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Giants Beware!

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Book Review

Title: Giants Beware!
Author: Jorge Aguirre
Illustrator: Rafael Rosado
Reviewer: Kiersten Carr
Publisher: First Second
Publication Year: 2012
ISBN: 9781596435827
Number of Pages: 208
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Outstanding

Review

Claudette is an aspiring giant slayer who wants to be just like her dad, a retired adventurer and swordsman. The only problem is that she lives in a nice, safe town where giants are only stories. Determined to make her dream a reality, Claudette convinces her friend Marie, an aspiring princess, and her little brother, Gaston, who wants to be a swordmaker-slash-pastry chef, to sneak out of the city with her and go find a giant. Along with their faithful dog, Valiant, and with most of the town chasing after them, the three children encounter a crabby witch and her sentient apple tree, the Mad River King and his son, and finally a baby giant! After making friends with the object of their quest, Claudette and her friends decide to protect the baby giant from the angry townsfolk by making it appear that they have slain a giant just like in the stories. Claudette is hailed as a giant slayer and everyone returns home satisfied, having been on an excellent adventure and learning that it is best to solve conflicts without violence.

With the engaging plot and colorful illustrations, Giants Beware! is an excellent book for young readers and a entertaining diversion for older ones. Managing to communicate a moral lesson without being preachy is difficult, but Aguirre manages the task well, showing that there is more to each of the antagonists than meets the eye and presenting alternatives to violent conflict that are entertaining as well as working well in getting the characters out of their scrapes. Rosado’s illustrations are delightfully expressive, creating a unique fantasy world that connects perfectly with the witty dialogue and adventurous story, making Giants Beware! a high standard for the graphic novel genre.