



2019

Little Critter: Exploring the Great Outdoors

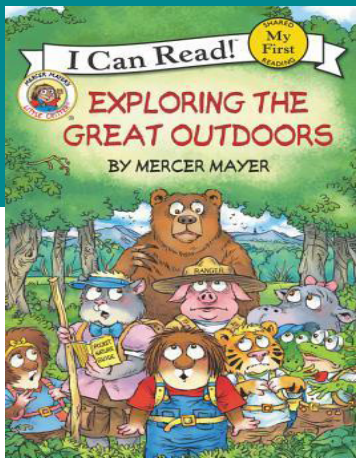
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Book Review

Little Critter: Exploring the Great Outdoors

Author

Mercer Mayer

Illustrator

Mercer Mayer

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Reviewer

Danielle Dallas

Rating

Excellent

Level

Toddler, Preschool

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Pages

28

Year

2019

Publisher

Harper Collins

ISBN

9780062431455

Laughable, lovable Little Critter narrates his adventures as he hikes through a state park on a class field trip. Miss Kitty and her animal class are ready to go with their hiking gear and snacks. But despite reviewing safe hiking rules with the park ranger, they still manage to encounter a series of misfortunes: falling down and needing a bandage, losing a hat, mistakenly picking poison ivy as a leaf specimen, falling into the river, avoiding a skunk, being followed by a bear cub and shortly thereafter its mama! They may lose their snacks and they may get tired and grumpy, but in the end, Little Critter and his classmates look forward to hiking again. The moral is subtle but encouraging: when we try something unfamiliar, we may stumble along the way but we can still choose to appreciate the experience.

The text is simple and well placed. An emergent reader will notice sight words and short sentences, but more difficult proper nouns and punctuations are present. A parent noticing the title first may expect a more informational book, but that is not the focus of the text. While the adventures contained in the storyline itself do not fall flat, the text is bland, although the author does successfully create interest using the word "happy" to contrast different characters' experiences. Where the text lacks, the vibrant illustrations enhance and redeem, especially the dramatic facial and body expressions of the animal characters. Following his modus operandi in other Little Critter books, Mercer Mayer incorporates a mouse and a spider in each picture. This is a fun detail to explore with children on a reread if they have not previously noticed the shenanigans of these characters who are so interesting in the illustrations yet unmentioned in the text.