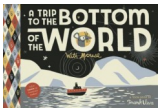
A Trip to the Bottom of the World with Mouse [1]



view in catalog [2]

Did you know there's a place in Antarctica where it's warm enough to swim? It's true! It's heated by an active (though not actively erupting!) volcano. Mouse and his human friend have set out on a long journey to that spot, and we're along for the adventure.

A Trip To The Bottom Of the World with Mouse [3], written and illustrated by Frank Viva, is the tale of a mouse in a stripey hat, and a bald-headed boy in a shirt with a bat on it, amusing themselves aboard a big boat bound for Antarctica. Mouse is antsy to get where they're going -- Mouse is always antsy -- and the boy is seasick. So they chat about everything they can think of to keep their minds occupied. The story progresses as a series of lists under discussion: things that are hard to do on a boat on a rough ocean, things to wear when it's cold, and the different kinds of penguins inhabiting the icy expanse.

The real fun of this book lies in its format. This *Trip* is an adventure in seeing as well as reading. A limited yet bold color palette (deep dark black, chilly grey-blue and bright bold yellow) sets the scene. Speech-bubble dialogue narrates the trip. An active panel-style layout, complete with scary rolling waves and jumping, splashing, boat-nudging killer whales, makes you gasp and giggle. Reading the images in this book is as essential as reading the words. I felt a little woozy as the waves rose, enthralled by the night sky with its swirling constellations, and I wanted to jump right into the water beside Mouse and the boy.

If you're up for another wild and brightly colored ride, Frank Viva's first book, *Along a Long Road* [4], follows a bicyclist on the ups and downs of a speedy circular trip. The road he rides is an unbroken yellow line which flows from page to page, around the back cover and back to the start of the story. It's dizzying, yet hypnotic.

A Trip... is recommended for ages 4 and up, and *Along A Long Road* is recommended for ages 3 to 6, but I challenge anyone to resist the thrills of Viva's visually vivid travel tales. You'll have as much fun as Mouse -- and you probably won't get seasick!

Posted by epackard on October 31, 2012

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