



Sophia's Red Hat

Patricia Nichvolodoff

Shannen Marie Paradero, illustrator

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Bright colors entice the eye, and the story of a shared kindness and how it grows will teach and encourage children and adults alike.

A little red-haired girl finds a red hat that sends her off on a kindness adventure in Patricia Nichvolodoff's *Sophia's Red Hat*.

Young Sophia finds a small knit hat in a tree, and it brings her much joy. It causes her to dance and twirl. Her family and neighbors see her happiness and want to join in. They ask her to knit them all hats so they can be happy, too. Sophia and her grandmother do just that, and the neighbors who receive the hats knit their own to share in turn. As the sharing of the hats blossoms, so does the town's kindness.

Nichvolodoff holds a master's degree in numeracy education, and she weaves this background into her playful picture book. The story builds upon itself, both in text and numbers, with the repetition of phrases like "twirled right and twirled left" as characters show their excitement for their new hats.

The repetition stands to help young readers build their reading skills and vocabulary. The text also adds to the number of people making and receiving hats, creating a wonderful, full-story math problem to solve at the end.

Shannen Marie Paradero's illustrations result in a brightly colored, kid-friendly book. Vibrant reds and greens make images pop off the page, while expert shading and patterns give the book depth and dimension. Action lines help to create a sense of movement on the page, while characters' clothes have natural folds, lending realism.

The book layout has the illustration on the left page and the text on the right page, with the same swirling leaf spot illustration on the bottom right corner. This straight repetition causes some monotony in the layout. Some pages also seem to be a bit text heavy for a picture book.

There is also a text/illustration inconsistency, as the text says that the wind catches the brim of the hat and blows it off of Sophia's head, but the hat is knit (both in words and illustration) and has a folded-up brim, similar to a winter stocking cap.

A fun, happy book, with the added benefit of helping children practice their reading and math skills, *Sophia's Red Hat* is a great introduction to literacy and building numbers. Bright colors entice the eye, and the story of a shared kindness and how it grows will teach and encourage children and adults alike.

BETH VANHOUTEN

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