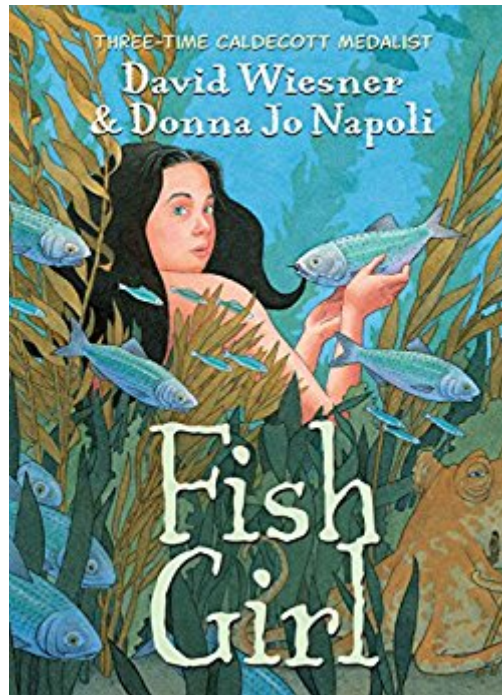




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Fish Girl



Synopsis

The triple Caldecott winner David Wiesner brings his rich visual imagination and trademark artistry to the graphic novel format in a unique coming-of-age tale that begins underwater. A young mermaid, called Fish Girl, in a boardwalk aquarium has a chance encounter with an ordinary girl. Their growing friendship inspires Fish Girl's longing for freedom, independence, and a life beyond the aquarium tank. Sparkling with humor and brilliantly visualized, Fish Girl's story will resonate with every young person facing the challenges and rewards of growing up.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We first saw this book at our library and checked it out. My 10 year old daughter really loved it and so we bought a copy for ourselves. We both enjoyed reading it together, and she's read it on our own and then she just started reading it again (to me -- which is fun for a change). This is a graphic novel, so much of the story line portrayed through illustration rather than words. I think there is a good balance between imagery and words, given that it is a graphic novel. We've recommended the book to friends and will enjoy repeated readings of it :)

My 8 year old loved it. It's a touching story with beautiful illustrations. It is difficult to read on a Kindle, however.

Great book that may help open a discussion on domestic abuse with students.

The art in this book is beautiful but somewhat minimalist, meeting the text halfway in conveying the details of the story. It's a good balance, the two aspects of the graphic novel working together. The art never distracts from the text, and the text never stoops to describing the art. This is a story about a mermaid girl, a human girl, and how small acts of kindness can help us do what we never thought we could. It's a good affirmation of friendship and trust. There's no villain, no inherently evil person, nothing shady or awful, but there is still conflict and an antagonist. The only problem I have with it, at all, is... what happens next? Younger readers probably won't be troubled by the consequences after the last page, but as an adult reader I see some roadblocks ahead.

When I saw that *Fish Girl* was a collaboration between David Wiesner and Donna Jo Napoli I knew I had to have it! I love Wiesner's picture books and Napoli's retellings. The two of them working together was something I could not wait to see. *Fish Girl* is a contemporary setting with magical elements. It has a very fairy tale quality to it. For as long as she can remember "Fish Girl" (Mira) has lived in an aquarium. She's the star attraction but she's only supposed to let visitors catch a glimpse now and then. The only person who she has interaction with is "King Neptune" who she believes saved her. This is a very lonely existence. Also, a bit creepy! It's clear that Neptune is not what or who he says he is. Through an accidental meeting with a girl her age, Mira eventually learns this as well. It was interesting to see how Mira eventually gains strength and belief in herself. I liked how this change begins due to forming a friendship with someone her age. The girls meet rarely and in secret but it's lovely to see their budding friendship grow. And it was important to see Mira take control of her life and freedom. Overall an interesting read. The illustrations are gorgeous and complement the text well. I've seen others note that even though this is geared toward middle grade readers, it does show themes of abduction and abuse. This is something we see in fairy tales, but I think it's important to know that going in.

I was eager to get my hands on this graphic novel offering from two powerhouses of children's

literature! I have long admired both David Wiesner's artistry and Napoli's storytelling prowess. *Fish Girl* is a poignant and compelling tale that deftly combines beautiful art with a classic story that will engage all readers young and old alike. Mira is the star of a boardwalk sideshow who comes to question her circumstances thanks to an encounter with a young girl who takes the time to seek her out and get to know her. As she struggles to learn the truth about her life and to cope with the treatment she receives at the hands of the sideshow owner, she learns much and discovers the true definition of freedom. It's a magical, well told story with a villain who is even more sinister because he's so believable and a heroine who is easy to root for and proves herself to be quite amazing with her courage and devotion to her friends. Only David Wiesner could ground this tale in the here and now with this graceful art. It's his uncanny ability to capture the energy and flow of the story that will have young readers not only believing in mermaids, but make them confident that they could be living at the local beach. *Fish Girl* is a must read for any graphic novel or fairy tale fan and is an enthusiastic recommend.

Napoli and Wiesner team up for this graphic novel, which is a modern-day slant on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. *Fish Girl* is the main attraction at Ocean Wonders. Not just any boardwalk aquarium, this is an old 3-story seaside building converted into a series of connecting fish tanks. Fish Girl has a tail like a mermaid and she doesn't speak. Her best friend is Octopus who is both companion and bodyguard. Neptune (not his real name) is the aquarium's owner, as well as master-of-ceremonies and tour guide. He has convinced Fish Girl that she is not human and therefore can't survive in the outside world. He gives her two jobs. One is to collect all the coins that visitors drop into the tanks. The other is to stay out of sight just enough to tease the visitors. She lives the life of a watery spirit until one day a curious girl named Livia pursues her until she finds her. Livia returns often and Fish Girl gradually shows herself more often. Livia tells her all about her life and names her Mira. Napoli and Wiesner masterfully contrast Livia's flaky personality with Mira's naiveté. As their unusual friendship develops, Mira's self-awareness expands and she begins to see through Neptune's aqueous shield to the ugly truth that she is a human slave for his profit. Wiesner's rich watercolors vividly portray the beauty and complexity of Mira's underwater prison. And it is only through his illustrations that we fully understand the role of Octopus. *Fish Girl* is a haunting tale about human bondage that is both sensitive and topical in today's world.

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