



2020

Show Me a Sign

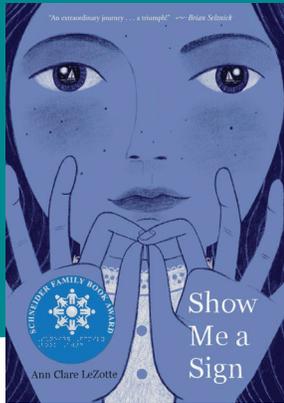
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Book Review

Show Me a Sign

Author

Ann Clare LeZotte

Illustrator

Julie Morstad

Reviewer

Maryn Wheeler

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Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate

.....

Pages

270

Year

2020

ISBN

9781338255812

Publisher

Scholastic

Eleven-year-old Mary Lambert thrives as a young deaf girl on the island of Martha's Vineyard in the early 19th century. Many people on the island are deaf and can communicate through sign. While the islanders navigate disputes about indigenous land rights, a scientist from the mainland arrives to investigate the causes of deafness on the island. When Mary is kidnapped by the scientist to further his study on the mainland, she is mistreated and realizes how isolating it is to not be able to communicate. Eventually, Mary befriends a maid who helps her escape. Making her way to the docks, Mary meets a sailor who rescues and reunites her with her own community.

As a deaf author, Ann Clare LeZotte insightfully writes about this historical deaf community on Martha's Vineyard. As Mary's eyes are opened to the perception of others, LeZotte reveals the reality, good and bad, of the deaf experience to the reader. The historic setting also shows society's growth in their knowledge about and acceptance of deaf people. Through Mary, LeZotte also draws similarities between Mary's misunderstood deafness and the misunderstanding of indigenous views about land. Mary becomes more compassionate and empathetic to others' mistreatment as she experiences mistreatment herself. This beautiful coming-of-age story becomes relatable as it teaches us to try to understand each others perspectives and learn not to judge too quickly.