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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ PICTURE BOOKS

Lonesome George

Rachel A. Blodgett
Glenn M. Blodgett, illustrator
AuthorHouse (Apr 25, 2013)
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An old island tortoise teaches children the meaning of humility.

Demonstrating the importance of supporting others while seeking humility for oneself, Rachel A. Blodgett's *Lonesome George* is a lighthearted story about a tortoise and the simple yet meaningful lessons he teaches his friends.

George, the old tortoise, is the last of his kind on the Galapagos Islands, and for that, some think he is lonely. George, however, is anything but. With an island full of friends—creatures of all kinds—and a unique outlook on life, George knows how to enjoy what and who surrounds him. And he does so on one particularly beautiful day with his finch friend, Fred.

As the two embark on their walk around the island, they come upon a diving contest between the many agile masked booby birds. One in particular, the largest and most intimidating to the others, Albert Miyagi, is very boastful and proud. But instead of finding fault with this attitude, George encourages Albert to show them his best dive.

They all see that Albert is indeed quite talented, and George is quick to reward him with a high score to praise him. The lesson, however, is yet to be made. With love and simple words, George teaches the bird that the greater accomplishment is not in the act but in the spirit in which he performed it: "Dear Albert, your spirit is GREAT!"

Humility is defined well in Blodgett's tale: "Humility is to be modest or humble"; "Humility is a lifelong practice"; and "A heart should be cultivated." The author also offers a warning about acting too arrogant: "It's when you believe you're better, you'll find that your friends are long gone!" The book ends with the realization that with a gift comes the responsibility to share it.

Lonesome George is a quick read with rhyming text and good lessons for elementary readers. Illustrations by Glenn M. Blodgett are colorful and well drawn with a coloring-book feel that young readers will appreciate. There are, however, spelling and punctuation errors and, at times, confusing and unnecessary lines.

With a good deal of aid from the illustrations, Blodgett's characters come across as endearing and quaint and will keep readers coming back for more.

TAMMY SNYDER (September 23, 2013)

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