



Being A Captain Is Hard Work: A Captain No Beard Story

Carole P. Roman

Bonnie Lemaire, Illustrator

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Captain No Beard is back, and his misadventures are about to teach a very important lesson: even leaders need help sometimes.

Being the leader means having all the answers. At least: that's what Captain No Beard thinks. His crew has other ideas, however, in Carole P. Roman's *Being a Captain is Hard Work*, the tenth book in the award-winning Captain No Beard series.

Captain No Beard is bent on getting to Dew Rite Volcano, despite all of his crew's apprehensions. Surely Mongo is incorrect about those clouds being storm clouds, and the Captain has certainly guided the ship north, despite Linus's assertion they're going west. But when one of the Captain's decisions puts the youngest crewmate in danger, it's time to rethink what constitutes good leadership.

A current complaint among many parents is that children's entertainment has taken on a disrespectful tone. Talking dolls have smart-mouthed attitudes, kids' shows are overflowing with bumbling teachers and parents, and books are full of sarcasm and older themes at younger ages.

The author shows that children's books can still be exciting and engaging when their characters remain respectful and positive. Even when Captain No Beard thinks that his crewmates are wrong, he never looks down on them or calls them names. Likewise, no matter how frustrating it is to deal with a know-it-all captain, the crew talks out their problems in respectful ways. "Nobody knows everything," Hallie says. "A good friend will always tell you when you are doing something wrong."

The beautiful watercolor illustrations throughout are also upbeat and positive, with bright, saturated colors and dynamic, expressive characters. Though there's the threat of stormy seas and trouble, Bonnie Lemaire's full-page pictures expertly convey tension without becoming too scary for little ones.

Children from preschool through early elementary will learn much from this book. Not only does it carry a good moral—even leaders need to listen to and learn from the people around them—but Roman also includes a key for naming ten different cloud types, "so you'll always know if there will be calm seas or stormy weather ahead!"

Those unfamiliar with the series may be thrown a little at the end, when the scene turns back into a bedroom. There's no backstory given to indicate that the adventure is in the children's imagination, but that's a small hiccup in an otherwise delightful tale.

CHRISTINE CANFIELD (February 19, 2016)

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