

## Soap on a Rope

**Denise Barry**

**Andy Boerger, Illustrator**

Mascot Books (Mar 24, 2015)

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*A cute soap story keeps things clean, simple, creative, and fun.*

Denise Barry's picture book *Soap on a Rope* is a cute story, written in rhyme, in which two children (and their dog) turn an initially disappointing gift into a fun surprise. The story's lesson works, as the children learn to feel grateful for the present, and the characters use their creativity in a way that should appeal to clever kids.

The story opens when a little girl, Abigail, receives a wrapped gift in the mail, which she shares with her brother and their eager dog, Foo Man Chew. When she discovers it's a soap on a rope, Abby wonders if it's a mean comment about her, and wishes she had received a toy instead. However, Abby and Nolan realize they can use the soap to make bubbles, giving them a way to play with their unusual gift, and they invite other children and animals to join in their fun.

The writing matches the story's friendly and upbeat tone. The language is simple enough for very young children to understand, and the text has a rhythm that doesn't feel forced. The illustrations by Andy Boerger are nicely textured, and the characters (especially the dog) have friendly and expressive faces. Boerger gives his drawings motion through lines without losing their throwback cartoon feel, and the nighttime drawings are particularly well done. The font used for the text is a little too stylized and might be hard to read for some children, but the other visual elements are strong.

Like its main characters, *Soap on a Rope* succeeds by keeping things simple, creative, and fun.

JEFF FLEISCHER (February 4, 2015)

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