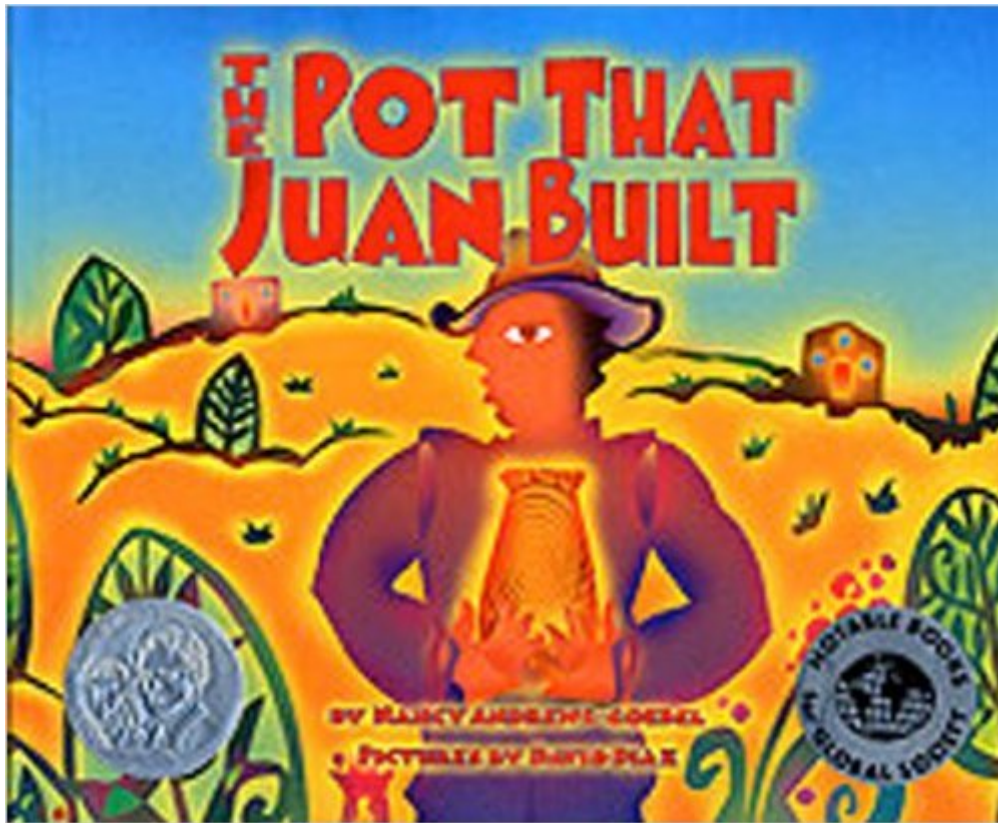


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# Pot That Juan Built, The



## Synopsis

Quezada creates stunning pots in the traditional style of the Casas Grandes people, including using human hair to make brushes and cow dung to feed the fire. This real-life story is written in the form of "The House That Jack Built," and relays how Juan's pioneering work has changed a poor village into a prosperous community of world-class artists. Illustrated by Caldecott Medal winner David Diaz.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1000 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Lee & Low Books (August 1, 2011)

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Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 10.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (20 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #246,353 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #47 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Mexico #96 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art > History #133 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

The absorbing subject matter of this book, presented through catchy rhymes and alliteration and strong, colorful illustrations, has completely captured the imagination of my four-year-old. For three days now, he's been "Juan" almost exclusively, following ants to a vein of "the very best clay, all squishy and white," pretending to make vessels for every conceivable purpose, and peppering me with questions about Mexico, pottery-making, and Juan himself. I've had to draw the line at cutting my hair for paintbrushes and gathering the "dried cow manure" left by the neighborhood dogs. "The Pot That Juan Built" appeals to pre-schoolers' burgeoning interest in rhyme and other aspects of language; making things out of simple materials; and the world around them generally. I give it my highest recommendation!

For those in the know, the book suffers for want of careful editing. It is flawed, for example, by illustrator David Diaz' arrogance in placing his own designs on Quezada's pottery. Had this book been about van Gogh, Picasso or any other well-known artist, it is unlikely he would have portrayed their art with no concern for what it looked like in reality. This puts down Juan Quezada. Diaz also carelessly depicts Quezada building a pot by the continuous-coil method of the Indians of the American Southwest rather than by the distinctive method that he innovated and for which he is known. Better editing would have caught these problems with the illustrations as well as a multitude of minor inaccuracies that occur in the text, nearly one to a page. For example, in speaking of using a bean to burnish pottery, the author comments, "Of course dried beans can be found in any kitchen in the village." The bean in question is an inedible wild bean, the chilicote-not the kind that would normally be found in anyone's kitchen. Such editorial problems do not, however, detract from this production as a children's book. They are the sort that only one in the know would see.

This is a beautiful book, in illustration and in content. It is the true story of Juan Quezada, a potter, and a celebratory tale of the village of Mata Ortiz, Mexico. Quezada's discovery of ancient pottery methods transformed Mata Ortiz from an impoverished village into a prosperous community of world-renowned artists. The story is cleverly told in the form of "The House That Jack Built". It is sing-song-y in it's rhythm and children will be enraptured by the story Ms. Andrews-Goebel has written and the beautifully vibrant illustrations of Caldecott Award winning illustrator, David Diaz. A more complete story of the famous pottery is told on the facing pages, providing intricate details of a fascinating process. A photo-illustrated afterward follows Quezada through the process of creating a pot, from the digging of the clay to the completed product. This book is a great addition to any child's multicultural library and informs us of one of the great contemporary and nationally recognized Mexican artists. DELIGHTFUL!!!

This is one of my favorite pottery books to ready to students during art class. Juan is a phenomenal artist and this story is so well written!! I'm also amazed at how quickly the book was delivered!

This book captures me on many levels. There is the mimicry of "The House That Jack Built" so it is a great addition to a unit on cumulative stories. There is a wonderful non-fiction component, so it can be paired with biography or "how-to" units and of course the art component means that this book would be fabulous with a pottery unit too. On top of all of those thematic possibilities, the illustrations are dazzling in themselves. David Diaz uses bold colors and design that captures

readers. My students immediately began to chime in on the rhyming portion of the text. They especially loved the line, "Before it was baked in the cow manure fire." Each two page spread has a bit of the rhyme and the facing page has a brief explanation to go along with it. This is where the details are explained like the fact that Juan does in fact gather cow manure and uses it as the fuel for the fire. My students were fascinated to learn that this story is about a real person and there is a website that shows some of the pictures from the information section at the end of the book in addition to even more pictures of his actual work. To see that one man taught himself how to create pots of such beauty using only the natural materials from the land around him is pretty amazing. That he shared this knowledge with his community so they could also create these kinds of pots is even more inspiring. My third graders were quite impressed with his abilities and also found the rhyme to be quite fun. It is a joy to be able to share such a unique non-fiction text with my students. After using the book in lessons, I also found several videos online so in the future we will also get to hear from Juan Quezada himself. Review originally posted at Reading Through Life [...]

I love this book! It has appealing rhythm, action and the repetition that children respond to. As a parent and a teacher I really appreciate the expansive age appeal... the story appeals to 6-7 year olds, the educational side bars explaining the story details for older children and the last section of the book with actual photographs has appeal for the adult reader. What a great gift! This book has history, art, archeology, science. The illustrations are magical. It is a "must have" for the libraries of young and old.

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