Clarion Review

Picture Books

Tiger Questions U?
Xlibris
978-1-4568-0758-0
Four Stars (out of Five)

The reading workbook market for young children is saturated with licensed properties and familiar corporate characters plugged into standard boilerplate templates, so an independently published reading workbook is fairly unique. Dee Clardy's *Tiger Questions U?* goes one step further by using the author's personal photographs of Tiger, her pet Pekinese/Poodle mix. The result is enjoyable and educational.

Clardy was inspired to write *Tiger Questions U?* in order to help children master basic information: the names of parents, addresses, and how to make an emergency call to 911, et cetera. The setup of *Tiger Questions U?* not only allows children to practice some basic reading, but also gives parents an opportunity to learn some things about their children. What children like and don't like is revealed as they answer questions alongside the commentary, which is delivered in Tiger's own voice. For example, Tiger says,"I was born in Kansas City, Missouri. Where were u born?" and "If u have several favorite foods, can you name them?"

The latter type of open-ended question is more effective in creating an interactive environment, and the only times the book slows is in sections where several questions can be answered "yes" or "no," with little elaboration. Though billed as a reading workbook, *Tiger Questions U?* works well as a writing workbook, too, as children can attempt to write their answers on the blank lines provided.

The snapshots of Tiger and his surroundings—that accompany the text—help young readers relate to familiar settings and identify with Tiger as they proceed through the book. The book's final section abandons Tiger's narrative and the snapshots in favor of a series of photos of objects from everyday life. Here, though raw and unpolished, the photographs may appeal to children who are usually presented saccharine, cartoon images of common items. In this case, the bacon looks like the bacon they might see on their own breakfast table, and the apples and bananas aren't perfectly red or yellow.

For parents or teachers who might be worried about the texting-style "U" used throughout the book, have no fear: A postscript from Tiger informs children that "You is the correct spelling of U." *Tiger Questions U?* is an innovative book that might help open doors for reluctant readers and writers.

Peter Dabbene