ForeWord Reviews
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PICTURE BOOKS

The Adventures of Anna and Andy Hummingbird
Linda P. Young
Juli Hasegawa, illustrator
Xlibris
978-1-4568-9568-6
Three Stars (out of Five)

Families everywhere are entertained by backyard wildlife. In this picture book, Young, an amateur birdwatcher, shares the antics of the hummingbirds she has watched for years from her own back patio. This is the first in a planned series of books about Anna and Andy Hummingbird, young birds with human-like motivations and emotions. It is a delightful blend of real and imagined events that occur throughout the first seasons of their lives.

The Adventures of Anna and Andy Hummingbird is comprised of five loosely related vignettes that follow the two young birds from hatching to maturity. Young, who is herself the character "Nice Lady" in the story, sprinkles the text with observations gleaned from her real-life experience with hummingbirds. Details like Momma throwing broken shells out of the nest, the two-day waiting period between the hatching of the eggs, and the flight patterns the birds employ to defend their territory will appeal to any backyard naturalist.

Colorful full-page illustrations bring Nice Lady's backyard to life with drawn and painted scenes of the trees where the birds live, the strawberry-shaped feeder that is the focal point of their lives, and the other creatures that populate these stories. The hummingbirds are drawn in a more cartoon-like style than the rest of the people, birds, and landscapes in the book. This can be mildly jarring, particularly in scenes the hummingbirds share with more realistically drawn characters like Nice Lady and the sparrow. However, Anna and Andy are charmingly rendered characters conveying emotions like surprise, confusion, and anger through the positioning of their heads and beaks.

In addition to uneven visual elements, there are some minor errors in spelling, syntax, and capitalization that detract from the professional quality of the book.

Anna and Andy's adventures and mishaps add up to a celebration of the activity that goes on in Young's backyard. Despite the minor flaws in the book's presentation, the author's intimate knowledge of these birds and the joy she experiences from their presence are very

apparent. This book, with its large format and colorful illustrations, is well suited for sharing and could inspire families to take an interest in the wildlife in their own backyards.

Carolyn Bailey