

The Extraordinarily Ordinary Life of Prince: Which Fork's First

Prince A Sanders

Ikhsan (bird) Ditya, Illustrator

Solutions By Prince (Nov 27, 2013)

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Parents will delight in this giggle-out-loud lesson in table manners that fills a chasm in today's picture book market.

Author and former classical ballet dancer Prince A. Sanders details the proper etiquette for fine dining in his new book, *The Extraordinarily Ordinary Life of Prince: Which Fork's First*. With the use of helpful pictorials as well as an original plot, Sanders and illustrator Ikhsan (bird) Ditya have created a genuinely entertaining story.

Prince is an imaginative and curious six-year-old boy who is preparing to go see a Broadway show and eat at the New York Hotel for his birthday. According to his adorably supportive mother, however, he is badly in need of a tutorial in table manners.

While the book is primarily written in the third person, the narrative switches halfway through to a dream in which the lovable pet hamster, Popcorn, takes the lead. In this segment, both the writing and the illustrations are giggle-out-loud funny. *Which Fork's First* veers away from a preachy, boring manual with these sorts of creative choices.

Because of the layout, including interspersed pages of text and full-page illustrations, *Which Fork's First* is appropriate for four- to seven-year-olds. The large type and simple, well-explained vocabulary work well for beginning readers.

While the concept is admirable, and the writing and illustrations are quite endearing, *Which Fork's First* has a few problems with design and packaging. Most of the illustrations inside the book are clean and informative, especially the segments where Popcorn is at the forefront, but the cover is overly cluttered. The illustrator could have focused more on Prince and simplified the cityscape for a more salable design.

Additionally, because this is the first in a series of books about Prince's adventures, there should be clearer separation between the title of the series and the title of the individual book; it's very difficult to discern which is which on the title page. This could be made clear with a volume number or even a colon. And although the text is, for the most part, cleanly edited, there are a few typos on the dedication page.

Which Fork's First is a successful attempt at teaching children table manners and, much to the delight of parents, fills a chasm in today's picture book market.

COLBY CEDAR SMITH (February 3, 2014)

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