September Book Buddy

“Can Do Attitude”

Clover offers a tip of her wings to the characters in her stupendous September Picks—all have a “Can Do Attitude” despite facing challenges that would upend those with less spunk.

Like these storybook characters our ability to succeed doesn’t always lie in our being the bravest, the fastest, or the smartest. Those with lesser abilities often rise to the top because, like the “Little Engine that Could,” they believe in themselves, their positive outlook providing the oomph they need to succeed. Page On!

Butterflies are lovely, but not when they’re trapped in your tummy fluttering away—driven by fear of a person, place or thing. In “May’s Brave Day,” by Lucy Morris, we meet a little redhead who can’t control her thoughts because she’s so scared to go to the first day of school.

May can’t even eat breakfast because of the butterflies. She thinks a change of scene might help and escapes to the outdoors. “….she always did her best thinking in the garden,” a safe place where May has found solace before. But this time the fix doesn’t come.

The gorgeous, jumbled garden does offer May some distractions—the chance to see creatures unaffected by fear—“a tiny shiny ladybug,” goldfish in the fishpond and bees, that “didn’t seem to have a worry in the world.” How May wishes she could be as carefree as a bee.

May’s mother calls to her to come inside, but May is still searching for her courage.

It isn’t until May actually goes into her classroom that the butterflies go bye-bye, all because of the kindness offered by a student, who very probably had butterflies on her first day too. May’s predicament is beautifully rendered in simple, uncluttered paintings.

Clover wishes she could fly at the speed of light, but jogging has never really been her thing. Still, she admires those who established the great New York City Marathon and the runners who participate, newbies and the experienced. “Ready, Set, Run!: The Amazing New York City Marathon” cleverly details this famous marathon, in fascinating text by Leslie Kimmelman and jaunty illustrations by Jessie Hartland.

Participating in the New York City Marathon is a “BIG DEAL.” There’s finding the right shoes and practice runs, “Lots of practice runs.” The race is held in November and people come from all over come to take part. There’s lots of stretching before runners toe up to the starting line, and a rendition of the song “New York, New York” pumps the participates up.

Along the race route drinks are offered and “32,000 bananas are eaten by runners on race day.” Naturally there are energy bars too! All sizes, shapes and ages run in the marathon, many taking part to “raise money for good causes.”

At Mile 20, runners can feel really depleted, like they can’t go on—it’s then that their “Can Do” attitude really has to kick in, giving them the push they need to cross the finish line. They end up “proud, sore, and tired. Dazed—they’ve done it.”

“Ready, Set, Run!” a winner of a book, if ever there was one.

Make room Flicka and Black Beauty, there’s another horse on the horizon—a mustang with a heart as big as Texas. Meet a spirited chestnut colt who’s loyal, brave, yet humble, in “A Horse Named Sky” written by the ever clever, ever-popular author Rosanne Perry.

Sky narrates his marvelous life story. He speaks in an authentic, entertaining voice from the first moment we meet the Mustang, at his birth, a bit of runt, yet a colt that holds great promise. His Aunties prophesize that one day, when Sky is full grown, he very well might challenge Storm, the Mustang herd’s leader, a strong, regal black and white stallion.

As Sky matures, his friendship with a filly named Storm becomes tight, the two learning the ways of the herd together. Storm is a year older and she schools Sky, advising him to “Never fall behind” reminding him that “Speed is strength.”

It’s Sky’s ability to be lightning fast that serves him in a capacity he couldn’t have foreseen. One day, Sky’s beloved freedom is snatched away from him, and the speed he’s honed in the wild to escape wolves and mountain lions, is corralled. Sky is captured by humans and becomes a mount for the Pony Express.

Sky’s speed serves mankind, but man isn’t always kind, and Sky longs to return to his herd, to once again run free. “A Horse Named Sky” is a thrilling story, a book that will keep young readers glued to the page as they cheer “Can-do” Sky on in his abundant adventures.