

KyRose Takes a Leap

Cicek Bricault

KyRose Press (Oct 20, 2022)

Softcover \$8.99 (268pp)

978-0-578-38232-6

In the adventure story KyRose Takes a Leap, a girl with special abilities faces immense social pressures.

Set in 2030, Cicek Bricault's fantastical novel *KyRose Takes a Leap* focuses on a girl who can speak with animals but who wants only to be popular—or at least more normal.

Despite advances in technology, children in KyRose's generation still struggle with age-old issues, including family bickering, friend group challenges, and school pressures. In addition to these hurdles, KyRose grapples with the fact that she can communicate with all creatures. She often tries to help animals in need, but she doesn't want to reveal her abilities.

KyRose receives an assignment at school: she is to construct a gadget to help astronauts on a Martian mission. With the help of her friends, she devises a clever machine that allows people to utilize echolocation. In between testing the device and communicating with animals, KyRose learns that a popular girl wants to become her mentor. With all eyes on her, KyRose juggles her assignment, her abilities, and her burgeoning social status with limited success. Her machine winds up being instrumental in assisting a stray dolphin reconnect with its pod but also leads KyRose into mortal peril.

KyRose may have magical abilities, but she's a relatable heroine. She prioritizes her friends and family, she works hard at school, and she succumbs to pressures to be the best. She also makes decisions in haste, leading to teachable moments. Further, her discussions of echolocation, space exploration, and the intricacies of ecosystems are edifying. As her social star rises and the echolocation device is tested or tweaked, she is faced with new opportunities—and tests, as when she utilizes her gadgets to gain advantages in soccer games.

The prose has an easygoing tone that allows the characters to remain the focus rather than extraneous sensory details. KyRose's world reflects modernity more than it does the future, though, with some of the futuristic elements remaining underdeveloped, reliant on clever naming systems rather than fleshed-out concepts themselves.

Still, the novel does an able job of balancing its magical realism with its elements of science and its story lines concerned with interpersonal dynamics. Though most of KyRose's conversations take place between her and animals, who share their outside perspectives on what she's facing, KyRose's friends and family members are well fleshed out, too, and their personal goals are well distinguished from KyRose's throughout. By the book's end, their concerns are made to connect to KyRose's tale: her machine, her ability to speak with animals, and her family's history all unite in the emotional conclusion.

In the adventure story *KyRose Takes a Leap*, a girl with special abilities faces immense social pressures.

JOHN M. MURRAY (September 29, 2022)

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