Clarion Review

Juvenile Fiction

The Fairies of the Clouds
C.D. Rauscher
AuthorHouse
978-1-4343-5153-1
Three Stars (out of Five)

Pixie, an adventurous fairy, accidently slides through the clouds, falls through the trees, and lands in an unknown forest. Fortunately, this charming wayward sprite is found by a loving group of children who bring Pixie back to their family home. After their mother mends the fairy's torn dress and golden wings with clear thread, the children and Pixie begin to have adventures together. What ensues is a colorful story about Pixie deciding if she belongs in the clouds or on earth with her newfound friends.

The Fairies of the Clouds is accentuated by full-page watercolors that capture the story in sparkling images. Because the illustrations are so enchanting, the use of more of them would have enhanced the story. The book has a nice feel, with a pleasing 8 1/2" x 11" shape and a smooth, glossy cover.

When weaving the story together, C.D. Rauscher does a fine job alternating between the children's voices and Pixie's thoughts. The reader is able to follow along from multiple points of view, which provides a well-rounded understanding of the colliding worlds. While the narrative is simple enough to be intriguing to a younger audience, the themes—choosing a life mate, estrangement in family relationships, etc.—are also complicated enough to engage an older reader.

At the end of each chapter, Rauscher includes comprehension questions that serve as an effective learning tool for children. Whether the child is reading alone or with a parent, the questions offer a way to increase understanding and to think in a critical way.

While most of Rauscher's writing is clean, *The Fairies of the Clouds* includes occasional phrasing that is less literary and more colloquial, which does not fit with the tone of the book. Rauscher also has some phrasing problems at the beginning of each chapter: she tries to ease the reader into the story with statements like, "Let's continue on to see what Pixie has been up to in

the clouds." Unfortunately, such attempts to engage with the audience actually make the transitions choppier. Rauscher does, however, do a good job of weaving side plots—a mute sister, a snake bite, the question of Pixie's real family—into the larger story of Pixie choosing between living on earth or her native land in the clouds.

In the author's note, Rauscher hints at more tantalizing adventures to come. Because of her strong characters and storytelling skills, young readers will be excited for the next installment.

Colby Cedar Smith