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Picture Books

Kami and the Yaks
Andrea Stenn Stryer
Bert Dodson, illustrator
Bay Otter Press
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Kami, a young deaf boy living in the most mountainous region of Nepal, finds his family's lost yaks; he does so by determination and courage, but also through keen observation. On the morning of a mountain-climbing trek involving his father and brother, the family's ever-important animals are nowhere to be found. Because Kami knows their favorite spots, he takes off on his own to look for them.

The illustrations aren't done in typical primary colors. Instead, they better reflect the actual colors of the Himalayas, with browns, grays and lots of white. Kami's red coat is a beacon in all the pictures, especially after a storm. The yaks are realistically drawn, with White Spot—the youngest and smallest, who becomes wedged between rocks—drawn as a gangly, awkward creature that is instantly lovable.

The story never dwells on the roughness of life experienced as a Sherpa, such as nasty weather, living hand-to-mouth on climbers' fees, or even Kami's deafness. Instead, what are emphasized is Kami's courage and perseverance and, ultimately, his success. Readers also learn about yaks, small-sized cattle with flowing white hair.

An editor's note at the end of the book provides a fuller explanation of Sherpas and Nepal.

Stryer has been a mountain climber since her teens. She has traveled to the Himalayas, and has taken other adventure trips. Her previous book is *The Celestial River: Creation Tales of the Milky Way*.

Illustrator Dodson's paintings stand out in this lovely book. He has illustrated more than seventy books and is currently commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera in New York for a series of illustrated opera stories for children.

Jodee Taylor