

Don't Drink the Pink

B.C.R. Fegan

Lenny Wen, Illustrator

TaleBlade (Aug 1, 2019)

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Joyful and curious characters enliven this spirited picture book about a grandfather's magical gifts to his granddaughter.

In B. C. R. Fegan's imaginative children's picture book *Don't Drink the Pink*, a quirky grandfather and his eager and adventurous granddaughter have a special bond that's enlivened by science and magic.

Grandpa Gilderberry has a penchant for creativity, science, and bringing joy to his granddaughter Madeline's life, especially on her birthday. Each year, he presents Madeline with a collection of potions that give her superhero-like abilities for a day. She can pick any one that she wishes as her birthday present—with the exception of the pink potion, which must remain untouched until Grandpa Gilderberry gives the okay.

Madeline narrates the story as a child would: in a direct, straightforward way. She describes what transpired on each of her birthdays: which color potion she selected, and what she experienced as a result. For example, on her first birthday, the red potion gave her fire-breathing abilities, while a brown potion gave her the temporary gift of flight on her seventh.

Grandpa Gilderberry and Madeline come alive and are full of joy and curiosity. Madeline revels in trying something new, and Grandpa Gilderberry loves witnessing her do so. Madeline's mother and father are doubtful about her birthday gifts, and they are not as amused by Grandpa Gilderberry's antics as Madeline is. Their skeptical attitudes dilute the happiness expressed by the main characters.

With a nice use of rhyme and repetition, the story advances with a consistent pace and lyricism. It covers fifteen years, each with their own two-page spreads. It's enough space and time to dwell on each individual birthday adventure. Repeated lines serve as an anchor.

Lenny Wen's colorful, rich, and dynamic illustrations capture characters engaging with one another and their surroundings, even secondary characters. Madeline's ever-present cat is a nice touchstone. Illustrations have texture and are fluid, down to details like the cat's hair, and facial expressions and body language are captured well.

Don't Drink the Pink is a story about a special bond between a grandfather and his granddaughter, showcasing the importance of family and fun.

ALEX DAILEY (June 19, 2019)

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