

The Sign Painter



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出版者:Houghton Mifflin

出版时间:2000-10

装帧:SAL

isbn:9780395979747

In his Caldecott acceptance speech for GRANDFATHER'S JOURNEY, Allen Say told of his difficulty in separating his dreams from reality. For him this separation was not as important as finding a meaning behind the contradictions and choices we all must make in life and their consequences. Early one morning a boy comes into town, hungry, and looking for work. He meets a sign painter who takes him on as a helper. The boy yearns to be a painter. The man offers him security. The two are commissioned to paint a series of billboards in the desert. Each billboard has one word, Arrowstar. They do not know its meaning. As they are about to paint the last sign, the boy looks up and sees in the distance a magnificent structure. Is it real? They go to find out. Through a simple text and extraordinary paintings, the reader learns of the temptation of safe choices and the uncertainties of following a personal dream. Here Allen Say tells a haunting and provocative story of dreams and choices for readers of all ages.

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