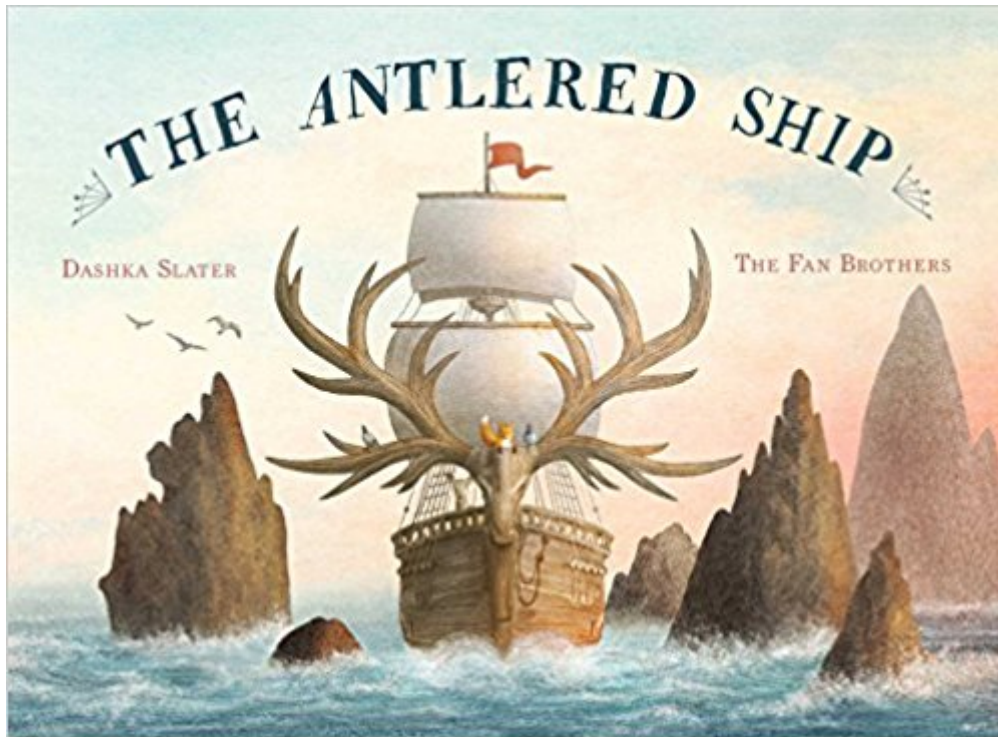




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The Antlered Ship



Synopsis

An inquisitive fox sets off on a seafaring voyage with a crew of deer and pigeons in this enchanting tale of friendship and adventure. Marco the fox has a lot of questions, like: how deep does the sun go when it sinks into the sea? And why do birds have such lizardy feet? But none of the other foxes share his curiosity. So when a magnificent ship adorned with antlers and with a deer for a captain arrives at the dock looking for a crew, Marco volunteers, hoping to find foxes who are as inquisitive as he is that can answer his questions. The crew finds adventure and intrigue on their journey. And, at last, Marco finds the answer to his most important question of all: What's the best way to find a friend you can talk to?

Book Information

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Beach Lane Books (September 12, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 148145160X

ISBN-13: 978-1481451604

Product Dimensions: 11 x 0.5 x 8 inches

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Fan brothers bring their arresting artistry, first seen in *The Night Gardener* (2016), to Slater's tale of Marco, an inquisitive fox searching for answers in the wider world. Marco's rather philosophical mind is teeming with questions: "Why don't trees ever talk? How deep does the sun go when it sinks into the sea?" The unexpected arrival of a large ship adorned with a magnificent masthead of a stag's tree-like antlers offers Marco the chance to seek out the answers his fellow foxes can't provide. Marco joins the ship's deer crew, along with a flock of adventurous pigeons, and the animals set sail for Sweet Tree Island. Their journey is fraught with stormy seas, paltry meals, sharp

rocks, and a pirate hoard, but once safely on the island Marco gains some insight at last. Finely detailed illustrations in graphite and ballpoint pen evoke the dramatic moments of Slater's story as effectively as the contemplative, such as when turbulent green-gray seas give way to a star-studded sky, or in the peachy sunset washing over Marco and his new friends. Young readers will revel in the whimsical touches, like the peg-legged pigeon sailor and the imaginative map gracing the book's endpapers. This gorgeous, eye-opening adventure is an engrossing reading experience that proudly touts curiosity and finding friendship in kindred spirits. • Julia Smith (Booklist, STARRED REVIEW June 1, 2017) A philosophical fox full of questions boards a ship with strangers and discovers that finding friends is even better than finding answers. Russet-furred Marco wonders about everything. His fellow foxes care mainly about dinner. When a great, antlered wooden ship, captained by a deer named Sylvia, docks in the harbor, Marco goes down to see it. Intrigued by the possibility of finding other foxes who share his curiosity, Marco decides to set sail, as do an adventurous flock of pigeons led by Victor, pictured as a one-legged bird in a bandanna. While they struggle a bit with the unfamiliar tasks and are beset by the typical dangers that sailors face, Marco, Sylvia, and Victor each contribute to the success of their journey. In the mostly dreamy, delicate pen-and-pencil illustrations, colored digitally, Marco the fox and the other animals are shown as sapient but not completely anthropomorphized. The antlered ship is delightfully detailed and decorated, the pirates our heroes encounter are appropriately toothy and threatening (even the cutlass-wielding mouse), and the sepia-colored maps on the endpapers feature deliciously evocative names. The old-fashioned appearance of the book's artwork perfectly suits Slater's contemplative, musing tone. While the ending is hardly a surprise, it feels right, true, and not the least bit clichéd. A beautifully composed package filled with whimsy and wisdom • the story of this unique vessel will inspire and entertain thoughtful listeners. (Picture book. 4-7) (Kirkus, STARRED REVIEW 7/15/17)

Dashka Slater's four picture books have won widespread praise for their inventive language and vivid imagery. *Baby Shoes* was named one of the best children's books of 2006 by both Booklist and Nick Jr. magazines and was chosen for the Texas 2x2 list of best books for children age two to grade two. *The Sea Serpent and Me* was a Junior Library Guild Selection and a finalist for the Cybil and Chickadee Awards, as well as being named to the 2008 Librarians' Choices List of the best books for children and young adults. *Dangerously Ever After* was named the 2013-14 Surrey Picture Book of the Year based on the votes of over 12,700 elementary school students. A recipient of a Creative Writing Fellowship from the National

Endowment for the Arts, Slater is also an award-winning journalist whose articles have appeared in such publications as Newsweek, Salon, The New York Times Magazine, and Mother Jones. She is also the author of a novel for adults, *The Wishing Box*, which the Los Angeles Times named to its list of the year's best fiction in 2000. Terry Fan received his formal art training at Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto, Canada. His work is a blend of traditional and contemporary techniques, using ink or graphite mixed with digital. He spends his days (and nights) creating magical paintings, portraits, and prints. *The Night Gardener* is his first book. Born in Illinois, he now lives in Toronto. Visit him online at Krop.com/TerryFFan and Society6.com/igo2cairo and on Facebook (Terry Fan Illustration). Eric Fan is an artist and writer who lives in Toronto, Canada. Born in Hawaii and raised in Toronto, he attended the Ontario College of Art and Design, where he studied illustration, sculpture, and film. He has a passion for vintage bikes, clockwork contraptions, and impossible dreams. *The Night Gardener* is his first children's book. See more of his work at Society6.com/opifan64 and on Facebook (Eric Fan Illustration).

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