ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

Dreamy Drums: Trouble in Paradise
JZ Bingham
Curt Walstead, illustrator
Balcony 7 Media and Publishing
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Fun illustrations and animal characters, combined with a pleasing rhyming scheme, make this a book that parents and children will want to read over and over again.

Dreamy Drums Trouble in Paradise, is a high-quality, eye-catching, colorful picture book with a cast of animal characters that children will enjoy. The first book in the Salty Splashes Collection, this book introduces a cast of animal pals and the hijinks they get themselves into. From Sammy, the young puppy learning the family rules, to a day spent at the beach with his sister Kat and friends, the group manages to fall asleep on a small boat and drift off in a storm until they beach at an island.

JZ Bingham's rhyming text excels at using both prose and spoken words to define the characters' personalities, such as when Kat dreams of being back to the only child, thinking, "She imagined 'Prisoner Sammy'/ and she grinned ear to ear." The rhyme is simple to moderate, good for lower elementary school students.

There is an abundance of text in *Dreamy Drums*, some pages having five stanzas—quite a bit for a thirty-two-page picture book. There is one logic error: when Sammy learns the rules, he discovers that he has some 'no-nos' hidden in his room that he needs to put in a bag and hide, but in the list of his rules, there is nothing noted that would make sense to bag, hide, or keep. The book gets part of its title from a picturesque stanza: "The thunder claps were distant, dreamy drums in their heads."

Illustrator Curt Walstead has drawn cartoon characters that fit the personalities Bingham created for them. According to the book's introduction, Walstead hand-drew the illustrations onto Balcony 7 Studios storyboard designs. His illustrations are fun and colorfully bright, with movement, direction, and appropriate amount of details. Walstead has an impressive resume, including *Dragon Tales*, *Men in Black*, *Dora the Explorer*, and *Go Diego Go*, just to name a few.

The cover illustration is eye-catching, with emotion on the characters' faces during the

storm. The title is printed large and bold at the top, with the author's and illustrator's names at the bottom. The book is a durable hardcover with dust jacket with quality paper inside. There are one or two pages where part of the illustration and storyboard seem slightly fuzzy, but it doesn't affect the overall feel of the book.

Dreamy Drums, Trouble in Paradise, of the Salty Splashes Collection, has an ensemble of fun animal characters written in a rhyming scheme that parents and children will want to read over and over again.

Beth VanHouten