

Fribbet the Frog and the Tadpoles: Captain No Beard

Carole P. Roman

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This charming nautical tale is both educational and fun.

In this ninth installment of Carole P. Roman's Captain No Beard series, *Fribbet the Frog and the Tadpoles*, Fribbet the frog is upset about something, and his friends on the *Flying Dragon* pirate ship are determined to help him.

The characters will be familiar to those who have enjoyed the earlier books in the series. The text features Captain No Beard (also known as Alexander) and his crew—Fribbet the frog, Mongo the eye-patch-wearing monkey, Polly the parrot, Linus the lion, first mate and cousin Hallie, and cabin girl Cayla, the captain's younger sister.

The human characters are based on the author's grandchildren. Roman is also the author of another collection of picture books that highlights children and their native countries, the *If You Were Me and Lived in...* series.

Friendship is the main theme in this narrative. When the tiny eggs at Fribbet's lily-pad home eventually start turning into brothers and sisters, the captain realizes he can empathize with the forlorn frog because he's dealing with the messes on the ship that Cayla is responsible for.

The illustrations are colorful and detailed, down to the pirate paraphernalia worn by the crew. Polly wears a bandanna on her head; an earring adorns Linus. In a nod to the content, the letter O in "Tadpoles" in the title on the book's cover has been replaced with a frog egg. Midway through the story, a row of dancing, prancing frogs cavort across the pages, which is especially whimsical.

The story itself unfolds in easily readable text presented in large white boxes; the fun illustrations are on each facing page, with some artwork entering the text boxes, such as waves or Polly flying through.

The story is simple and easy to follow, and it offers a couple of good life lessons. As the wise Captain No Beard explains, "Problems can weigh you down like a heavy anchor. When you share your load with others, it's never too heavy to carry." A little bit of science is even included, with a diagram that follows the development of the frog life cycle.

A few minor punctuation errors may distract the reader/parent; the younger crowd this book is meant for will probably not notice, though. They may wonder, however, about Fribbet's plumed pirate hat disappearing and reappearing from one page to the next.

This charming tale is made even more likable when the audience realizes that the *Flying Dragon* is actually the captain's bed, the blue sea is the carpet in his room, and the animals are his stuffed toys.

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (March 2, 2015)

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