



2002

The Spider and the Fly

Robert L. Maxwell

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Howitt, Mary. *The Spider and the Fly*. Illustrated by Tony DiTerlizzi. Simon & Schuster, 2002. ISBN 068985289. \$16.95. 36 pp.

Reviewer: Robert L. Maxwell

Reading level: Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Poetry; Picture books

Subject: Spiders—Juvenile poetry; Flies—Juvenile poetry; Books—Reviews;

Everyone knows "Will you come into my parlor? said the Spider to the Fly", but never has it been presented like this! Originally published in 1829, DiTerlizzi's witty illustrations bring the tale up to the roaring 20s, when silent movie stars reigned supreme, and in fact the black and white illustrations recall a silent movie. The fly is a naive flapper, the spider a cruel villain of the type that in other stories ties young maidens to railroad tracks. The cast is rounded out by a pair of ghost bugs who try to warn the still-living fly away. Following a creepy dinner ("I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!") the fly is at last lured into the trap and laid to rest. If you're up to reading a creepy story and giggling at the same time (as my kids did), this book is for you.

Included as an after word is a short biography of Mary Howitt.