

Long Goes to Dragon School

Helen H. Wu

Mae Besom, Illustrator

Yeahoo Press

(40pp)

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Long Goes to Dragon School is an insightful picture book in which a young dragon with unique abilities struggles to fit in.

In Helen H. Wu's picture book *Long Goes to Dragon School*, a young dragon learns the importance of individuality and diversity.

School is starting, and Long is excited. But then his teacher announces that the class will be learning how to cook with their fire breath. Long is a water-breathing dragon, though, not a fire-breathing dragon. He fears that he won't be able to contribute to the class's planned picnic and wonders what everyone will say. Because of his worry, he forgets to enjoy the new experience with his friends.

The book's wonder-inducing watercolor illustrations make use of warm color schemes and life-giving details, as of flowing winds, busy backgrounds, and the dishes at the picnic. They also convey the characters' feelings well: when Long's classmates are shown expressing excitement about the announcement of a cooking class, Long's own facial expressions and the clenching of his fingers reveal his worry and his inner turmoil.

Thanks to its short, active sentences ("Camille toasts marshmallows. Willy roasts popcorn. Mia grills fish. Long nibbles on his claws."), the story flows well, introducing important lessons about self-acceptance, authenticity, appreciation, and the celebration of diverse talents for the value that each adds to the world. The result is a happy story whose hero learns the value of embracing his talents in the end.

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GABRIELLA HARRISON (January 12, 2023)

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