

Achoo!

Laura Nadler Scott

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On the Island of Blue, a sneeze erupts and a pleasing tale of rhythm and rhyme unfolds. *Achoo!* is the title of the book. It's also the startling noise heard in a place where healthy monkeys live happily swinging among blue trees with blue leaves while sipping blue dew. "Confused by the outburst, they listened and froze. Are those sneezly sounds from some sad monkey's nose?"

Laura Nadler Scott and Marguerite Massa create an interesting world of adorable monkeys on the blue-filled island. Skillfully blending fact and fantasy, they describe in words and pictures a blue hill, blue sand, blue palm trees, and blue spoons. Mayor Munkin, who wears a blue hat, tries to stay calm. He thinks about what to do to stop the increasing amount of sneezes, yet he allows no input from others: "He narrowed his eyes, a stern look on his face, 'You must keep that sneeze in your own private space!'"

Despite following the numerous (and good) ideas the mayor comes up with, more and more monkeys begin to sneeze.

Throughout the story, the mayor thinks and paces and ignores wise Mubby Monkey when she tries to tell him her idea. Mayor Munkin advises that sneezing chimps need sleep and relaxation in the sun, but despairs when no one is cured; eventually, even *he* catches cold. At last, the mayor is led to where other sick monkeys have gathered to eat Mubby's nourishing blue leaf soup.

Achoo! is especially appealing to children with the sniffles and all will love the rhyming sounds of "blue" and "dew," "palm" and "calm," "achoo" and "shoo." Along with an appreciation of sounds and words, there are other satisfying morals for young minds: a cold can be caught by anyone, and although it doesn't immediately go away, there are things that will make a sick person feel better. They will appreciate, too, that a seemingly wise grown-up can sometimes learn something of value from others.

Nadler Scott and Massa previously published the children's book *Where is Love?* The author holds events to foster literacy and creativity for youngsters. Adults and young children will appreciate the informative and entertaining *Achoo!*, and will look forward to future uplifting and educational stories from these talented creators.

MARY POPHAM (September 1, 2011)

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