Clarion Review

Picture Books

Little Wave and the Mission of Laura Hawksbill
Linda Joy
Xlibris
978-1-4691-9178-2
Three Stars (out of Five)

Little Wave, Jiffer the sailboat, and Obee the albatross are swimming around the ocean when they meet a new friend, a large sea turtle named Laura Hawksbill. Laura has a problem: Her home beach has been taken over by humans, who have built hotels, golf courses, and various other obstacles. Laura needs help to find a place to lay her eggs. The three friends decide to introduce Laura to Omar the octopus, known as the wise one, in the hopes that he will help Laura find a new place to lay her eggs.

Little Wave and the Mission of Laura Hawksbill is a very simple story with a very big message. Linda Joy has set out to teach several important lessons about believing in oneself, always being nice to others, and taking care of the earth. The author is to be commended for taking on so many important topics, but none of them receives sufficient attention. For example, she writes about a group of turtles fighting over seaweed: “When you are mean and selfish you get that right back one way or another. What you give out returns, a continuous circle.” This is a fairly complex concept for a young child, and touching on the back-at-you topic distracts from the environmental lesson that is at the core of the book without providing enough context for either lesson to have any meaning.

There are additional problems, including awkward writing. At times, Joy attempts to rhyme but she does not do so consistently. This gives the text a discordant rhythm, and the word choices seem forced and unnatural. For example, she writes that “There is a vast mountain of plastic, all sorts of debris that the birds, turtles and many fish eat and it’s poison you see! Huge boats trawl the oceans for all the fish leaving nothing much for the rest of us. Even krill for the whales is seeing defeat.” Also, the characters are very flat. The reader will learn nothing about Little Wave, Jiffer, or Obee. Who are they, and what is the nature of their friendship? This is the third book Joy has written about these characters, and though she may have provided more

information about them in previous books, there is nothing here to connect the reader to the characters.

Despite all of its problems, the book is not without merit. The author's own crayon drawings are colorful and fun. And Omar, who has a very powerful sense of mysticism and is joined to the spirit of the ocean, will likely strike a chord with readers. Parents and young children aged three to six may find this book to be an enjoyable, useful starting point for talking about environmental responsibility.

Catherine Thureson