ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

Las Riquezas de Rangoberra
Jane Weber
Raven Tree Press
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“Some think it was dropped stone by stone from nesting birds tidying up nearby cliffs.” The island of Rangoberra, a beautiful island in the middle of the brilliant blue sea. The story begins in a search to find an heir to the throne. The King and Queen of Rangoberra declare a contest: “Each entrant must present a single treasure chest filled with the riches of Rangoberra.” The winner will be announced as the heir to the throne at midnight the night of the Harvest Ball.

Alyssa, the royal seamstress, sews the “finest dress” and the most “royal robe ever seen.” She proudly sews everything the King and Queen ask. Seeing all the scraps, she goes to work patching a beautiful quilt.

The night of the Harvest Ball, the Queen catches a chill and requests a quilt to cover her at the announcement ceremony. Opening it, Alyssa carefully wraps it around the Queen of Rangoberra. “The King and Queen gently touched every diamond-shaped piece on the quilt.” Memories of all the people and events in the King and Queens lives flooded them, and they were pleased. So pleased that they announced Alyssa the next Queen of Rangoberra.

This is the author’s first children’s book. Having studied children’s literature at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, she knows the magic and importance of the genre. The illustrator has previously contributed artwork to *Celtic Cookbook* and other publications; here her talent shows in the skillfully painted pictures. Each set of pages contains a beautiful painting in a large gold frame. The background is a wash of what looks like old scroll paper. Saari captures details in simple but beautiful ways.

Intended for children about four to nine years old, the book includes a helpful vocabulary list at the end, a useful tool for both teachers and parents. Weber uses colorful language in her story and Saari’s illustrations accompany the words well. If there is an element that might benefit from further work, it is probably following through with details to complete the flow of the story. Page to page, connections are made and eventually the story emerges.

The popularity of bilingual texts in children’s literature is continually growing. *Las Riquezas de Rangoberra* is a simple fairy-tale story that would be a welcome addition in

any English or Spanish children’s literature collection.