

## Reading Between the Lines—February 5, 2012

Good morning! This is Dotty Cline. You are listening to “Reading Between the Lines” brought to you by the Friends of the Homer Public Library.

On a recent visit to our grandchildren on the east coast I rediscovered an author who has become a superstar in the realm of children’s literature. The more than 100 books he has written and illustrated have been translated into 25 languages and sold 15 million copies worldwide. His stunning illustrations grace the pages of another 150 books. He has a long list of awards including a Caldecott, a Newberry and a Smithsonian Medal. His most recent book is on the New York Times Bestseller list of children’s literature. Each year he receives 100,000 fan letters. And though his books are described as children’s literature, they appeal to readers of every age.

Have you figured it out? Are you thinking of Eric Carle...Maurice Sendak...or did you recognize Tomie dePaola? That’s “Tommy” spelled “T-o-m-i-e” and “da-POW-la” – “d-e-capital P-a-o-l-a.” Tomie dePaola just draws you right into his stories, both with his words and his delightful illustrations. And there is no doubt that he is one of the best-loved children’s authors and illustrators of our day! His public appearances are almost as popular as the books he has created.

After many years of illustrating other author's books, Tomie decided to write his own stories. Strega Nona was an immediate hit. Based on a character from an Italian folk tale, Strega Nona is a wise, loving gentle woman who possesses magical powers. She helps everyone with their troubles. She can cure headaches, help girls get husbands, and she can even get rid of warts. But Strega Nona is getting old and she hires Big Anthony to help her with her housework. She tells him there is one thing he must never touch...her magic pasta pot. You can just imagine what happens next! Tomie has written 11 Strega Nona books, and the most recent one Strega Nona's Gift is the one on the New York Times Bestseller list.

Tomie grew up in a home with an Italian father, and an Irish mother who read to him every day. When he was four he declared that when he grew up he wanted to write stories and draw pictures for books, and to sing and tap dance on the stage. Now, at 77, he says he has done all of those things. Several of his books are autobiographical, including The Art Lesson, grandson Patrick's new favorite book. Imagine longing to be old enough to go to school so that you could have a real art lesson like your older brother, and then the frustration when the art teacher tells you, you must copy her picture—something Tomie's older artist cousins had told him REAL artists NEVER do.

And he could only have one piece of paper. This is one of those stories about individuality and perseverance that appeals on many levels.

This author who looks like a cross between Santa Claus and a leprechaun, says his goal is to present a world of hope. Through his stories he wants to inspire his readers to have courage to try something and allow themselves to fail, and to keep trying, and in so doing to discover as he has, the joy in finding something you love and do well.

So, for literature that will appeal to your children, your grandchildren and to you as well, find Tomie dePaola's books. You will love them!

The Library hours are

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 10 to 6,

And Tuesday and Thursday 10 to 8.

Tune in next Sunday morning at this same time for "Reading Between the Lines" right here on KBBT AM 890, Homer!