used as a participation play with older toddlers, with audience members taking the parts of Sam and the dog and Mother while the reader narrates (of course, everyone might want a cookie). It would fit nicely in a food-themed hour. Transfer of the pages to transparencies for projection might solve the problem of size. Children could be encouraged to think about their favorite kind of cookie, imagining what it looks like, smells like, crumbles like, etc.

*Book title:* One Fine Day

*Author/illustrator:* Nonny Hogrogian

*Publisher/Date of Publication:* Macmillan Publishing Co., 1971

*Recommending Sources:* Hearne p.56

*Location of Book:* Monroe County Public Library Children's Dept. (Ej Ho)

*Average reading time:* about 5 minutes

*Intended audience:* ages 4-7

*Rationale for use with children:* A fox must pass through several barter transactions when he drinks an old woman's milk and she cuts off his tail; she will sew his tail back on if he will bring her some more milk (the cow wants grass; the grass wants water; the stream wants a jug; etc.). Theft is punished, but persistence is rewarded. You can get what you want from others if you can give them something they want; the things you want involve other people, and we all need the cooperation of others to get things done. Kindness for its own sake (out of pity), however, is required for the final solution.

*Personal appeal:* I have always been a sucker for the textual rhythms, memory requirements and relationships between characters and objects generated by cumulative story structure (I just love Jack's house and Liza's friend with the perforated bucket). The clear, colorful illustrations in this book have a folk-art realism and sense of humor that make this originally oral tale even more fun when you have the book. While this story could be told effectively without the book (oops!), it is hard to resist in the setting Hogrogian has given it here.

*Story Preparation:* Given its traditional tale-telling source, it is tempting to "perform" this story using different voices for the different characters, adding gestures to accompany each item the fox must obtain on his quest, etc. Roney cautions against such dramatics for reading aloud, however. The rhythms of the language, a good speaking voice and the interest of the illustrations should carry the story when you are reading from a book.

*Illustration Analysis:* The large illustrations should work well for viewing by the audience. Some shapes may be unclear at a distance, such as the miller's sacks and the bags on the donkey's back. Text and pictures are arranged clearly, neither interfering with the other. Care should be taken in holding the book, so as to avoid "losing" details at the binding (i.e., hold it flat) and avoid covering details with the fingers.

*Text Analysis:* Text is orderly and distinct from the pictures, making it easy for the reader to scan; print may be too small for the audience to read. Be sure to establish in practice sessions how you want to "break up" the different items in the barter chain with spoken rhythm—and practice where you will take breaths as the chain gets longer and longer. While elaborate character voices are too distracting with picture books, you can distinguish the delivery of lines for different characters by mildly varying the quality of your speaking voice and diction. Pay special attention to language rhythms for this story.

*Potential for adaptations and uses in story hours:* This story could also be enhanced by audience participation, with props of the different items the fox must trade for being distributed in the audience, which the "fox" must then retrieve. It would partner naturally with a song like "There's a Hole in My Bucket".

*Book title:* Buffalo Woman

*Author/illustrator:* Paul Goble

*Publisher/Date of Publication:* Bradbury Press, 1984

*Recommending Sources:* Hearne p.55

*Location of Book:* Monroe County Public Library Children's Dept. (J 398.2 Bu)

*Average reading time:* about 10 minutes

*Intended audience:* ages 5-8

*Rationale for use with children:* A brave young hunter is honored by the Buffalo People with a wife from among their own; but when his human family mistreats his bride, she takes their son and returns to the buffalo, where the hunter must pass the buffalos' tests in order to stay with his wife and son. Courage and devotion are respected even by your enemies. Love may demand much of you, and may transform you. A father's love for his wife and son, and a son's love for his father, can overcome great odds. Human beings must respect the buffalo (by extension: the natural world), which sustains them.

*Personal appeal:* Beautifully hued, stylized illustrations heighten the magic of this tale, well known in the study of Folklore for its many variants across the Plains. Once again I realize too late that I have chosen a book which perhaps should have been disqualified from this assignment by its oral origins. Goble's rich illustrations and careful presentation of the background of the tale, however, make it well worthwhile as a picture book.

*Story Preparation:* With its more complex text, you will want to practice how and when to maintain eye contact with your audience while reading. Details in some of the illustrations may not translate well at a distance; some discreet finger-pointing may be in order on some pages. Be careful when holding the book not to obscure critical details in the pictures. Oddly, a two-page illustration follows the first page of text—but does not follow logically from the opening text. It looks more like a thematic frontispiece for the entire story than a continuation of the story. You might want to skip those two pages (possibly closing them up with a paperclip to facilitate page turning) and come back to them at the end of the reading (they are lovely, you won't want to omit them).

*Illustration Analysis:* Again, the details in the illustrations warrant special attention. Take your time with each page, being sure to monitor the audience—are they getting what they need to make sense of the pictures? Can everyone see? It may be advantageous to prepare brief explanations/prompts for details that may be problematic, if the audience seems puzzled or at a loss on a particular page (“do you see the prairie dogs?” “there he is under the buffalo robe”).

*Text Analysis:* Text is clearly presented, distinct from the illustrations. There is more text here on each page than in some picture books; practice an unhurried delivery, and be sure you know the story well enough to inflect your phrasing for maximum clarity.

*Potential for adaptations and uses in story hours:* Goble's presentation of this tale invites discussion. Share with the audience where the story comes from and what it meant in oral tradition. Perhaps present other variations on the tale, and/or another story about buffalo, or a similar transformation story from another culture, or another story about fathers and sons. This would fit well in an ecology-themed program, as well. The famous speech attributed to Chief Seattle might make a good fit.