

Children's Book Review of the Month

by Kim Barry, Teaching Preschool at the Village School for 19 years!

*Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson

*Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson is a book that fascinates young children. Harold's story begins one evening when Harold decides to go for a walk in the moonlight. He uses his purple crayon to draw the moon and a sidewalk, and then his adventures begin. Harold draws a dragon so frightening that he scares himself. His hand holding the purple crayon shakes, creating little waves and before he knows it, Harold is falling into the ocean. But luckily, Harold has his purple crayon, so he draws himself a sail boat and climbs aboard and sails under the crescent moon. The moon is a soothing constant on each page of this book and ultimately helps Harold find his way back home.

The clean lines of the illustrations and simple text keep children engaged in the story. Adults will enjoy the play on words Johnson creates, when, for example, "Harold made land without much trouble."

We read *Harold and the Purple Crayon* to our preschool class recently. The children were spell bound by Harold and his story. When I ask myself what makes this book attractive to preschoolers, I realize that there is something safe about Harold. He is a self-reliant problem solver. We trust that Harold can handle any trouble that comes his way and he does. With the help of the moon he finds his bedroom, makes his bed, climbs in and draws up the covers. Whew, Harold is safe and sound and that's all children really want in their books and in their lives.

This book is a fun read-aloud for preschoolers. Most children aged 6-8 can read this on their own. *Harold and the Purple Crayon* is the first in a series of seven Harold books written by Crockett Johnson and is available at Bruce's Browser in Athol.