Clarion Review

Picture Books

Count von Ice de la Cream and the Golden Ice Cream

G.O. Martinez
G.O. Martinez, illustrator
M.M. Barron, illustrator
Xlibris
978-1-4568-6522-1
Three Stars (out of Five)

Count von Ice de la Cream is the best and most creative ice cream maker in the kingdom of Rumalia. We're not talking chocolate and strawberry and vanilla. No, his flavors include avocado, pepperoni pizza, French fries with catsup, hot dogs, and on and on.

When the Count sees the beautiful golden hair of the kingdom's princess, he is inspired to make a brand new flavor: golden hair, which includes a lock of the princess' hair, along with shampoo, conditioner, and hair tonic. The results of his creation are quite unexpected and cause many problems for the Count and the people of Rumalia.

Count von Ice de la Cream and the Golden Ice Cream is a light, easy and very silly story. Children in the three to six-year-old range will find much to giggle over as the Count creates his outrageous golden hair ice cream, and the people of Rumalia deal with the consequences of eating it. The author deliberately uses some difficult words like "predicament" and "concoction," and the text is fairly lengthy for a picture book. This will challenge some children, and parents will no doubt need to do some extra duty.

In addition, the phrasing is sometimes awkward and the sentence structure is not always correct. Illustrations are also sometimes inconsistent and childlike, with disproportionate human figures.

Still, *Count von Ice de la Cream* is a fun book that families can enjoy together. It offers the kind of tale that parents concoct on the fly to make their children laugh, and indeed, Martinez indicates in an author's note that he made it up as a bedtime story for his children a dozen years before he decided to turn it into a book.

While there are problems that keep *Count von Ice de la Cream* from being great, it is full

of humor and heart. Many readers—of all ages—will find something to enjoy.

Catherine Reed Thureson