

Pepper Parrot's Problem with Patience: A Captain No Beard Story

Carole P. Roman

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The world of bedroom pirates is back as Captain No Beard and his friends return in Carole P. Roman's *Pepper Parrot's Problem with Patience*. Roman manages this second outing of the Captain No Beard crew capably and offers a lesson about learning new skills and patience along the way.

In the first installment in the series, *Captain No Beard*, there was a charming reveal at the end: Captain No Beard was actually a boy named Alexander with a rich imagination, the ship was really his bed, and most of his crew were stuffed animals from his room. *Pepper Parrot's Problem with Patience* introduces a new member of the crew, Pepper Parrot, who gets frustrated easily and finds it difficult to learn her left side from her right. With help from Captain No Beard and his crew, Pepper manages to learn what she needs to know and even changes her name to something more suitable for a pirate, Polly.

The sophomore effort in a continuing series can be tricky. This time, most readers will be familiar with Captain No Beard's true identity and some of the other signatures of the series, like "translations" of pirate talk. But Roman strikes a nice balance of catering to new readers with brief encapsulations of the basics while adding new elements that are true to the Captain No Beard themes.

Like many stories written for the preschool to third-grade set, *Pepper Parrot's Problem with Patience* offers a moral, but the teachable moments don't come at the expense of the story—they are part of the story. Kids learn maritime jargon (port and starboard) along with the old trick of holding up the left hand to make an "L." Roman makes this lesson part of a larger theme of not getting frustrated when learning doesn't come easily or quickly: "'See, Pepper, there was no reason to cry,' Hallie said. 'Don't get angry and scream. Just ask for help and wait. We are all here to help you. That's what crewmates do. All you need is a little patience.'"

This female voice of reason, Captain No Beard's cousin Hallie, also offers a point of interest for girls who might not care to read a pirate-themed picture book that is dominated by male characters. The illustrations are friendly, colorful, and inviting and, along with the cover and overall layout, measure up to the high standards of the first Captain No Beard book. Roman's writing is clear and fun throughout.

With *Pepper Parrot's Problem with Patience*, Roman proves that Captain No Beard and his crew have staying power. After a successful second outing, many readers will no doubt hope to see a third story in the series.

PETER DABBENE (March 22, 2013)

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