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MAYL810
Review 1 Picture Book

McGinty, Alice B. *Bathe the Cat*. Illustrated by David Roberts. Chronicle Books, 2021. 3-5 yrs.

Mop the fishes. Sweep the dishes. These are perfectly normal chores – at least, according to the cat in the picture book *Bathe the Cat*. Aside from the cat, this story features Daddy, Dad, Bobby, Sarah, and quite simply, the baby. In a race against time before Grandma Marge arrives, Daddy rearranges the magnet letters on the fridge, delegating the chores. “Mop the floor. Scrub the dishes. Vacuum the rug. Feed the fishes. Mow the lawn. Sweep the mat. Rock the baby. Bathe the cat” (5).

One look at the cat says it all. One eye wide open. One eye twitching. This cat does *not* want a bath. With a turn of the page, an orange paw rearranges the magnet letters, respelling the chores. “Sarah, feed the floor. I’ll sweep the dishes. Bobby, rock the rug. Dad will scrub those fishes” (10-11). Each time the cat rearranges the letters, the chores get more ridiculous, turning a task as mundane as a chore list into gleeful chaos.

Except the chaos never feels chaotic. The chore list reads like a poem, its predictable rhythm and rhyme eliciting a sense of calm. David Roberts’ illustrations strike that same chord. Each character’s clothing shares three distinct

colors – yellow, orange, and pink. This bright warm palette demonstrates unity, tying the family together as they work together to finish chores. Above all else, the absurdity of these chores will hook young readers. Since *Bathe the Cat* is as heartfelt as it is hilarious, it's bound to make a splash at storytime.

It's likewise bound to make a splash in the growing body of LGBTQ+ picture books. As coming out narratives gain much needed ground in children's literature, it's delightful to find stories exploring the broader spectrum of LGBTQ+ personhood. Just as the picture book *Calvin* celebrates a transgender boy finding joy in his fullest self, *Bathe the Cat* celebrates a multiracial queer family finding joy in each other. Even the caught cat and the mopped fishes find their happy ending.