Dos peixets a la peixera
Author:
Claire Smedley
Reader:
Laura McGloughlin

Dos peixets a la peixera (Two Fish in a Bowl)

Two Fish in a Bowl/Dos peixets a la peixera by Claire Smedley is a charming picture book aimed at the 3-5 market. It's a rhyming bilingual story in English and Catalan that tells the tale of two very different fish and the race between them around their fish bowl. They set off at top speed, so fast that they actually fly out the top of the bowl, and once they return, tired, they stop for tea and a snack. But after eating they realise the race is still on and both aim to win. However, they cross the finish line at the same time, and the book ends with them going home, tired but happy.

It's a simple, sweet story told in catchy rhymes in both English and Catalan (beautifully rendered in Catalan by Bel Olid), but the illustrations make it special. Illustrations can make or break a picture book, and luckily here they strengthen the story on every page. The contrast between the orange fish and the green fish is vivid, and delicate, dreamy watercolours infuse the pages. As the race continues through the waving algae the increasing scope of the illustrations make the fishbowl seem vast, and give the race an epic quality.

…with such universal charm and appeal, it's easy to imagine this book being read aloud to children (voices and all), so I'd recommend it to Anglophone publisher.

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