ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

JUVENILE FICTION

The Big Bad Rain Monster
Jeralyn Lash-Sands
CreateSpace
978-1-4610-5446-7
Five Stars (out of Five)

Anyone who has ever witnessed a sensitive dog's reaction to a thunderstorm will empathize with Lady Chee-Chee, and with her owners as they try to find a way to deal with her fears. In *The Big Bad Rain Monster*, author Lash-Sands tells the charming story of a loving family's efforts to help their dog.

Lady Chee-Chee and her friend Sir Grumbles live with the human Sweetie Bumpkins and her parents, Papa Blue Eyes and Mama Angel. The family lives an idyllic life in a cottage by the ocean, with organic gardens and a beach where Sweetie takes the dogs for a walk every day. When the occasional thunderstorm rolls in, however, little Lady Chee-Chee is nearly paralyzed with fright, trembling and hiding even before the storms begin. A distressed Sweetie and her parents decide they need to work together to find a way to help Lady Chee-Chee.

The Big Bad Rain Monster is engaging and perfectly paced, and Lash-Sand's use of amusing names for the characters, as well as her explanation of each, helps to keep the tone of the story lighthearted enough to appeal to children of all ages. The author gently leads readers through the family's problem-solving efforts, emphasizing the importance of working through challenges until a solution can be found. Sweetie and her family ultimately come up with a unique and thoroughly modern way to help their much-loved pet feel safe, and young readers who have storm-terrified dogs in their own families may be tempted to try it themselves.

The book is beautifully illustrated with soft, realistic renderings of people and animals alike. The illustrator effectively captures the overall tone of the story, imbuing human and canine faces with appropriate expressions. And the images of dark clouds are personified with delicately drawn faces, subtly depicting the "rain monster" in a subdued manner that will not frighten younger readers.

The Big Bad Rain Monster is charming and fun while it simultaneously manages to tackle the subject of fear. The story teaches that with love, patience, and a little ingenuity, even difficult problems can be overcome. Lash-Sands is a talented storyteller, and her delightful book

deserves a place on every child’s shelf.

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