

## = Make Way for Ducklings =

Make Way for Ducklings is a children 's picture book written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey . First published in 1941 , the book tells the story of a pair of mallards who decide to raise their family on an island in the lagoon in Boston Public Garden , a park in the center of Boston .

Make Way for Ducklings won the 1942 Caldecott Medal for McCloskey 's illustrations , executed in charcoal then lithographed on zinc plates . As of 2003 , the book had sold over two million copies . The book 's popularity led to the construction of a statue by Nancy Schön in the Public Garden of the mother duck and her eight ducklings , which is a popular destination for children and adults alike . In 1991 , Barbara Bush gave a duplicate of this sculpture to Raisa Gorbachev as part of the START Treaty , and the work is displayed in Moscow 's Novodevichy Park .

The book is the official children 's book of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts . Praise for the book is still high over 70 years since its first publication , mainly for the enhancing illustrations and effective pacing . It was criticised for having a loose plot , however . The book is popular worldwide .

The names of the ducklings mentioned in the story are : Jack , Kack , Lack , Mack , Nack , Ouack , Pack and Quack .

## = = Background = =

Make Way for Ducklings , published in 1941 , was McCloskey 's second book and was the winner of the Caldecott Medal in 1942 . In his acceptance speech , McCloskey explained his motivation for the story . While attending the Vesper George Art School in the early 1930s , he would spend time in the Public Garden feeding the ducks . After some time away , he returned to Boston to paint a mural and created a draft of the book after inspiration from May Massee . To better illustrate the story , McCloskey spent time at the American Museum of Natural History in New York , visited an ornithologist , and eventually brought home for models six ducklings to live in his studio at 280 West 12th Street , apartment 4C , in New York 's West Village .

## = = Plot = =

The story begins as Mr. and Mrs. Mallard fly over various potential locations around the city of Boston , Massachusetts ( United States ) to start a family . Each time Mr. Mallard selects a location , Mrs. Mallard finds something wrong with it . Tired from their search , the mallards land at the Public Garden Lagoon to spend the night . In the morning , a swan boat passes by the mallards . The mallards mistake the swan boat for a real bird and enjoy peanuts thrown by the people on the boat . Mrs. Mallard suggests that they build their nest in the Public Garden . However , just as she says this , she is nearly run down by a passing bicyclist . The mallards continue their search , flying over Boston landmarks such as Beacon Hill , the Massachusetts State House , and Louisburg Square . The Mallards finally decide on an island in the Charles River . From this island , the Mallards visit a policeman named Michael on the shore , who feeds them peanuts every day .

Shortly thereafter , the Mallards molt , and would not be able to fly until their new wings grew again , and Mrs. Mallard hatches eight ducklings named Jack , Kack , Lack , Mack , Nack , Ouack , Pack , and Quack . After the ducklings are born , Mr. Mallard decides to take a trip up the river to see what the rest of it is like . Mr. and Mrs. Mallard agree to meet at the Public Garden in one week . In the meantime , Mrs. Mallard teaches the eight ducklings all they need to know about being ducks , such as swimming , diving , marching along , and to avoid dangers such as bicycles and other wheeled objects .

One week later , Mrs. Mallard leads the ducklings ashore and straight to the highway in hopes of crossing to reach the Garden , but she has trouble crossing as the cars will not yield to her . Michael , the policeman who the Mallards visited , stops traffic for the family to cross . Michael calls police headquarters and instructs them to send a police car to stop traffic along the route for the ducks . The ducks cross the highway , Embankment Road ( Storrow Drive had yet to be constructed when the book was written ) , then proceed down Mount Vernon Street to Charles Street where they head

south to the Garden . The people on the streets admire the family of ducks . When the family must cross Beacon Street to enter the Garden , there are four policeman standing in the intersection stopping traffic to make way for the ducklings . Mr. Mallard is waiting in the Public Garden for the rest of the family . Finally , the family decides to stay in the Garden and lives happily ever after . They end each day searching for peanuts and food , and when night falls , they swim to their little island and go to sleep .

= = Illustrations = =

Illustrated with sepia drawings rather than the traditional black @-@ and @-@ white pictures found in most children ' s books of the day , the book , which received the 1942 Caldecott Medal for its illustrations , has continued to garner praise years after its first publishing . The drawings of Boston represent a duck 's eye view of the city . Each of the individual ducklings is " bored , inquisitive , sleepy , or they are scratching , talking over their backs one to another , running to catch up with the line " . Children identify with the ducklings because they behave as children do . The comforting message shows parents as caretakers , protectors , and teachers . According to fellow Caldecott winner Paul O. Zelinsky , " I realized that if the action in the drawings were to move from left to right , the ducks could not have been shown passing the Corner Book Shop , which is a wonderful detail in the story ... He clearly knew these streets very well . " " ' Robert McCloskey 's unusual and stunning pictures have long been a delight for their fun as well as their spirit of place . ' -- The Horn Book "

= = Reaction = =

= = = Sales = = =

Make Way for Ducklings has been continuously in print since it was first published . As of 2003 , the book had sold over two million copies . In September 2006 the hardcover edition of the book ranked # 2 @,@ 182 in sales at Amazon.com and # 1 @,@ 838 in sales at Barnes & Noble . The story has also been published in paperback and audiobook .

When it was first released in 1941 , Ellen Buell of The New York Times called the book " one of the merriest we have had in a long time " , praising the understated comedic aspect of the procession down Beacon Street , as well as McCloskey 's " fine large pictures " which simultaneously demonstrate " economy of line " and " wealth of detail " .

Viking publishing planned to release a 75th @-@ anniversary edition of the classic in March 2016 .

= = = Critical commentary = = =

One critic , Alice Fannin , says the " loosely plotted " story gives no true explanation for why Mr. Mallard leaves the island in the Charles River or why the Mallards did not simply stay on the lagoon island in the first place and avoid the bicyclists on the shore . However , McCloskey has stated himself that he thinks of himself as an artist who writes children 's books and not vice versa . Fannin also finds the characterization lacking , that is , the Mallards represent " rather stereotypically concerned parents " , often showing the same facial expressions and rarely showing expressiveness .

Another critic has positively commented on McCloskey 's use of page breaks as a pacing technique . McCloskey 's use of one @-@ sentence pages forces the reader to quickly turn the page , enhancing the sense of motion , especially during the home search and when Mrs. Mallard teaches the ducklings their basic skills . McCloskey also employs this page break method to heighten surprise . When searching for a home , Mr. and Mrs. Mallard seem to have found a home on page eleven .

" ' Good , ' said Mr. Mallard , delighted that at last Mrs. Mallard had found a place that suited her .

But ? " ( p . 11 )

Then , they encounter a sudden problem with the chosen location when Mrs. Mallard is nearly run over by a bicyclist on page thirteen .

= = = Gender roles = = =

Make Way for Ducklings was published in the 1940s . Many books of the time portray a male dominated society , a trend which Make Way for Ducklings does not follow . In context , the story takes place during wartime as fathers were being drafted and sent to Europe , requiring more social support for single parent families . McCloskey presented Mrs. Mallard as an " independent and nonsubmissive female character . "

When Mr. Mallard leaves on questionable purpose , Mrs. Mallard is charged with raising their ducklings alone . McCloskey portrays Mrs. Mallard as a capable woman who does not need the support of a male character . This strong portrayal has led one critic to label the book as " pre @-@ feminist " .

= = = Surveys = = =

Based on a 2007 online poll , the National Education Association named Make Way for Ducklings one of its " Teachers ' Top 100 Books for Children . " In 2012 it was ranked number six among the " Top 100 Picture Books " in a survey published by School Library Journal .

= = Cultural effects = =

The city of Boston , the setting of the book , has whole @-@ heartedly embraced the story . In the Public Garden , where the Mallards eventually settled , a bronze statue has been erected of Mrs. Mallard and her eight ducklings . While the tallest statue stands only 38 inches ( .97 meters ) tall , the caravan of bronze ducks set in Boston cobblestone spans 35 feet ( 10 @.@ 67 m ) from front to back . The statue , installed October 4 , 1987 , was a tribute to Robert McCloskey " whose story ... has made the Boston Public Garden familiar to children throughout the world . "

Since 1978 , the city has hosted an annual Duckling Day parade each spring , with children and their parents dressed as ducklings . Part of the route retraces the path taken by Mrs. Mallard and her ducklings to get to the Public Garden .

In 2000 , schoolchildren from Canton , Massachusetts decided that the book was worthy of being the official children 's book of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and went to their state legislature to get a bill passed declaring it so . However , legislators from Springfield , Massachusetts blocked the legislation on the grounds the official book should be by Springfield native Dr. Seuss . Legislators reached a compromise when they agreed to make Dr. Seuss the official children 's author of the commonwealth and Make Way for Ducklings the official children 's book .

A statue similar to the one in the Boston Public Garden was erected in Novodevichy Park in Moscow as part of the START Treaty by Acton , Massachusetts landscape and construction company Capizzi & Co . Inc. on July 30 , 1991 . The equipment , statues , cobblestones , and workers were all flown by the US Air Force in a C5 containing the heavy equipment , diesel fuel , and other assorted tools they would need . The individual statues , which were in total length , 40 feet ( 12 m ) long , were presented by then United States First Lady Barbara Bush to Russian First Lady Raisa Gorbachev as a gift to the children of the Soviet Union . Four of the ducks were stolen , one in 1991 and three in February 2000 . Thieves hoping to sell the ducks as scrap metal cut the statues off at the legs . The ducks were replaced in September 2000 at a rededication ceremony attended by former President of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev .

= = Films = =

Make Way for Ducklings was adapted into an 11 @-@ minute black @-@ and @-@ white cartoon created by Weston Woods in 1955 . Founded by educator Morton Schindel in 1953 , Weston Woods Studios , Inc . ( named after the wooded area outside his home in Weston , Connecticut ) specializes in animating children 's picture books on film . The program is centered toward young struggling readers who , after watching the movie , are encouraged to read the books themselves .

In 1964 , Schindel and Weston Woods Studios made the 18 @-@ minute Robert McCloskey , a documentary which is sometimes screened in art schools . The film shows McCloskey sitting in Boston Public Garden and intercuts pages from his sketchbook drawings for Make Way for Ducklings . The illustrator discusses experiences that have influenced his work and the relationship of craftsmanship to inspiration .