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Picture Books

Mason Moves Away
978-0-9720192-3-1

Curiosity is a trait shared not only by children all over the world, but also by animals all over the world. In this succulent jungle story, two wildlife hunters look at animals and the animals look at them.

The hunters and the animals see each other's prints, hear each other's voices, stare at each other's colors, watch each other's activities, and study each other's habits. In both Spanish and English, the story builds as the two hunters search from dawn to dusk for animals to aim at and shoot. As the reader is introduced to howler monkeys, poison dart frogs, jaguars, pink dolphins, sloths, piranhas, and Azteca ants, the hunters are always there watching and waiting. Finally, on the last page, the hunters are revealed as photographers shooting cameras, not guns. The surprise twist makes the book work in a whole new way. It is no longer about a tragedy about to happen, but rather a delight in learning about another place.

The author, who holds master's degrees in education and library science, and has written other children's books, including Once Upon a Dime: A Math Adventure, uses the natural rhythms of the day to showcase the unique creatures of the Amazon. The translator has rendered a long list of children's books into Spanish, including biographies, picture books, and Dr. Seuss. English readers will enjoy trying to find the equivalent Spanish words, and Spanish readers will not feel relegated to a footnote translation. Each language appears in a different color, but takes the same amount of space on the page, making them of equal value.

The illustrator, a freelance graphic designer and artist, fills each page with deep colors, dappled light, and layers of texture. Her paintings create a realistic landscape that seems to have no beginning or end, with the sense of many things present but unseen.

Children enjoy non-fiction that entertains as well as informs. In this bright book, kids will enjoy a playful story, an introduction to some unusual creatures, exposure to another language, and a surprise ending. This book will be valued equally at home and in the classroom by both Spanish and English readers.

Anna Stewart