

Dear Reader,

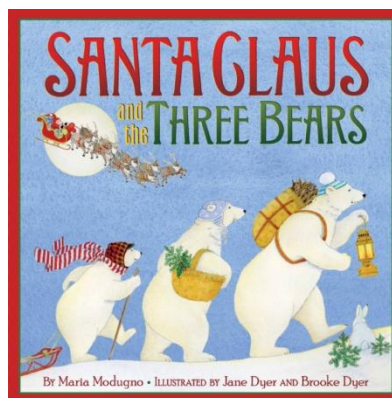
I love fairy tales, whether they are retold, fractured, or even in their original versions. But my favorite fairy tale has always been *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. I love how it repeats the rule of three over and over and over again: three bears, three chairs, three bowls, three beds.

One day I spent an afternoon at the Central Park Zoo with Jane Dyer, her daughter Brooke, and Brooke's daughter, Clementine. As we paused at the polar bear exhibit, I remembered it was Jane's painting of the three bears that made me fall in love with her art, and she was one of the first artists I ever worked with. (That was many years ago when Brooke was not much older than Clementine.) Although Jane, Brooke, and I worked together on a number of picture books, I was always in the role of editor. So that evening when I was tapping away on my laptop, I put together the image of polar bears with my love of fairy tales, and, since the setting was somewhere cold and snowy, I threw Santa Claus into the mix.

It didn't happen overnight, but in time I had a story I was happy with, and I showed it to Jane and Brooke. I was over the moon when they agreed to illustrate it. Their paintings are more sumptuous than I could ever imagine, and I still cannot believe I have a finished book!

Happy Reading,

Maria Modugno



HARPER

An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

www.harpercollinschildrens.com