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Review: Mercy Watson to the Rescue

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DiCamillo, Kate, *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*. Illustrated by Chris Van Dusen. Candlewick Press, 2005. ISBN:0763622702.

Description:

Mercy is a pig. However, her “parents” Mr. and Mrs. Watson choose to treat her as if she were their child. They sing to her at bedtime, and when she does not want to sleep alone Mercy is welcomed into the Watson's bed. One night when Mercy has just snuggled down between her two favorite humans, the bedroom floor suddenly gives way and both of the Watsons are afraid to move. Mercy responds to this crisis in her own way which results in taking an angry neighbor on a merry chase through the yard, and simultaneously bringing helpful firemen to the assistance of her beloved family. In this adventure Mercy distinguishes herself as a “porcine wonder.” This is the first title in the very successful Mercy Watson series. An interactive website, www.mercywatson.com, offers games for the young audience and a teacher's guide for adults.

Critique:

Warmth, security, humor, and just enough adventure to keep the preschool through primary child wanting more fairly drip from this series--just like Mercy's favorite dish, hot buttered toast. The simplicity of the Watsons' love for Mercy and their praise of her valor will bring giggles from young listeners who know that Mercy was just having fun. Total acceptance of this overgrown pet for who she is has the potential to build confidence in the young reader/listener, as well. Ned and Lorenzo, the firemen demonstrate compassion mixed with an awareness of their responsibility as they wisely perform their duties. DiCamillo's gentle humor blends nicely with Van Dusen's vivid illustrations.

Awards: Theodor Geisel Honor Award

Related Subjects: Animals, Easy Reading, Food, Pets, Pigs

Character Themes: **Citizenship**, Duty, Humor, Inquisitiveness