

Hairy Harry Couldn't Hurry: An Imaginarium of Imaginations that Take Place in the Hot Days of Summer

Bello

Denis Proulx, Illustrator

The Ewings Publishing

(30pp)

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Hairy Harry Couldn't Hurry is an inventive, allegorical picture book about the importance of eating right in order to grow healthy and strong.

In Bello's informative picture book *Hairy Harry Couldn't Hurry*, brothers learn about proper nutrition while helping a luckless spider.

While playing in their tree house, Chichi and Chacho notice a small spider building a web. They decide to watch it for a while. Using a magnifying glass, they observe quite a bit—including that the web is of poor quality, and that spider is slow and unlikely to catch bugs. Indeed, the spider, Harry, tells the boys that he's starving and has no energy to build a good web or trap food. Chichi and Chacho resolve to help Harry get healthy again; their methods, which follow a discussion with their parents, are fanciful.

Narrated by the older brother, the story begins with lengthy background information on the boys' family and their culture, followed by a summary of how the brothers first encountered Harry. What follows this extended set-up is an allegory about the importance of eating right in order to grow healthy and strong. Indeed, the boys' parents—a doctor and a nurse—add a didactic element, explaining food's function in giving bodies energy in clear terms.

The imaginative illustrations take the form of rough digital paintings with bright colors and wavy, imperfect lines. The font is consistent with this aesthetic, too, its letters rounded and evocative of comic books. However, the CDC-backed information at the book's end—about mosquitoes and how they spread diseases—proves superfluous, as mosquitoes play only a minor role in the story itself.

In the educational picture book *Hairy Harry Couldn't Hurry*, a malnourished spider opens a family conversation on the benefits of a healthy diet.

IAN DAILEY (February 11, 2025)

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