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Johnny Kaw: A Tall Tale by Devin Scillian Illustrated by Brad Sneed

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Johnny Kaw is a six-foot-two-inch newborn who gains a pound every hour. Realizing their son is too big for their small-town lifestyle, Johnny’s parents hitch up their wagon and head west to Kansas. There they find enough space for their giant son to grow and accomplish amazing feats. One day a tornado threatens to destroy their farm, but Johnny cuts it down with his scythe. After long days of working on the farm, Johnny and his mother enjoy watching the sun set. Years later, Johnny’s mother passes away. Knowing how much his mother loved sunsets, Johnny takes his scythe and cuts down all the trees in the central plains so his mother’s spirit can always enjoy the setting sun.

Devin Scillian and Brad Sneed have created a delightful book that showcases the beauties and legends of Kansas. *Johnny Kaw* is not only an amusing story in the style of tall tale characters like Paul Bunyan, it is also a heartfelt piece that exhibits a son’s love for his mother. Along with the playfulness of Scillian’s story, Sneed offers his own whimsical additions to the plot. Within the illustrations, Sneed depicts the state animals and plants of Kansas and even showcases school mascots from two of Kansas’s major universities. This book makes a great resource for teachers and librarians doing units on tall tales or even teaching about Kansas. *Johnny Kaw* is also a great read-aloud book for any age group.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

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