

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

NELLY

The Turtle That Went To School and Found a Home

Martha Stoddard

Photos by David H. Stoddard

Memories Publishing (40 pp.)

\$7.99 paperback

ISBN: 978-0-9997622-5-7

December 9, 2019

BOOK REVIEW

A turtle finds a new home with a caring teacher in this debut children's book.

Mrs. M, a substitute teacher for the ninth grade, loves to study turtles. So when a student worries about the well-being of a turtle the girl brought to school in a shoe box, a counselor offers the creature, called a red-eared slider, to Mrs. M. At a pet store, Mrs. M gets all the proper supplies, such as special food, vitamins, and an aquarium with hood, lights, and water filter. Though shy and scared at first, Nelly—as Mrs. M names her new pet—soon comes out of her shell, swimming around or basking on her rock. Mrs. M researches how to best take care of sliders, such as making sure they get sunshine with shade and giving them treats like bits of apple. This concern comes naturally to Mrs. M, who believes “that all people are caretakers of the world's creatures, one rescue at a time.” When Nelly outgrows her aquarium, Mrs. M realizes that it's time to release her into the wild. In her book, based on her own experiences, Martha Stoddard deftly communicates how a love of animals translates into the practical details of caring for them. Through Mrs. M, readers can learn how to examine sources like care sheets provided by state parks; additional information includes a glossary, list of resources, and a bibliography. At times, the work strays into concerns more likely to interest adults than children, as with the details of Mrs. M's extensive collection of turtle replicas: “My fist-sized stone tortoise was carved from hard, red soapstone, which is like marble. This particular artifact came from a Texas Hill Country market.” Color photographs by David H. Stoddard, the author's husband, illuminate turtles in the wild and at home.

While occasionally dry, this tale delivers an affectionate introduction to looking after turtles.

(author's note, acknowledgements)