Clarion Review

Picture Books

Lillibit's Dream
Melody Sullivan
Stanislav Grof, illustrator
Hanford Mead
978-1-59275-000-9
Four Stars (out of Five)

Lillibit is a caterpillar with big dreams. She believes that there must be more to life than eating leaves. She wants to fly. While the other caterpillars make fun of her for climbing up to the highest leaf so that she can try, her best friend, Serena the ladybug, encourages her to believe in her dreams.

Lillibit 's Dream offers two valuable lessons to young readers. The first is scientific in that it teaches about metamorphosis. As Lillibit grows through the story, the reader will learn about molting and about how a caterpillar creates a chrysalis to become a butterfly. Though this is certainly an interesting lesson for young children, the book's presentation is somewhat frightening.

Lillibit is terrified when her skin splits open the first time she molts, believing that she is dying. She has the same fear when she begins to form a chrysalis. Lillibit's reaction to the process of changing could leave some children with the idea that metamorphosis is very traumatic for a caterpillar.

The second lesson is about the power of believing in one's dreams. Lillibit fantasizes about flying, though she does not know that she will become a butterfly. Others try to tell her that life is already all that it can be and make fun of her for reaching for more. With the encouragement of Serena, Lillibit refuses to give up on her dream and eventually it comes true.

The text is generally well written by Melody Sullivan, especially in descriptions of Lillibit's dreams. For example, "In Lillibit's dream of dreams, she reached for distant galaxies and her legs grew long. She stretched her possibilities and her antennae unfurled. She soared to suns far beyond her caterpillar crawl and wings sprouted from her back. The stars sang. The galaxies swirled. And the universe pulsed."

The accompanying color illustrations by legendary psychotherapist Stanislav Grof, MD, PhD, are consistent and express both emotion and a good sense of movement. They relate well to the text, and the bright colors are visually appealing.

Overall, *Lillibit 's Dream* is an above-average book that children ages three to six will enjoy. Parents should be aware that some additional discussion of metamorphosis might be necessary. The author's presentation of the power of dreams is truly lovely and makes the book well worth reading.

Catherine Thureson