

Kobee Manatee: Climate Change and the Great Blue Hole Hazard

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Lauren Gallegos, Illustrator

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Kobee Manatee: Climate Change and The Great Blue Hole Hazard is an educational picture book about the dangers that plastic pollution represent to the oceans.

In Robert Thayer's inviting picture book *Kobee Manatee: Climate Change and The Great Blue Hole Hazard*, Kobee encounters beauty, danger, and the effects of plastic pollution and climate change.

In this series title, cuddly Kobee and his friends swim from the Cayman Islands to the mysterious Great Blue Hole near Belize. They learn about the dangers of plastic waste after rescuing a sea turtle whose head is ensnared in plastic; the text states that hundreds of species, from plankton to whales, suffer from the effects of the eight million metric tons of plastic dumped into the ocean each year.

Later, when the friends arrive at the Great Blue Hole, hermit crab Pablo is lured by its mysterious beauty and falls into it, after which it is revealed that the hole is so deep that sunlight does not reach its depths, and even plants and plankton can't survive there. Pablo is rescued by Tameeka, a deep-diving loggerhead turtle. After this, the friends have a party and help Kobee's cousin clean up plastic litter to get her new café ready for customers.

Straightforward and friendly conversations between Kobee and his friends lead the narrative, much of which is devoted to them admiring the ocean's beauty while also facing its dangers. As their underwater adventures progress, facts are shared to foster appreciation for the ocean and its inhabitants. Such information comes on old-looking scrolls on each page, which focus on the state of the ocean and the varied denizens of the deep. The book also introduces ocean-related vocabulary and suggests ways to become part of the effort to stop plastics from ending up in the oceans.

The book's vibrant illustrations are used to complement the characters' emotions. They feature odd, diverse, and sometimes dangerous oceanic creatures, and their use of colors makes the characters pop against their soft blue backgrounds. Further, plastic waste appears in many of the illustrations, floating in the water or littering the ocean floor.

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KRISTINE MORRIS (April 13, 2021)

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