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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ PICTURE BOOKS

Time for the Fair

Mary Train
Karel Hayes, illustrator
Down East Books (Aug 25, 2005)
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Every child, at one time or another, has struggled with that famous virtue: patience. The passage of time is a difficult concept for young children to grasp. The author has done a clever job using seasonal changes to clarify this concept for children in this delightful picture book.

Little Grace can't wait for the Farmer's Fair. She asks those familiar questions, "Will the fair be here soon?" and "How much time?" Her mother's almost poetic responses help Grace answer those questions in a concrete way: "Enough time for us to watch the rain fall and the world come alive again. When the grass is green, it will be closer to the time of the fair."

This is the author's first children's book, and her experience as an educator is apparent in the way she takes her character through the process of waiting without making her impatience irritating to the reader. Grace gets involved in the fun and work of farm during each season, while observing the changes to learn what will happen next.

The watercolor illustrations could each be framed and displayed. On the two-page spread where Grace discovers that spring has arrived, the girl's bright yellow rain slicker is complemented with blooming daffodils. Grace's mother is hanging sheets out to dry and they blow gently in the wind as Grace hands her some bright red tulips. With each turn of a page, Hayes realistically depicts the transitions between seasons and life on Grace's farm.

The fair finally arrives and Grace reaps the rewards of her patience. The reader will get to see why she was so eager to experience the sights and sounds of the Farmer's Fair. This picture book may get a bit monotonous for parents, but preschoolers (this book's targeted audience) will get lost in the detailed illustrations and the main character's excitement for the fair.

Winter, spring, summer, and fall take a long time for a four-year-old. Patience is a virtue they will be better able to grasp after reading this book. They will also understand, as Grace does, "A year is a long time."
TROY-MICHELLE REINHARDT (August 18, 2009)

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