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Amazing

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Here is a little boy who is amazing. Not only does he have a special little dragon for a companion -other children probably have a dog or a cat - just watch how he powers across each page laughing, dancing, racing - doing everything together and with his friends who are as amazing.

Steve Antony's illustrations burst off each double spread whether they are vignettes showing snapshot actions or bold double- page spreads full of colour and movement. That his young protagonist is a wheelchair user is irrelevant; this is a boy, who with his friends - and a lively bunch they are too - is grasping life to the full with the support of his dragon companion, Zippo. And you do not require a wheelchair to need the support of such a companion as every child knows. There are far too few picture books where a child who is a wheelchair user (or indeed with a hearing aid or even glasses perhaps) is shown naturally taking charge of the narrative with nothing to draw attention to the situation except the illustration. Here Antony makes it very clear that children are children and all have the right to be centre stage, to see themselves, not as the supporting cast but in the spotlight for all the best reasons ; enjoying fun and games. It would be Amazing if over the next year, such joyful, inclusive, child- centred books become the norm.

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