Clarion Review

Picture Books

Gizmo and Scatz: A Tail of Friendship

Jazz
Lyn Stone, illustrator
AuthorHouse
978-1-4678-8267-5
Two Stars (out of Five)

Gizmo the dog and Scatz the cat do not get along. Though they live in the same house, Gizmo likes to chase Scatz, bark at her, and steal her food. Scatz spends most of her time running from Gizmo. Things change for both of them, however, when they are frightened by a storm and end up cuddling under a bed together.

Gizmo and Scatz: A Tail of Friendship by Jazz is a sweet, simple story about a dog and a cat who learn to be friends. The text of the story is presented in rhyme. In a market that is this flooded with rhyming picture books, the writing must be impeccable and the story truly unique if the volume is going to stand out. Unfortunately, neither of these is true for this tale. The author's rhymes are forced and awkward, with little regard for meter. For example, she writes: "When it's time to have their meal, / Most of Scatz food / Gizmo steals."

Additionally, the plot is somewhat muddled. The story seems to be about two animals learning to get along. Yet, when the animals end up snuggled together under the bed, the author sums up the lesson she is trying to teach by stating: "They both learn, / No matter how different you are, / You are still your own / little special star!"

The best aspect of the book is the illustrations by Lyn Stone. Gizmo and Scatz are drawn beautifully. The animals come to life on the page, displaying emotion, mischief, and a great deal of fun. There is, however, one major problem. The artist has included images of a cat food dish and a pet bed with the animals' names on them. In both pictures she has spelled the cat's name "Scats" instead of "Scatz." This misspelling is careless and shows a lack of concern for the quality of the book.

Ultimately, there is not much in the writing here to endear the reader to the characters, but the illustrations of Gizmo and Scatz go a long way toward making the text entertaining.

Children ages two to six will enjoy looking at the pictures, and adults can use the story to discuss the importance of learning to get along with others.

Catherine Thureson