

Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade

- **Bibliographic information:**

Author & Illustrator: Melissa Sweet

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin

Publication date: 2011

- **Summary:**

This is a true story of a puppeteer named Tony Sarg. He was a boy who loved to invent things that moved and found a love for making puppets. As an adult, he was asked by the biggest department store in New York City, R.H. Macy's, to make a puppet parade. He tried out many ideas and finally got to the perfect idea. Tony created huge balloon animals that moved like real animals to be the main event in the parade. Now every Thanksgiving Day there is the Macy's day parade held throughout the streets of New York City and many people come and line the streets every year to witness the big balloon animals.

- **Awards:** 2012 Robert F. Sibert Medal; 2012 NCTE Orbis Pictus Award

- **Book Reviews:**

- "This clever marriage of information and illustration soars high."—Kirkus Reviews, starred review
- "A joyous piece of nonfiction that informs and delights in equal parts."—Booklist, starred review
- "Sweet's whimsical mixed-media collages, embellished with little dolls she made herself out of odds and ends, reinforce the theme that, for Sarg, work was play."—Horn Book, starred review

- **Author's Webpage:** <http://melissasweet.net/>

- **Discussion Questions:**

- **Pre-reading questions:**
 - Based on the cover what do you think the story will be about?
 - Do you know what a puppeteer is?
 - Where do you think the story takes place?
- **Questions while reading:**
 - What do you think Tony will grow up to be?
 - Do you think Tony's puppet idea will work for the parade?
 - Do you know what a marionette is?
 - What do you think about Tony's final idea for the parade?
- **Post-reading questions:**
 - Have you ever watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on TV?
 - What was your favorite part of this story?
 - What kind of animal would you make into a huge balloon?

- **Activities:**

- **Reading/Oral Language**
 - Do readers' theater with the story. Script can be found here: <http://texasbluebonnetaward2014.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/2013-2014-bluebonnet-balloons-over-broadway-readers-theater-final.pdf>
- **Writing**

- Have the students write about their experiences with the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. If they have never seen it, have them write about what they think the parade would be like if they were to go sometime.
 - **Math**
 - Make word problems about the parade that use beginner level math.
 - **Science**
 - Perform an experiment using balloons. For example, use baking soda and vinegar with a balloon to see how the chemicals react to inflate it.
 - **Social Studies**
 - As a group, look up Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and share facts about the history and process of the event.
 - **Art**
 - Have the students work on drawing and coloring skills by designing their own balloon characters.
 - Have the students create paper bag animal puppets and then have a mini parade in the classroom.
- **Related Books:**
 - *Here Come the Girl Scouts!: The Amazing All-True Story of Juliette 'Daisy' Gordon Low and Her Great Adventure* by Shana Corey, illustrated by Hadley Hooper
 - *Barnum's Bones: How Barnum Brown Discovered the Most Famous Dinosaur in the World* by Tracey Fern, Illustrated by Boris Kulikov
- **Other books written by Melissa Sweet**
 - *Carmine: A Little More Red*
 - *A Dozen Easter Eggs*
 - *My Little Ballerina*
 - *Hippity-hop*
- **Other books illustrated by Melissa Sweet**
 - *Mrs. Harkness and the Panda*
 - *Rubio and the Three Osos*
 - *Baby Bear's Books*
 - *Spike, the Mixed-up Monster*
- **Related Websites:**
 - <http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=27322&a=1>
This website offers interviews with the author and also a couple of book readings, one of which is *Balloons Over Broadway*. There are also book guides and lesson plans available.
 - http://social.macys.com/parade2012_kaws/?cm_mmc=VanityUrl-_-parade-_-n-_-n#/home
This is the official website of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. It has the parade route, how many days until the parade, the line-up, and a lot more fun information for kids and teachers.
 - http://www.hmhbbooks.com/kids/resources/BalloonsOverBroadway_ActivityKit.pdf
This website is full of fun activities related to the book such as paddle puppets.

- <http://puppetco-op.org/>
This website offers a lot of different ways to make all kinds of different puppets.