



# Happy Birthday Madame Chapeau

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News & Choice:

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Book

BfK Rating:

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This is the third picturebook collaboration between Beaty and Roberts, in which Beaty supplies the rhyming text and Roberts the illustrations. Like the previous two, this is a flight of humorous fancy concerning the occupation of its central character, in this case a milliner. And David Roberts declares himself particularly pleased with this subject because, as long as you can believe what you read in books, he is himself a milliner as well as an illustrator. Certainly he treats us to some startling hats, some of them of historical significance, as we see lonely Madame Chapeau all dressed up for her birthday and losing her own favourite hat, one which has an especial significance for her. Although she receives some gallant offers of replacements as she makes her way through the streets of this fashionable French town, it is only when she is finally sat down to enjoy her celebration lunch at Chez Snooty Patoot that she finds the right hat, and a new friend. Both text and illustration have just the right touch of retro-chic. Beaty's rhyme never misses a beat and even where you think it might have, you realise she has deliberately applied the brakes to introduce a change of pace and mood. Madame Chapeau's gallant band of would-be rescuers (and suitors?) is a fine bunch of gloriously incongruous caricatures including a cowboy, a Scotsman, a mime artist, a jockey, an Egyptian and Charlie Chaplin. This is a treat for fashionistas of any age.

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