ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

PICTURE BOOKS

If You Were Me and Lived in...France: A Child's Introduction to Cultures around the World
Carole P. Roman
CreateSpace
978-1-4810-3200-1
Four Stars (out of Five)

Maman or *Papa* will love to read this delightfully illustrated book to kids curious about another culture.

In Carole P. Roman's charming educational book *If You Were Me and Lived in…France…*, children are taken on a guided journey to learn what it might be like to live in another country, and they are taught some French words along the way.

The second book in a series on other countries, this volume teaches children a little about life in France. Roman, a former social studies teacher who has written six previous picture books, succeeds in helping readers identify with youngsters in France by presenting common events in the lives of French children.

The narrator suggests names that a French child might have, including Mathis and Jacqueline. French children call their mother *Maman* and their father *Papa*. They watch parades and fireworks for Bastille Day, which is similar to Independence Day in the United States.

The delightful, colorful illustrations feature a boy and a girl; on the cover, they are holding a large globe with the boy pointing to France. On one page, there is a blue silhouette map of France with a black star indicating the location of Paris. More color contrast would have made the capital city stand out.

The meanings of the French words are clear from the context, the corresponding image, or an explanation. For example, one illustration depicts the boy and girl, wearing backpacks, standing in front of their brick school that displays a French flag. The narrator says, "You would love spending your days in école." One improvement would be to indicate French words by putting them in italics.

The brief, large-print text makes for easy reading. A few questions provide readers with a variety of ways to consider the information being presented. When the children's mother

patronizes a *boulangerie* (bakery), the narrator asks, “What else do you think they would have in a boulangerie?”

The book has one misspelled word (“brought” instead of “bought”) and two missing commas, errors that stand out in a twenty-six-page picture book. At one point, the narrator makes a confusing statement: “One of the most popular sports in France is called football, but if you were me you would call it soccer.” Actually, if child readers were the French narrator, they would say *football* to refer to the sport that Americans call soccer.

Nevertheless, children up to age seven or eight will enjoy this book, and the pronunciation guide will help adults reading to youngsters. *If You Were Me and Lived in…France…* is a good place to start for young people interested in learning about different countries and cultures.

Norma Dawn Kellam