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Sea Horse, Run!

Tammy Carter Bronson
Bookaroos Publishing (June 2011)
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Sea Horse, Run! is a delightful depiction of underwater life that will educate and bring joy to young readers. Tammy Carter Bronson, author and illustrator, tells a story about sea creatures that dwell in the Australian Coral Reef. In each scene Bronson weaves a dreamy, watery atmosphere with simple lessons of this mysterious world. Her vibrant artwork details the ocean reef covered with live coral and the other animals that float and swim around it. Giving speech and emotions to the creatures of the deep, the writer teaches young people about courage and friendship.

Sea Horse and Coral are two friends observing other sea life floating or darting by. Coral—who sings, thereby giving a double allusion to her name—helps Sea Horse disguise himself as he takes on her varying colors. “When Coral was red, Sea Horse looked red. When Coral was yellow, Sea Horse turned yellow. When Sea Horse was not with Coral, he was blue like the sea.” Danger! Sea Horse notices a shark veering too close. Coral sings, “Sea Horse, run far, far away.” But Sea Horse is brave; he hugs Coral and asks Shark why he is fleeing. He finds out that Shark is afraid of a Sea Dragon. Other animals pass by: a moray eel and an octopus, but Sea Horse will not run away. He will not abandon Coral and so he watches and waits. When he offers to help Seaweed hide from the dragon, he discovers that Seaweed is the dragon and not at all monstrous and terrible.

With dry-brush techniques using watercolor and colored pencil, then a cut-and-paste into her computer, Bronson brings her images together in brilliant collages. She tells a pure story of fantasy by using a small amount of words to appeal to young minds, similar to Dr. Seuss’ objective in *The Cat in the Hat.* Her research in libraries and aquariums across the country provides a sense of authority to the work. The back of the book contains a wealth of information about the appearance, habits, and life cycles of sea horses; maps that indicate locations of coral reefs, Leafy Sea Dragons, and other animals in the Australian Coral Reef. Children from three to eight will treasure this book—one to remember among favorites.
MARY POPHAM (March 25, 2011)

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