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Sawdust and Spangles: The Amazing Life of W. C. Coup

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Covert, Ralph, and Mills, G. Riley. *Sawdust and Spangles: The Amazing Life of W. C. Coup*. Illustrated by Giselle Potter. Abrams, 2007. ISBN 9780810993518. \$16.95. 32 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary, All

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Biography; Informational Book; Picture Book;

Subject: Coup, W. C. (William Cameron), 1857-1895—Juvenile Literature; Circus owners--United States—Biography—Juvenile Literature; Circus--United States.; Books—Reviews;

A seemingly average boy named William Cameron Coup sets his fate in motion when he walks past a sign advertising a circus. He decides to see this circus and is immediately entranced by the magic and fun. He dreams of one day being able to travel and work for the circus. He accomplishes this dream, which further fuels his imagination, and he begins to dream even bigger. He decides to create and manage his own circus. William changes his name to W.C. Coup and becomes one of the most famous circus leaders of all time. Although Coup is successful in creating a circus, he keeps on dreaming, bigger and bigger. Coup, along with a business partner, decides to embark on the biggest dream of all: to create an underwater circus! The underwater exhibit becomes a huge success, making W.C. Coup a pioneer in entertainment whose daring dreams will be long remembered.

Through picture book format and the use of watercolors, the story of W. C. Coup is entertaining and captivating. Artist Potter shows the magic of the circus life with bright colors and imaginative pictures including a dog-faced boy and a variety of performing animals. With this book, authors Covert and Mills send the message to readers of all ages, that in order to accomplish great things one must be willing to dream. This book could be especially useful when studying American history, or as a fun informational read-aloud.