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Fearsome Giant, Fearless Child: A Worldwide Jack and the Beanstalk Story

Jessica Mellor

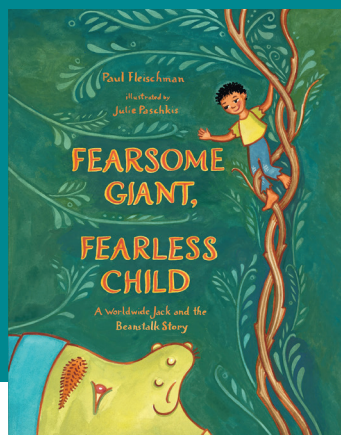
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Book Review

Fearsome Giant, Fearless Child: A Worldwide Jack and the Beanstalk Story

Author

Paul Fleischman

Illustrator

Julie Paschkis

Reviewer

Jessica Mellor

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Rating

Outstanding

Level

Primary, Intermediate

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Pages

28

Year

2019

ISBN

9781250151773

Publisher

Henry Holt and Co.

This worldwide Jack and the Beanstalk adaptation draws parts of the tale from cultures all around the world, meshing them to create one fully unique story. In some places Jack is actually the youngest son of thirteen kids, and in other cultures he's no bigger than your finger. Sometimes he steals a bell-covered pillow, a horse, or a harp. But no matter the context, as with all good tales, this one also ends with a victorious boy.

The power of this book is to see how different cultures portray the same basic tale. However, because snippets from different cultures are used to tell a cohesive story, it often feels jumbled and slightly jarring when it jumps from a witch to a giant or when it takes place in different locations. The illustrations beautifully capture the changes with different styles and characters as well as a word that shows the reader where they are, but even these elements may not be enough to eliminate confusion. There has obviously been a lot of calculated research put into this book, and while it maintains a solid structure by putting pieces together that fit at the right point of the story, this book is more for cultural insight than reading aloud.