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TITLE INFORMATION

MIGHTY ZOË

The Misunderstood Parrot

Heather S. Lonczak

Illus. by Claudia Varjotie

IngramSpark (44 pp.)

\$18.00 hardcover, \$9.00 paperback, \$3.99 e-book

ISBN: 978-1-73446-877-9

July 16, 2020

BOOK REVIEW

A family learns what it takes to be good owners of a pet parrot in this picture book for elementary schoolers.

Zoë, a green-cheeked conure, is adopted by a mother with two children, several cats, and a dog. The bird quickly adopts Mama as her soul mate, and although the parrot doesn't imitate human words, she seemingly answers questions with fervent nods. The family learns about the parrot's preening behaviors, which include plucking hairs from Mama's arm, and her tendency to splash around in her water. She also makes "grinding" noises with her beak, bites to warn of danger, and squawks when lonely. Lonczak reveals these actions in a matter-of-fact manner, never criticizing Zoë but instead focusing on the family's reactions. Clever asides from Zoë's perspective, such as her defense of spilling popcorn ("How am I supposed to grow the forest if she keeps cleaning up the seeds?!") offer insight into bird psychology. The humans' facial expressions in Varjotie's cartoonlike, full-color illustrations sometimes seem unrealistic; Mama hardly reacts when Zoë bites her on the ear. The charming images of Zoë, though, capture the little bird's big personality. A reference to Napoleon may puzzle young readers, though.

A pleasant, approachable portrait of a less-common type of pet.

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