

Corky Tails: Tales of a Tailless Dog Named Sagebrush; Sagebrush Meets the Shuns

Joni Franks

Raquel Rodriguez, Illustrator

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Through a young tailless dog named Sagebrush, children will see that even they can do their small part to protect Mother Nature.

A variety of important human themes come together beautifully in Joni Franks's *Corky Tails: Tales of a Tailless Dog Named Sagebrush; Sagebrush Meets the Shuns*.

Sagebrush is a small Welsh corgi who lives with her parents on a cattle ranch. The ranch is owned by someone who is only described as a kind young Miss, and it is partly through her that Sage learns how easy it is to make a difference in the world.

One morning, Sagebrush goes exploring in the big woods. She comes across a few Shuns, described as tiny people who reside in tree hollows. They have a great distrust of regular-sized humans, since they were the ones who knocked down all the trees in the forest. This forced the Shuns to live where they live and scavenge for food. The main story line revolves around Sagebrush's desperate attempt to save her new friends (with the help of the kind young Miss) before the forest is totally destroyed by loggers.

Though the book is heavy on its environmental message, having a cute animal as the main character makes what could have been a confusing concept far less intimidating. Through Sagebrush, children are more likely to comprehend what is happening to the Shuns and will hopefully want to stop the destruction just as much as Sagebrush does.

Additional themes, such as having determination and being kind, are just as intrinsic to the book's plot. Her whole short life, Sagebrush has been laughed at for not having a tail. Obviously, most children who have been teased for something are sure to identify with that. This makes one of the book's messages—that you can still make a difference no matter what—really resonate.

Raquel Rodriguez's colorful illustrations add depth and provide a deeper understanding of what is happening throughout the story. There is a lot of text on each page, so the illustrations may be needed for younger readers.

The need to protect Mother Earth is something everyone can agree on. Through a young tailless dog named Sagebrush, children will see that even they can do their small part.

KELLY THUNSTROM (August 2, 2017)

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