

Bobby and Boo Set Sail: And Learn Colours in Chinese as Well

Kathy de Bruin

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With skillful rhyme, the story naturally incorporates colors, and teaches the Chinese word for each.

Kathy de Bruin's clever rhyming picture book, *Bobby and Boo Set Sail*, uses two boys, their aunt and uncle, and a day on a boat to explore the colors of the rainbow and to teach the Chinese words for each.

Bobby and Donny are excited to spend a day on the ocean with their aunt, uncle, and cat. As they explore and play, they encounter many different colors: a green crab, a grey dolphin, a pink parasail. After each color is introduced, a full page is devoted to the Chinese word for that color, including pronunciation guidance. A helpful key at the beginning of the book explains the four tones used in the Chinese language, and this supports and clarifies the pronunciation of each color.

Ablly capturing the fun of a day spent on the water, the family engages in activities—like water-tubing and building a sandcastle—that give the book a sense of adventure and fun. Rhymes are skillful, and colors are naturally incorporated into the story.

The emphasis on Chinese words is interesting, but there are no other cultural references in the book. Characters and locations are generically rendered. The title character Boo is the family cat, and he has a surprisingly small role in the story, though he and Bobby are the only characters pictured in every scene.

Computer-generated illustrations clearly match the activities described on each page, providing good visual representations for activities that some children will not be familiar with, such as parasailing. However, the pictures do nothing to further enrich the story.

Bobby and Boo Set Sail uses water adventures to introduce elements of a foreign language; it is an enjoyable and entertaining work.

CATHERINE THURESON (February 23, 2018)

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