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Are You the Pirate Captain?

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~~Not a choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Here on the endpapers is a piratical ship, skull and crossbones flying, provisions on the quay, hinting at some fine adventure as we open the book. On the sails of the ship is a sea shanty, 'We need a pirate captain, before we can depart; a buccaneer who will strike fear in every sailor's heart.' There follows a catchy 'Ho diddle-ho and hey diddle-hey?' chorus and there, squawking loudly, is a scruffy seabird, clutching the melody for the shanty, set in the key of C for ease of singing, guitar chords included! From the crow's nest, First Mate Hugh yells that the ship is ready to sail for it has been mopped and swabbed and scrubbed, and even the crew has had a wash. BUT they have lost Scurvy Sea Dog Sid, their last captain, to a giant squid! So the search must be on for a new captain. Hugh and crew approach several likely looking seadogs, but not one will take up the offer when asked 'Are you the Pirate Captain?' The last sailor challenged replies that no, he is going to a dressing-up party. But he does offer to help them in their quest to find someone with courage, brains and heart. What they need is someone to lead the crew, not just look the part. The crew have a pow-wow on deck, and realise they are all agreed: it must be Pirate Captain Hugh, for he is clever, brave and bold!! In comes seabird, with a corked bottle in his beak. Inside it is the other half of S S Dog Sid's lost treasure map and so they all set sail for far off lands.

This book is such fun, filled with humour in text and pictures, characters being drawn with just the right amount of authenticity. There are Georgian streets with dandies wearing the most outlandish wigs and frills, buckles sparkling on their high heeled boots, and long-bearded captains with eye patches and missing teeth. Each crew member is drawn with great individual characteristics, and their part in the tale is told solely in the illustrations, e.g. their growing despair at not being able to locate a new captain. First Mate Hugh is small, and so boyish by comparison with the rest of the crew. Young shipmates reading this for themselves will have ample opportunity to empathise with little Hugh. The book would be great for dramatising, having such a variety of characters, with lots of opportunity for improvisation. Author and illustrator have worked together brilliantly to create a book full of 'avast's and 'yo, ho ho's, and the text bounces along in rhyme, swishing readers along to a satisfying end. It just begs to be read aloud!

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