

Sharky Marky and the Big Race

Lance Olsen

Thomas Perry, Illustrator

Olsen Images

Hardcover \$13.99 (28pp)

978-0-9895712-0-3

Like SpongeBob SquarePants for the younger crowd, this beautiful book is sure to delight young minds.

Like a kinder, gentler *SpongeBob SquarePants*, the Sharky Marky book series gives voice and personality to creatures under the sea. In *Sharky Marky and the Big Race*, author Lance Olsen and illustrator Thomas Perry weave a suspenseful story in which a shark on wheels tackles adversity and comes up from behind to win the big prize.

Sharky Marky is bumper to bumper with his friends in the race when Meanie Marlin uses his sharp bill to poke a hole in one of Marky's back tires. Then Octo Eddy squirts ink in his face, and Marky decides he must pull over. As Olsen writes, "Sharky Marky won't panic / He keeps his wits. / He needs some repairs / So he heads to the pits."

The rhyming text is fun to read out loud, sends a good message, and encourages reader engagement. As Marky reenters the race from the pits, Olsen writes "Now Marky has fallen to last in line / He'll need your help to catch up in time!" The necessary detour might have cost Marky the race, but Olsen encourages readers to count down from ten to one as they watch Marky zoom past his ten competitors in an inspiring show of perseverance.

Overall, *Sharky Marky and the Big Race* is a perfectly paced story of an underdog going from flat tire to trophy that is sure to delight young minds.

What's more, the hardcover children's picture book has very high production value with a vivid color scheme, charming illustrations, and action-packed scenes. The front and back inside covers are filled with a playful who's who face book of characters from Walrus Whippleton, Peter Puffer, and Sammy Stingray to Killer Whale Karl and Horace Sea Horse. Such an imaginative cast is poised to bring more whimsical, fun, and uplifting tales to the Sharky Marky series.

AMANDA MCCORQUODALE (September 16, 2015)

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