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Waddle, Waddle, Quack, Quack, Quack

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Skalak, Barbara Anne. *Waddle, Waddle, Quack, Quack, Quack*. Illustrated by Long, Sylvia. Chronicle Books LLC, 2005. ISBN 0811843424. \$14.95. 30 p.

Reviewer: Irene Halliday

Reading Level: Toddler, Preschool

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Juvenile--fiction;

Subject: Ducks--Fiction; Lost children--Fiction; Stories in rhyme; Books--Reviews;

Mama duck is sitting on her cozy nest watching anxiously as her eggs begin to crack from the tapping of the ducklings inside. Very soon, all five are hatched and ready to explore the big world outside. Mama leads them quickly to the lake, where they learn to swim and dive for pondweeds. But one little duck drifts off into the reeds and is lost. He must swim through the big waves of a sudden storm and wander across a meadow, searching everywhere for his family. He finally returns to the lake, calling "peep, peep, peep," and Mama finds him just as dusk is falling. Back to the safety of the nest they waddle, huddling close together as "Moon climbs in her bed of black, 'Sweet dreams,' says Mama, 'quack, quack, quack. '"

If you're searching for a cozy new read-aloud for bedtime (or anytime), *Waddle, Waddle, Quack, Quack, Quack* is exactly the right story to choose. The simple, rhymed text has a wonderful rhythm, punctuated by sound effects that young children will love to imitate, such as "tap, tap, tap," or "glup, glup, glup." The pen and ink line drawings, in a soft sepia brown, form the basis for superb watercolor illustrations, rich in detail. The text is printed in the same gentle brown as the lines in the drawings, further softening the overall effect. Little duck's journey across a meadow filled with bright wildflowers provides a splash of contrasting color that heightens his adventure. Be prepared to read this appealing story again and again to toddlers and pre-schoolers, who will understand little duck's fear when he is lost, excitement as he explores, and enormous relief when he returns to his mama and family, who missed him and will keep him safe.