



2018

My Beijing

Laura Dekle

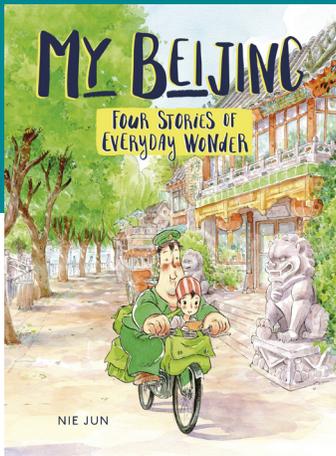
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Book Review

My Beijing

Author

Nie Jun (translated by Edward Gauvin)

Illustrator

Nie Jun

Reviewer

Laura Dekle

Rating

Excellent

Level

Primary, Intermediate

Pages

128

Year

2018

Publisher

Graphic Universe

ISBN

9781541526426

Hu'er lives in Beijing with her charming and quirky Grampa. Hu'er is often carried or pushed in a wheelchair due to a physical disability that affects her legs. She and Grampa live in a hutong, which is like a mix between a cul-de-sac and an alleyway. The four mini-stories in this book chronicle the adventures Hu'er and Grampa have in and around their hutong. When a public pool will not accept Hu'er because of her physical limitations, Grampa teaches her the formations of swimming on a rope in their yard. One day while Grampa is napping, Hu'er meets a mysterious boy who teaches her to find wonder and beauty in nature. Grampa tells Hu'er the fascinating and surprising story of how he met her Gramma when he was a mailman. Finally, Hu'er and Grampa charm a grumpy older neighbor by paying attention to his dreams and then saving his life.

The illustrations in these stories uniquely show detail, characterization, and some entertaining physical humor, such as Grampa's "toot" as he rides his bike up a hill. Younger readers will enjoy being able to analyze the sequence of pictures while following along in the story. Some pages have several panels of only illustrations with no text, while other pages are much more text-heavy. These elements work together well to create masterfully crafted and engaging stories. Words that cannot be translated adequately into English or require explanation are explained at the bottom of the page in which they are featured. Some events in the stories actually occur in dreams, and it is a bit difficult to follow where reality stops and dreams begin. This book exposes readers to what daily life in a hutong in Beijing is like, and, as the subtitle claims, it is full of "everyday wonder."