

Spaceman Sam

D'artagnan

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(64pp)

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A boy undertakes a surprising intergalactic adventure with his father in the unforgettable picture book Spaceman Sam.

Enter outer space—no rocket needed—via *Spaceman Sam*, D'artagnan's cosmic, encouraging picture book that celebrates creativity and the bonds that come from it.

Sam possesses the rare power of imagination. He can turn mundane moments into adventures. Thus, a cardboard box becomes the catalyst for an outer-space race against alien creatures. But when Sam discovers he's unable to keep up with his opponents by himself, he calls on his father, who doesn't share Sam's power, to join his mission. To Sam's surprise, his father welcomes the adventure, copiloting them toward an unforgettable feat.

End rhymes, metaphors, and other rhetorical devices make this a transcendent text. Its imagery is vivid, as with "My hopes had drained of ever reaching first when my engine choked with its gasoline thirst." And Sam is appealing as he narrates his story with vulnerability, expressing his loneliness and need for help to his father: "Shooting stars and nebulas faded from view, I was left all alone in the darkest of hues." He demonstrates self-awareness and social skills well. Elsewhere, the duo display empathy toward one another during their intergalactic travels, illustrating healthy parent-child relationships in which sensitivity and acceptance remain foundational.

Watercolor textures and layered lines make the illustrations vibrant. They depict whimsical worlds and fantastical characters that complement Sam's bustling narration. Bright splashes of rainbow color palettes bounce against backdrops with saturated blues, reds, and purples. The characters' brown hues are nuanced and dynamic, changing against blue-gray domestic settings and gold-plated planets in the galaxy. And Sam's Afro-textured hairstyle is detailed with gravity-defying coils that enhance his audacious personality.

Spaceman Sam is a charming picture book that celebrates the magic of imagination.

BROOKE SHANNON (June 26, 2024)

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