

Playing in the Rain

Brad Closson

Brooke Stanke, Illustrator

CreateSpace

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There is something profoundly moving about the image of a wise, gentle, and fun-loving grandfather, especially when he is paired with a little boy on an epic adventure. Closson and Stanke capture this timeless fantasy of intergenerational magic perfectly in *Playing in the Rain*. As an added bonus, they do it without being overly sentimental or too politically correct. Straightforward rhymes, fantastical exploits, and lighthearted illustrations, all come together perfectly in this tale, ideal for toddlers through elementary age.

The hero appears to be around ten years old and remains nameless, as does his grandfather. The latter entices his bored grandson to head outdoors with him to play in the rain, and off they go. The hours fly, and when they are called in for dinner, they are giddy, muddy, and drenched. Over dinner with the boy's parents, the grandfather weaves a tale of the wonders they experienced, from fighting pirates, to frolicking with a beaver while fishing for marlin. The rhyme scheme is tight with the first and third line rhyming in each stanza. None of the words are complex and they flow easily off the tongue.

Each drawing has a smorgasbord of clever and whimsical touches, such as the creative permutations of the boy's shirt and boots. There are also a multitude of cute little crabs, birds, and other smile-provoking surprises to discover on nearly every page.

Worth mentioning in this multicultural, post-modern world, is that the characters are white, the family is nuclear, and the story is stereotypically middle American.

PATTY SUTHERLAND (December 3, 2010)

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