ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

The Year of the Dog: Tales from the Chinese Zodiac
Oliver Chin
Jeremiah Alcorn, illustrator
Immedium
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"At dawn, a joyful squeal rang through the farmyard," writes Chin. That squeal heralded the birth of baby Patty the Pig on Farmer Wu's farm. The neighbor animals crowded around the pigpen to welcome the baby, as Patty's parents introduced her to her elders on the farm. Patty learned fast, and the elders all agreed that it was time to teach her some manners.

While Auntie Sheep shook her head and advised Patty "to keep her skin clean," Patty enjoyed sliding and slipping across the mud bath. When Uncle Ox instructed Patty "to chew slowly and not make a mess" while eating, Patty "dived face first into her chow." When Farmer Wu lost his jade ring, and all the other farm animals couldn't help the farmer, Patty saves the day with her cleverness, stubbornness, and courage.

Oliver Chin's second book in his Chinese Zodiac series features Patty the piglet, born in the Year of the Pig, who displays all the wonderful and not-so-wonderful qualities of people born in the same year. Readers will enjoy learning about the personalities of people born in the Year of the Pig as they follow Patty on her adventures around the farm. While the main character, Patty, charmingly introduces us to the characteristics of Year of the Pig people, the other characters in the book are not as obviously representative of their birth years, which would have helped the book be more informative. Chin has also written *The Year of the Dog*, the first book in this series, as well as *The Adventures of WonderBaby*, *9 of 1*, and *The Tao of Yao*.

Jeremiah Alcorn illustrates the book with expressive angular cartoon characters, capturing the emotions of the animals and animals on their adventures, with full color illustrations on every page. Alcorn was the 2003 winner of the ACME animation competition. In this book, his second collaboration with Chin, he illustrates with humor and gentleness the traits of Patty: inquisitiveness, resilience, intelligence, stubbornness and courage. Patty's character, as well as the other animal and human characters in the book, shines through his simple bright cartoons.

From the supercilious scorn of Auntie Horse as she tells Patty to "sleep standing up and

not be so noisy” to the amusing expressions as Patty squeezes, squeaks, and slithers her way under the gate, readers young and old will enjoy this journey through the remarkable Year of the Pig.