

Gracie Becomes a Rock Star: The Adventures of the Cedarwood Kids

Mazie H. Leftwich

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Gracie Becomes a Rock Star jumps from a clever play on words into an easygoing family story.

In Mazie H. Leftwich's lighthearted and amusing picture book *Gracie Becomes a Rock Star*, a girl transforms her family picnic by performing.

Told from the perspective of Gracie's brother, Caden, the story starts with the children playing near the log cabin that their grandparents are building. Both children love to be the center of attention; when Gracie finds herself on a natural rock stage, she instantly transforms into a singer. Caden's subsequent observation that Gracie is a "rock star" is sure to elicit giggles.

Caden is a good-natured audience. He complains about the length of Gracie's show, as any older brother might be expected to do, but he also enjoys her talent. The pair's brother-sister bond is a heartwarming element, while Gracie's fantasy of singing for a large crowd makes her sympathetic.

The story unfolds at a natural pace, though the plot diverges to include Caden climbing on nearby construction equipment; the adults admonish the children to be careful but otherwise don't interfere. This is an unsafe activity to model, and the adults' acceptance reads as less than plausible.

The book's full-color illustrations are computer generated. They capture the happy family picnic, depicting some of the action described and matching the tone of the story, though they are not otherwise memorable. The pages are text heavy, and the story feels too compressed in the shortened book length.

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CATHERINE THURESON (November 7, 2018)

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