

And a Book: The Inhabitants of Myth

Michael Molinet

Michael Molinet, Illustrator

Notable Kids Publishing (Oct 22, 2020)

Hardcover \$17.95 (32pp)

978-1-73335-480-6

The book-within-a-book picture book And a Book opens the door to a magical world.

Michael Molinet's informative and engaging picture book *And a Book* explores children's literature through dueling illustrations.

The book is comprised of two separate narratives, kept distinct through contrasting art styles and through separations on the page: an encyclopedia of magical creatures appears on the left, while the story of a boy reading that book appears on the right. As the boy learns more about unicorns, dragons, and other magical creatures, the audience is privy to information about the boy himself. He brings the encyclopedia into the rain, leaves crumbs on the pages, and accidentally rips a corner.

Most pages of the boy's narrative show him reading the book open to the page that he is inside of, and evidence of the boy's misuse of the book appears there, superimposed on top of the creatures, including colored pencil markings and muddy footprints. The book's mythology is shown to interact in the real world—most apparently on the page about dwarfs, wherein a dwarf casts a light to help the boy fix a ripped page of the book.

These intertwined narratives are complex to a sometimes confusing level, though elements of the book-within-a-book format are clarified by a late explanation from the leviathan. The mythology text's layout is also a point of distraction, with the first stanza of each rhyme appearing above the creature's names; on the page about faeries, the title is missing.

The narrative's nursery rhyme-style is coupled with direct language, so the book is conducive to being read out loud. In the prose afterword, the creatures are explained in a more personable way, adding relatability and humor. The language in this afterword is more sophisticated, though just as engaging, as that that comes before it: after an explanation of how powerful and scary leviathans are, a note jokes, "I am glad he is in this book, but I am also glad that he only has one page."

The picture book *And a Book* opens the door to a magical world.

GEORGE HAJJAR (October 14, 2020)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.