



The Big Aquarium Adventure

Learn About Frogs, Fish, Turtles, Sharks, and Skates!

Editorial Review

In Roop's children's chapter book, three youngsters learn about sea creatures and how to deal with overwhelming feelings.

Fourth-grader Stephen loves frogs; his pal Alex, who's in fifth grade, is an aspiring journalist; and Alex's classmate, Jordan, enjoys research. When Alex learns that Stephen visited an aquarium while on vacation in Baltimore, he asks to interview him. Stephen helpfully describes the fish, including sandbar sharks, turtles, and frogs he observed, while Alex takes notes. Stephen also recalls shaking with fear when he approached the open-top tank of clearnose skates and wanting to run away when someone asked if he'd like to pet one. He then reveals the tools that he used to manage his anxiety: He paused, remembered the toy frog he kept in his pocket to help calm his nerves, took deep breaths, and returned to the more peaceful frog area of the aquarium.

When Jordan hears about the interview, she embarks on a research mission and creates an informative report that features simple facts, maps, drawings, and diagrams that identify the body parts and life cycles of some of sea creatures Stephen encountered. In the final chapter, Alex and Jordan collaborate on a nonfiction story about Stephen's experiences, incorporating the latter's research. **The final product offers a comprehensive overview of the preceding chapters, supporting reading comprehension through repetition.** Boune's tranquil full-color cartoon illustrations effectively break up the text. However, the similar images of Stephen and Alex conversing outside feel redundant, and the dialogue is sometimes uninspired ("Did you visit The Big Aquarium?" "Yeah, we did").

Developing readers will appreciate the straightforward plot, concise sentences, and simple questions. Roop, who has experience working with students with autism, offers thoughtful word guides, a glossary, and activities and resources to improve literacy. Some readers may find the vast array of elements to be daunting, though. The various characters are portrayed with a range of skin tones.



KIRKUS REVIEWS

“An interactive, fact-filled book for early and reluctant readers with an interest in marine life.”

Categories:
Children's Animals,
Children's Concepts,
and Science and
Technology