ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

JUVENILE FICTION

The Adventures of Bunzy: The Beginning
Tina Eshed
AuthorHouse
978-1-4389-2673-5
Three Stars (out of Five)

Tina Eshed has drawn on her now-adult son's love of a special childhood toy in writing *The Adventures of Bunzy: The Beginning*, the first of what she promises will be several children's stories about a delightful stuffed rabbit. Little Bunzy is the handiwork of a magical old woman who lives in the forest. She knits him of leftover yarn, sews a spell into his head, adds a tiny red heart inside his chest, then uses her "abracadabra" magic to give him powers of his own. The only caveat is that Bunzy must be truly loved before his powers can work. Bunzy must find himself a special child, which of course, he does. Together, he and his new friend embark upon their first adventure, undoubtedly the forerunner to many more wonderful times to come.

The Adventures of Bunzy is a likeable, endearing tale that adults will enjoy reading aloud and young children will want to hear again and again. There are moral messages scattered throughout. Love is an overriding theme, but there are also lessons about friendship and generosity, being careful, facing fears, and taking care of others. The messages are not heavy-handed or overbearing, but instead are deftly woven into the actions and words of the characters as they go about their adventure.

Eshed's story is engaging, albeit sparsely illustrated for a children's book. While Bunzy himself is adorable, the pictures are rather small and their style is a bit stiff and old-fashioned, particularly the drawings of human beings. Eshed carefully describes the specific colors of various things in the book, but unfortunately, those colors are not reflected in the illustrations. For instance, Bunzy's shirt is supposed to be red but appears pale lime green, and the fairy, Cherry-blossom, whose hair and dress are described as pink, is shown in brown. Children love to look for specifics like these, and the colors that do not match up with the text will be disappointing.

Children may also question why the woman who created the little bunny, whom she always called "MR. Bunzy," refers to him simply as Bunzy when they meet again. The rabbit

himself points out the “MR.” part of his name early on in the story, yet it never comes up again. In addition, perhaps the Old Woman herself should have a name. Always referring to her simply as the Old Woman seems like a missed opportunity.

The text also has several editing issues that need to be addressed. Incorrect and missing punctuation, variations in font size—especially the sudden reduction starting on page ten—and the lack of either boldface highlighting or even capitalization to differentiate section titles from the regular text all present unnecessary distractions. Occasional cases of extra spaces between lines and missing spaces between words are also in need of correction.

The Adventures of Bunzy: The Beginning is a lovely introduction to a most agreeable new character. Bunzy is a charmer, and with some editing assistance, his first adventure story could be, as well.

Cheryl Hibbard