2016

Rules of Summer

Aylea Stephens

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**Title:** Rules of Summer  
**Author:** Shaun Tan  
**Reviewer:** Aylea Stephens  
**Publisher:** Holder Children’s Division  
**Publication Year:** 2014  
**ISBN:** 9781444908893  
**Number of Pages:** 48  
**Interest Level:** Primary  
**Rating:** Excellent

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**Review**

There are rules to summer. These rules are things like not leaving red socks on the clothesline and never step on a snail. Some rules might seem strange ("never eat the last olive at a party"), while others seem like common sense ("never give your keys to a stranger"), but the illustrations depict what happens when the rules are broken and how things get progressively darker as the boys push things farther. In the end, though, they learn the rules of summer and have a great adventure.

This book doesn’t have a clear plot or message, leaving the emotions in the illustrations to lead the reader to feeling the story rather than understanding the story. It’s part humor and part surreal fantasy, but the illustrations invite the reader to put in whatever emotions they have into the rules too. The illustrations show what kind of depths that a child’s imagination can go to. Younger readers might struggle to understand what is going on or why it is happening, but older readers are more likely to enjoy this unusual picture book and the unique storytelling methods it uses.