ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

**Story Time for Little Porcupine**
Joseph Slate
Jacqueline Rogers, illustrator
Marshall Cavendish
978-0-7614-5073-3
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It's time for bed, but first-a story! Little Porcupine requests a story about the Big Porcupine in the Sky. "Well, grab your toes, 'cause here goes!" says Papa. Although Big Porcupine was the King of the Daytime Sky, he had no spines. One day the clouds decided to cover up Big Porcupine so that they would become the Kings of the Sky. When the clouds all came together, lightning zigzagged across the sky. Big Porcupine worried that the lightning would hurt the little porcupines on earth so he reached out and caught every bolt that flashed. When his paws were full he stuck the lightning bolts into his head, back, and tail. Today, we call his spines the sunrays.

Little Porcupine then wants to tell Papa the story about Big Porcupine's Picnic. "Grab your toes, Papa, 'cause here goes!" Big Porcupine in the Sky wanted to tell all the little porcupines on earth a story but realized that no one would hear him. What could he do? He decided to give them a picnic. He placed grapes, bananas, and raspberries in a basket and hurried over to some blue sky in the West. He squished the raspberries all over his head and squeezed the grapes through a handkerchief to wipe pure juice across the sky. Next, he lined up the yellow banana peels under a green picnic blanket. All the little creatures cheered when they saw the first sunset.

Little Porcupine promises to close his eyes and pretend to sleep after one more story about the Big Porcupine and the Moon. "Keep them closed and grab your toes," says Papa. Moon was jealous of the Big Porcupine in the Sky because Big Porcupine was brighter, warmer, bigger, and shone all day. Moon pulled his night cloak over Big Porcupine, but the sunrays shot out and poked holes in the cloak. The holes are the stars in the night sky that watch over all the little porcupines of the world.

Slate, a prize-winning author, has written a bedtime story that gives explanations to some of the many questions that young children ask. The stories evoke pleasant thoughts and give children something to think about as they fall asleep.

Rogers has chosen colors that are warm and soothing. The bedtime story pages have borders around them that have to do with the particular happenings of that story. By contrast, the soft-colored drawings of Papa and Little Porcupine are on a white background. Rogers has provided a story within a story through the use of color.

*Judi Oswald*