

Clarion Review ★★★★☆

PICTURE BOOKS

The Girl Who Couldn't Read: Until She Discovered Her Super Powers

DPA Weston**Leena AK, Illustrator**

FriesenPress (May 3, 2018)

Softcover \$22.99 (40pp)

978-1-5255-2707-4

The Girl Who Couldn't Read is an impactful and hopeful children's picture book about overcoming learning disabilities.

DPA Weston's thoughtfully illustrated picture book, *The Girl Who Couldn't Read*, is powerful as it explores the experiences of a special-needs child.

A young girl who has trouble reading and writing finds herself continually alone, experiencing constant frustration. Other children do not want to play with her, and her teachers do not understand her slow growth. In fifth grade, though, she starts to discover her strengths, and then she proves wrong those who disparage her.

The book's illustrations are colorful and informative, showcasing the girl's feelings of alienation and desperation. They also highlight her happy moments, as when her painting skills are acknowledged and praised by the principal. As the story progresses, the illustrations become brighter and more colorful, echoing the wonderful change taking place in the girl's life.

Descriptive language does a thorough job of capturing the girl's difficult early experiences, though the text takes care to ensure that her negative experiences do not override her later accomplishments. The varying reactions of her teachers further highlight the importance of awareness and education around special learning needs, and the book's careful pace and short, structured paragraphs make it easy to follow and understand.

The book's tone is warm and encouraging, and clues for diagnosing reading disabilities are listed at the end of the book. Light, optimistic language makes its approach both appealing and enlightening. Important lessons are imparted, such as that people are capable of learning and changing even when there are challenges. Inspiring secondary characters include a teacher who goes out of his way to help the girl read.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (August 21, 2018)

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