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Melia and Jo

Samantha Bullock

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Book Review

Melia and Jo



Author

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Illustrator

Jennifer Oxley

Reviewer

Samantha Bullock

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Preschool, Primary

Pages

37

Year

2018

Publisher

Houghton Mifflin Har-

ISBN

9781328916266

Melia spends most of her time inventing and experimenting in her backyard” until one day her makeshift STEM lab is turned upside down by her artsy, pirouetting new neighbor Jo. At first Melia isn’t sure what to think of this new girl who finds unorthodox uses for Melia’s half-completed inventions, but eventually she realizes that Jo’s artistic solutions are actually making the inventions better! The two girls work together to complete Melia’s inventions with Jo’s artistic sense, creating the ultimate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) team by combining their individual unique talents.

Melia and Jo does an excellent job showcasing the necessity and value of combining the arts and the sciences. The fact that science-minded Melia is a girl also promotes the important message that it’s normal for girls to enjoy STEM and not just stereotyped, traditionally feminine activities. However, though the book focuses heavily on the topic of invention and scientific pursuits, it equally promotes the value of the arts, implicitly pointing out the essential partnership between the two disciplines and the uses of each in creating the best possible innovations. The book encourages children to develop a variety of interests, a particularly relevant message for preschoolers and young primary readers as they are beginning to develop and explore their own interests and talents. The book’s many positive messages are accompanied by whimsical, bright watercolor illustrations, making it a valuable edition to any read-aloud repertoire.