



HOLLYWOOD

Book Reviews

Title: Kingly and I: A Trip around the Sugar Cane Farm
Spanish Title: KINGLY Y YO: un paseo por el cañaveral
Author: Anelly Schwab Alfaro
Publisher: Archway Publishing
ISBN: 978-1-4808-7085-7
Genre: Bilingual – Illustrated Children’s Story – Educational
Pages: 40
Reviewed by: Beth Adams



Hollywood Book Reviews

We all know the saying, “You can’t judge a book by its cover,” yet in author Anelly Schwab Alfaro’s masterpiece titled *Kingly and I: A Trip around a Sugar Cane Farm* - from its cover to final page, the imagery, magic of the characters with language, peacefulness and life-giving food source of sugarcane, are homogenized into a classic book which is a must-read to youngsters.

Let's count the amazing aspects of this book. First and foremost is the bilingual printing of the story; Spanish and English. This is the perfect way to teach a foreign language to children – whether being Spanish to English or the other way around. Next, we see the artistic illustrations being printed to the edges of the pages using hand-drawn techniques surely impressive enough to capture the roaming eyes of children seeking non-verbal information from the pictures. Then we have the storyline itself of a young girl with her pony named Kingly riding around a sugarcane farm in the Dominican Republic. Putting all of these elements together, Anelly Schwab Alfaro has achieved what I already defined as a “masterpiece.” (obra maestra!)

The girl is the narrator, which in a way enables all young children to imagine themselves in this role, personalizing the story in a very impactful way. Riding around the sugarcane farm reveals many cultural ways the land is farmed, crops are gathered, people use their resources of water, and showing a peaceful place which makes it for an inviting place to visit. Even the aroma of the sweet-smelling sugar is told in a way readers will imagine it for themselves – I imagined the smell of cotton candy being made. One day, the rain on the roof and the muddy fields made it a day for staying inside, not riding Kingly bareback around the farm. The next day, however, with the sun coming out and drying up the farm brings back a sense of normalcy and leaves to the ending of the book with a feeling of hope and optimism.

There are many books being published into the crowded genre of illustrated children's books, but few are as creative and educational as *Kingly and I: A Trip around a Sugar Cane Farm*. Less is more when it comes to children's books as it is truly an art for an author to put themselves into the minds of youngsters to grab their attention. This is demonstrated with finesse and style, and is a must-have for all family libraries, as children will gravitate to reading this time-and-time again because of the good feelings it has to offer. Without even realizing it ~ they all will be learning, or at least becoming familiar with, another language.