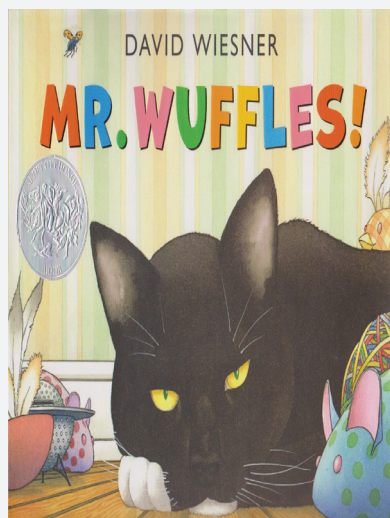


Second Reaction: Cooperation, Communication, and Friendship in a Most Unusual Setting

Wiesner, David. *Mr. Wuffles!* New York: Clarion Books, 2013.

Marissa Buche



Cats can exude a multitude of emotions and behaviors that delight the young and old. David Wiesner has done an excellent job of illustrating Mr. Wuffles's lack of excitement with ordinary toys, as well as Mr. Wuffles's need for curiosity and adventure in this near-wordless picture book. Mr. Wuffles has no interest in the catnip, stuffed mice offerings of string and feathers his owner gives him—causing him to walk past a very suspicious spaceship intermixed with the untouched toys. He quickly realizes his mistake and peers into the spaceship where he discovers small, green creatures trying to hide and protect their ship. Each page illustrates an adventure between the curiosity and excitement of Mr. Wuffles and the fear the aliens—who are inside the spaceship—experience in their pursuit to fix the broken parts. This story lends itself to an unlikely friendship between the aliens and the ants that live under the radiator in the living room. Although both groups are challenged by a language barrier, food, technology, and drawings help the ants and aliens devise a plan to fix the spaceship and escape the wrath of Mr. Wuffles.

Sharing this book with my children was a delightful experience. The plot regularly changes in nature from adventure to comedy and finally, to heroism. Wiesner is impeccable in his illustrations and the storyline that follows. His full-page and comic strip illustrations will

help a young reader focus on the emotions of the characters and the message of the story. Mr. Wuffles's emotions change at every page turn, which the reader can appreciate through the beautifully illustrated eyes and facial movements of the cat. The detailed and eloquent lines Wienser uses to give the aliens humanlike qualities and gestures help the reader gain a more concrete understanding of their mission to get home and provide them with a more friendly demeanor as they come into contact with the ants.

My children laughed at the mishaps of Mr. Wuffles as he pursued the fleeing aliens. They were intrigued by the hieroglyphic writings that the ants and aliens used to communicate, making universal connections to history and pictures. Wienser's story was able to guide my children to his message about friendship, mainly through his illustrations which showed the ants and aliens communicating and helping each other.

I would encourage the use of this book with children to promote not only storytelling, but also to convey the underlying message of friendship. Young and advanced readers could use this book to engage in conversation about how the ants and aliens worked together despite their language barrier, allowing for an application to their own human interactions and friendships.

About the Author

Marissa Buche is a graduate student in the school counseling program at Purdue University. She has a degree in elementary education from Purdue University, is married, and has three school-aged children. She likes to use new and exciting literature to teach life skills and character building in schools and at home.