Clarion Review

Juvenile Fiction

My Champion
S.K. Carnes
Illumina Publishing
978-0-9718600-7-0
Four Stars (out of Five)

Tess is in love with horses and dreams. On the days that she is allowed to ride one of the work horses from her family's farm Tess rides out to her special place by the sea. With her faithful companion Star she gathers driftwood and builds a shelter there. Tess collects treasures of special shells fishing nets and old shoelaces. One day when Tess visits she discovers an old orange crate with the word "Valencia" on it and so her shelter becomes Valencia. The eagle soaring above watches over Star and his human companion and tries to talk with the old horse. One day Tess notices that her bracelet of shells is missing and in its place is a bracelet with a crystal heart. Perhaps the young girl who lives above the cliff has found her treasure spot and has come down to play.

Through her beautiful illustrations the author introduces her characters to the reader. Along the way the reader learns to dream about things to come just as Tess dreams about riding on a champion horse before a cheering crowd of spectators. Although the text is lengthy for a picture book it is an excellent read-aloud story to be shared between adults and young readers. The accompanying CD presents a reading of original poetry by John McCutcheon with narration of the story by Ernest Pugh and original music and sound effects by Alan Boyne. Young readers will enjoy this book at various levels of understanding first as a simple story of a girl and her horse then as a story of accomplishment and pride.

Joyce Rice