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The Day the Stones Walked

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Barron, T. A. *The Day the Stones Walked*. Illustrated by William Low. Philomel Books, 2007. ISBN 9780399242632. \$16.99. 32 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Folklore;

Subject: Easter Island--History--Juvenile fiction; Statues--Juvenile fiction; Tsunamis--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

To Pico the day is beautiful and he has caught two sea urchins and a black crab. When he shows his treasures to Mala, his mother, however, she doesn't notice. Instead, she studies the distant oddly colored clouds and recognizes them from an incident in her childhood. She sends Pico to warn Pala, Pico's father, of the coming "great wave." However, Pico's father won't leave his work. He is carving a moai, another huge rock statue so, when danger threatens, it will be ready to walk and help his people. Pico does not believe the stones had ever or would ever walk and be alive. When Pico sees that the storm really is a tsunami, he runs back to warn his father again, but before he can, he is engulfed in the strong foaming wave and whipped deeper into the ocean. Pico is miraculously saved! By a moai?

Many readers may be drawn to this title because of its author: Barron's widely popular young adult fantasy novels give him name recognition. Another attraction is the mysterious Easter Island statues on the cover. Barron's story is succinct, and the richly colored illustrations have a blurry textured look that fits the legend of this ancient Easter Island culture.

The Author's note at the end of the book explains more about Easter Island, and the stone images that mystify the world. Barron also suggests that deforestation was most likely the reason the native populations, unable to sustain themselves, died out. He then asks, "Will we, who live on the bigger island called Earth, learn from the experience of Easter Island? Or will we make the same mistake on a much larger scale?"

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