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Tractor Mac: Harvest Time

Cynthia Frazier

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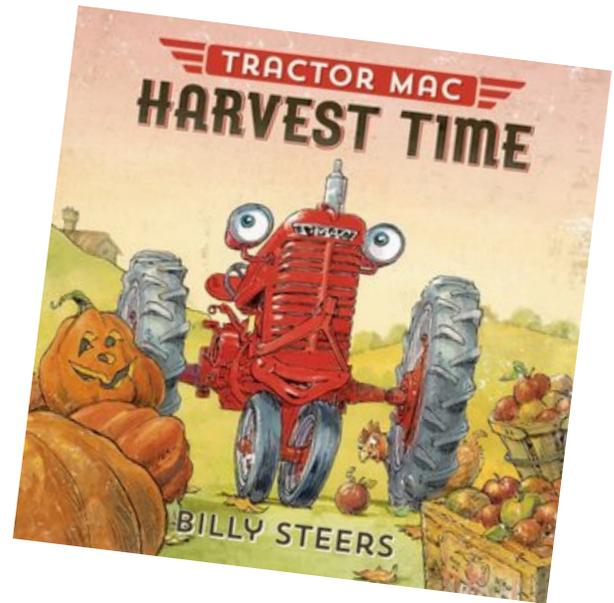
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Book Review

Title: Tractor Mac: Harvest Time
Author: Billy Steers
Reviewer: Cynthia Frazier
Publisher: Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers
Publication Year: 2007
ISBN: 9780374301118
Number of Pages: 26
Interest Level: Toddler, Preschool, Primary
Rating: Outstanding



Review

Life on a farm in the autumn is a busy time. The farm across the road from Stony Meadow is having its annual Pumpkin Picking Festival. Families come every year to pick out their pumpkins, ride on a hay wagon, guess the largest pumpkin's weight, find their way through the maze, and eat yummy food. All of the animals on the farms are excited about the season also. But Mac and Small Fred, tractors on neighboring farms aren't so excited. Small Fred is worried that pulling the heavy wagon full of pumpkins will be too much for him this year. Mac knows that his job of helping to harvest the apple crop will be uncomfortable as his exhaust stack will get caught on limbs, and his big tires tangled. Having apples falling off the trees onto him as he passes through the orchard is a sticky mess also. The tractors have to help each other out.

Steers' books began as bedtime stories he told his young boys about life on his parent's farm in Connecticut. His Tractor Mac books have been very popular with children since the first one was published in 1999. Part of the charm of his books are farm animals and machines with their own characters and human feelings. His illustrations of life on a farm in the 1940s and 50s done in watercolor and ink are colorful, detailed, and full of action and emotion. As a child, Steers enjoyed drawing and was a cartoonist for the student newspaper in college. As a commercial pilot with American Airlines, much of his writing is done in motel rooms during lay overs where it is quiet and he can get a lot of work done. Family is very important to him, and his books reflect this as they teach lessons about teamwork, helping, and sharing.