



2020

Swashby and the Sea

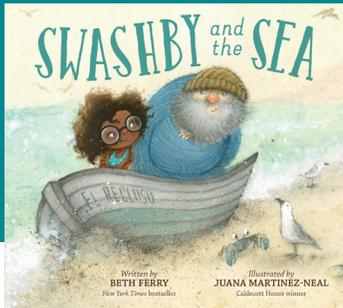
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Book Review

Swashby and the Sea

Author

Beth Ferry

Illustrator

Juana Martinez-Neal

Reviewer

Karen Abbott

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Rating

Outstanding

Level

Preschool, Primary

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Pages

32

Year

2020

ISBN

9780544707375

Publisher

HMH Books

Captain Swashby is happy to be alone on the beach, so when a woman and her granddaughter move in next door, he becomes a cranky curmudgeon. He tries to shoo them away with hostile messages written in the sand, but the sea wipes some letters away, revealing a very different message. “Now vanish” becomes “wish” and “please go away” turns into “play.” The Captain can’t argue with the wisdom of the sea, so he teaches the granddaughter to build a proper sand castle. He soon discovers that for all his reticence, having friends and neighbors is a wonderful thing. When his little companion is swept away by the waves, he leaps to her rescue.

The wonderful images in this book sweep readers into the story, and the characters’ personalities shine through the artwork. The girl is a happy little sprite, her grandmother is a bit bohemian, and Swashby is a traditional besweatered grump with lovely hairy legs, a knit cap, and wind-whipped whiskers. Another wonderful part of this book is the use of alliteration. Phrases like “salty, sandy, and serene” punctuate the most poignant messages of the story. The repetition of the sounds alerts the reader to the primary emotions of the moment. This is an amazing book that will be loved by generations.