

Not Quite Narwhal

Reviewed by Sara Alswager

Author/Illustrator: Jessie Sima

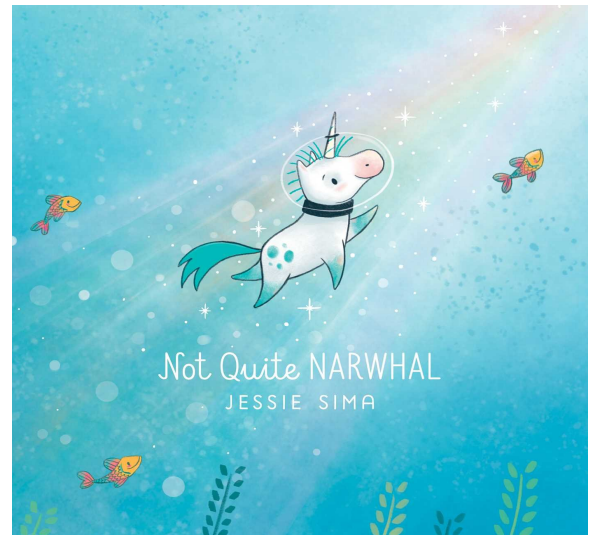
Age Range: 4-8 years

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Themes: Acceptance, love, finding yourself, speaking your truth, going on a personal journey, and big life adventures.

Summary: Kelp was born under the sea with a family of Narwhals. Kelp always knew that he didn't quite fit in...but never understood why. One day, Kelp gets swept away in a strong ocean current and finds himself closer to land than ever before. Suddenly, Kelp sees a sparkling creature that looks exactly like him! Kelp swims to shore and immediately begins looking for the sparkling creature. After walking for days, he discovers an entire community of "land narwhals" and spending time with them quickly proves that he is more like the *unicorns* than he was the narwhals that raised him. Kelp travels back to the narwhals...will they still accept him now that he knows he's different? He announces to the narwhals "turns out...I'm not a narwhal...I'm a unicorn!" and they reply "Of course you aren't, we all knew that." Kelp was so thankful his community accepted him for who he was. Kelp could not decide whether he wanted to be a narwhal or a unicorn. And after agonizing over the decision he realized: he didn't have to choose. He could be both.

Review: I first found this book at the Scholastic book fair at my school and I immediately fell in love with it! Not Quite Narwhal is a beautiful tale of personal journey and finding who you are. My students relate to this book in a multitude of ways, and I hope yours can too! There are so many teachable moments including when Kelp decides to take his personal journey, when Kelp stays open minded while discovering the unicorn community, when the narwhal family accepts Kelp for who he is after he's finally realized that he is different, and when Kelp creates his own space in the world by being part of both the narwhal and the unicorn communities.