

Author, illustrator collaborate on picture book

Nicole Magistro, Alice Feagan team up to create 'Read Island'

Daily staff report
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Two Vail Valley residents have teamed up to create a unique children's picture book called Read Island. Slated for release on October 5, the story embodies the lifelong passion for books and nature that brought these locals together.

Written by longtime bookstore owner Nicole Magistro and illustrated by acclaimed artist Alice Feagan, the clever and colorful story touches on many themes including outdoor adventure, the joy of reading, environmental stewardship, and the importance of meditation and mindfulness.

"Our mountain lifestyle influences and informs our work," says Magistro. "Read Island has been such an exciting project because it puts all of the things we love — books, nature, learning, and community — into one hopeful package. A picture book is a celebration on so many levels."

Read Island was inspired by the very real and remote place by the same name off the coast of British Columbia, where Magistro's family has been visiting for more than two decades. In the book, a brave girl sets sail on a reading adventure with her book-loving friends — a studious fox and a stowaway mouse. The trio

head out to find a magical island made of books, populated with characters including a moose who loves to cook, an eccentric Kermode bear, a tattooed humpback whale, and a singing sea wolf.

Filled with innovative illustrations that incorporate fables and stories from over 20 classic children's books, nursery rhymes, and songs within the collage art, the book's imagery draws in the reader whether they are an adult or a child. Additionally, the lyrical, descriptive text seamlessly complements the timeless drawings, creating a clever and thoughtful journey into the world of Read Island.

"We love books and the connections that are made through these stories," says Feagan. "They are there for us always and we want to pass that message along to as many young readers as we can."

In addition to her Read Island collaboration with Feagan, Magistro is a mentor, consultant, and community leader who was the proprietor of The Bookworm of Edwards for 15 years. During her tenure, she was the recipient of the ABA's Entrepreneurial Excellence Award, WNBA's Pannell Award, and James Patterson indie bookseller grant. Known for her distinct cut-paper collage style in The Collectors and School Days Around the World, Feagan also creates playful illustrations for magazines, apps, educational products, and games.

The book Read Island adds to the product line of puzzles, apparel, and greeting cards, which are sold in more than 50 independent retailers across the United States.



"Read Island" is slated for release on Oct. 5.

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