Clarion Review

Picture Books

Duckie Goosie Fixes His Sled
Landen Sanders
Lance Sanders
CreateSpace
978-1-4664-4015-9
Three Stars (out of Five)

With so many children's books striving to instill or reinforce a moral code, it is nice to see one that also tries to teach something a bit more down to earth, like, say, the art of fixing a hole in an inner tube. That, of course, is exactly the double duty to which *Duckie Goosie Fixes His Sled*, a new book by Landen and Lance Sanders, aspires.

This volume is the second book featuring Duckie Goosie, the title character created by young Landen Sanders. As with the first installment, *Duckie Goosie Fixes His Roof*, this book features Duckie Goosie solving a problem step by step. When his friends Monkey Doggie and Bunny Kitty decide to go sledding, Duckie Goosie wants to join them but finds that his old inner-tube sled is flat. He gathers his repair materials and patches it, only to be put down by his friends who have brand-new sleds. Duckie Goosie doesn't give up, however, and he soon wins a race against his overconfident, and later apologetic, friends.

The story, a joint effort by son Landen and father Lance, is mostly excellent, and even with character names that seem a bit *too* cute, it fulfills two goals: kids can see Duckie Goosie's friends get their comeuppance because of his determined persistence, and they can learn a quick lesson in inner-tube repair as well. Fixing an inner tube may not be a task the average five-year-old can complete without assistance, but seeing the protagonist do so could inspire kids to think about how to solve problems without simply running to mom or dad to request a replacement.

The main shortcoming of *Duckie Goosie Fixes His Sled* is the quality of its illustrations. Rendered with colored pencils, the pictures do not reproduce well, bringing down an otherwise top-notch production effort. The visual storytelling also suffers at times. One strange sequence has Monkey Doggie crashing into a pile of snow; the other two racers are traveling alongside him when it happens. In the next picture, Bunny Kitty, who should have passed the pile, instead

crashes into the same pile of snow, with Duckie Goosie still racing parallel to her. Then, Duckie Goosie “saw the bump coming and kept his eye on the finish line.” It is distracting that the sequencing is out of kilter; time seems to stand still as all of this happens simultaneously.

Overall, *Duckie Goosie Fixes His Sled* is a nice story that does not yet win the race. The makings of a good series is here; with a few improvements, the Sanders’ next effort could take the gold.

Peter Dabbene