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Bartholomew Biddle and the Very Big Wind

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Book Review

Bartholomew Biddle and the Very Big Wind

Author

Gary Ross

Illustrator

Matthew Myers

Reviewer

Liz Romney

Rating

Excellent

Level

Preschool, Primary

Pages

92

Year

2012

Publisher

Candlewick Press

ISBN

9780763649203

In the middle of a windstorm, Bartholomew learns to sail with just a bed sheet and a sense of adventure. He leaves his city and somehow ends up on a tropical island with pirates. Although intimidating and cranky at first, the pirates are actually quite friendly and like to have a good time. Bartholomew stays for weeks, but gets bored of having fun all the time, so he leaves with his sheet and lands at a strict school for boys. He makes a friend, Densy, and teaches him to fly. Bartholomew continues on his adventure and ends up in a place where many pilots of all kinds have gotten stuck. Everyone has given up hope of ever leaving. Bartholomew tries and tries, but he is stuck just like the rest of them. After a few weeks, Densy flies into the canyon, having escaped from the school. They climb up the cliffs and leave the canyon to continue their adventure, which finally leads them home.

Both a chapter and picture book, this unique hybrid story is told through poetry. The author creatively weaves together Bartholomew's tale of adventure all while rhyming. From the outside, it looks like a picture book, but it is too long to be read aloud to a small child in one sitting; however, the individual chapters make it easy to read just a portion. The beautiful illustrations perfectly match the style of writing. The colors are bright when the story is bright and muted when the story calls for it. Bartholomew is easy to relate to—at first he wants to escape from his life and go somewhere fun, but in the end, returns to his family. He also learns that who he is with is much more important than where he is. Even though this book is fun, there are deep, thought-provoking life lessons laced throughout with witty rhymes. Themes like overcoming big obstacles, learning the importance of friendship, building parent-child relationships, and letting children be independent are tied together in this beautiful book.