

Clarion Review ★★★★★

PICTURE BOOKS

JoJo's Tiny Ear

Stefania Munzi-Logus

Alphabet Publishing

(30pp)

978-1-956159-05-9

Jojo's Tiny Ear is an upbeat, personalized picture book about a boy's experiences with microtia.

Based in truth, Stefania Munzi-Logus's encouraging picture book *Jojo's Tiny Ear* is about a confident, joyful boy who teaches others about his hearing disability.

Jojo, just like other children, loves to play with his toys, explore the world, learn about animals, and have fun at the park. All that makes him different from others is the fact that one of his ears did not grow while he was in the womb. His condition, microtia, makes hearing difficult, but not impossible.

Jojo wears a hearing aid that's attached to a headband. With a positive attitude and using sign language to communicate, Jojo educates bullies on the playground, as well as those who aren't familiar with microtia, creating an open dialogue wherever he goes. He celebrates his individuality and promotes that of others: it's what makes people who they are, he says.

Colorful and detailed, the watercolor illustrations complement the idealized story line and enhance its message. Some of their dark background colors obscure the text, though. Nonetheless, this is a vibrant picture book with a valuable message about understanding and acceptance. Its story is told in jaunting rhyme schemes, and its arc is tidy and didactic, beginning with explanations of who Jojo is, and then sharing what microtia is. An inciting incident with the bullies pushes a rise in the book's action, which is followed by a climatic explanation. The idea that people's differences make the world a more fun and interesting place is emphasized in clear terms.

An upbeat, personalized picture book about a boy's experiences with microtia, *Jojo's Tiny Ear* encourages others to appreciate the seen and unseen differences between people.

ALEX DAILEY (November 23, 2021)

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