

Eve's Ducklings

Maria Monte

Emelie Wiklund, Illustrator

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With charming illustrations, Eve's Ducklings is a sweet picture book in which a girl learns to engage with wildlife in a way that is safe, both for her and for the animals.

In Maria Monte's gentle, educational picture book *Eve's Ducklings*, a girl and her grandfather watch a mother duck and her ducklings swim in the pond.

Eve wants to engage the ducks, so she stalks them, her hand outstretched to touch them. But the protective mama duck has had enough. Eve's grandfather educates her about what actions might frighten the ducklings and their protective mother; as the book progresses, Eve's behavior graduates from aggressive to nurturing. She moves from chasing the ducks to playing at a distance to feeding the birds. The ducklings approach her again after these lessons are learned. By the conclusion, Eve is attentive to the needs of the animals, rather than putting her own desires first and approaching the ducklings in the hopes of connection.

Monte illustrates a familiar learning process; it is reinforced by Eve's grandfather's kind teaching methods. He instructs without recrimination. Active verbs are used to describe the ducklings' behaviors; they squeak, preen, and ruffle, and they keep the story moving in the process.

Emelie Wiklund's soft, rounded watercolors accompany the story, showing the characters' evocative facial expressions. She captures poses that suggest movement, and the small details of her art, which range from a missing hat that turns up later to a fat bee and plump cattails, enrich the scenes and make the book charming.

Eve's Ducklings is a sweet picture book in which a girl who trusts her grandfather learns lessons about engaging with wildlife in a way that is safe, both for her and the animals.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (May 29, 2021)

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