



The Specific Ocean

Kyo Maclear , Katty Maurey (Illustrator)

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In this gently told picture book, a young girl is unhappy about having to leave the city for a family vacation on the Pacific Ocean (which she used to call the Specific Ocean). As the days pass, however, she is drawn to spend more time in and near the water, feeling moved by its beauty and rhythms. “The ocean does its own thing, rolling backward and forward. Wash, swash, splash, hush. There is no late or hurry or racing in ocean time.” By the end of the vacation, the girl has grown to love the ocean and now feels reluctant to leave it behind. But as she soon realizes, it doesn’t ever have to leave her. “Calm. Blue. Ruffled. Gray. Playful. Green. Mysterious. Black. Foggy. Silver. Roaring. White. No matter where I am, this specific ocean will be with me.”

The Specific Ocean Details

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Author : Kyo Maclear , Katty Maurey (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review The Specific Ocean for online ebook

Amy Rae says

I'm not the slightest bit surprised that Kyo Maclear's latest is marvelous. One need only take a look at *Virginia Wolf* and *Julia, Child* to know that her work is utterly darling. But *The Specific Ocean* is especially great, a meditative story about learning to love the ocean over the course of a summer vacation.

It feels like a child-sized version of *This One Summer*, tone-wise. Maclear teases out delicate feelings over the course of the book and presents refreshingly mature, nuanced views of ownership, creativity, and memory. Moreover, as charming as *Wolf* and *Child* are, this one reads as at least partially autobiographical-- and perhaps for that reason, it seems all the more moving. These are real feelings in the heart of a real girl, held for decades and told now, with the wisdom of an adult and the sense of wonder of a child.

The art is as lovely as it ever is in Maclear's books; her publishers always seem to match her up with the perfect illustrators. One more I highly recommend adding to any bookshelf.

NB: I received a free galley copy of *The Specific Ocean* from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Sigourney says

Received from NetGalley for review.

'No matter where I am, this specific ocean will be with me.'

The Specific Ocean is an adorable story for children, about a young girl who goes on holiday to a cabin near the Pacific Ocean with her family. At first she doesn't want to be there and is convinced it will be a boring holiday, until she reluctantly goes down to the sea with her family and realises how vast and entrancing it can be.

The drawings are delightful – utilising a calm palette of blues, greens, and creams, with flashes of brightness, it is a wonderful thing to look at. The narrative itself is simple but descriptive, creating beautiful images with few words, and I know that adults and children alike will enjoy this during story time. It explores the ocean, with all of its mystery and allure, which will probably spark a lot of interest and beach trips for children – something I highly recommend, having spent half my childhood at the beach.

This is a lovely children's book that will work on many levels – for younger children being read to, and older children who are gaining confidence in their reading ability. It's a very sweet story and sparks excitement about the ocean, something that not enough people are interested in or care about.

Michelle (FabBookReviews) says

A quiet book, such as *The Specific Ocean*, can be just as moving, as feeling, and as sensory as a loud or demonstrative book. I have long been a fan of Kyo Maclear; author of terrific picture books like *Virginia Wolf, Spork* and *Julia, Child*. In this latest picture book, she has teamed up with Katty Maurey, illustrator of Francis, the Little Fox, whose work reminds me a bit of Giselle Potter, Carson Ellis and Isabelle Arsenault (all incredible artists).

There is so much to enjoy with *The Specific Ocean*- a picture book that I hope gets enjoyed by as many readers as possible. Through Maclear's pitch-perfect verse and Maurey's drawings, the picture book captures: the rolling emotions of being dragged away on holiday as a child; of despairing how to fill vacation days; of then finding joy in something as grand as the Specific (Pacific) ocean; and of falling deeply in love with something bigger than oneself and too majestic to hold captive.

The combination of Maclear's unadorned and lulling storytelling voice works so wonderfully here with Maurey's clean illustrations and restrained palette. During my reading of this picture book, I was taken back to my own childhood memories of time at the beach with my parents and how grand and *radiant* everything- the sand, the waves, the rocks, the crabs- even the seagulls!- seemed to be.

Overall, I am enamoured with *The Specific Ocean*. I can safely say that my love affair with Kyo Maclear's work continues, and that was a pleasure to read another picture book with Katty Maurey's distinctive and evocative illustrative style. I hope to see many more works from both in the future!

I received this book as a digital galley from Kids Can Press via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Soudha says

The Specific Ocean follows the simple but endearing story of a young girl who goes on vacation on the Pacific Ocean. As the story unfolds, her initial indifference to the ocean turns to a growing fondness as she discovers its hidden beauties.

In terms of plot, you could say that there isn't much happening, but there also lies the charm of this simple but poetic book. Within slightly more than 30 pages, the gorgeous illustrations and the lyrical prose offers a story that will leave the reader with the unique satisfaction that comes from reading memorable stories, along with an unavoidable longing for the cool waters of the ocean.

This is simply one of those books which is likely to please kids just as much as the adults reading to them.

Danielle says

I'm so glad there is room in the world for all kinds of picture books, the snappy funny ones and the ones like this: lyrical, beautiful, full of true feelings.

Mark Holtzen says

Loved.

Tasha says

A girl does not want to leave her friends behind in the city and head off for summer vacation. There's nothing to do in the little house near the ocean that she used to call The Specific Ocean instead of the Pacific. She starts out with a moping schedule and refuses to head to the water. The next day though, she does go down with her family and the water is cold but it also has warm spots. The next day, she races her brother down to the beach. They spend time floating in the waves, walking along the shoreline, and sitting on the rocks to watch the waves. The girl decides that she wants to have some of the ocean to call her own and to bring home, but that won't work. So she has to figure out how to take the feeling of it home with her, deep inside.

Maclear has written a book about the process of change and the time that it takes to allow new experiences in. Time in the book moves slowly forward, allowing the girl the chance to change her mind in a natural way. Then the connection with nature becomes a delight, a way to spend the long days of vacation. The ocean becomes not just a source of activity for her, but a source of personal peace and joy. That process is honored here, that feeling of being connected to the world as a whole and wanting to keep that feeling with you every day. The prose in this book is exceptional. Maclear writes in first person and allows the girl's voice to be poetic but still childlike and simple.

Maurey's illustrations are filled with an inner glow that is helped by the pastel palette that is used. The sun shines on the page, the water beckons. The book has that dreamlike quality that many good vacations do, especially those filled with salt water and sand.

This quiet picture book speaks to those who don't like change but is ultimately about nature and its power in our lives. Appropriate for ages 4-6.

David Schaafsma says

A sweet, subtle, lyrical, and pastel-washed story (illustrated by Katty Maurey) about a girl who doesn't want to go on vacation but gradually, eventually, falls in love with the ocean. I read it because I had read her quirkier and a little bit amusing Virginia Wolf; this one is serious and straightforwardly lovely.

Jess at Such a Novel Idea says

I received a copy of this book via Netgalley in exchange for an honest opinion.

Wow, this was a gorgeous book, inside and out. I was really, really impressed by the emotion and depth it carried through its story (no, no pun intended that time).

At first I was weary to pick a book called 'The Specific Ocean', but I really loved her explanation about it and her idea that there can be something said outloud and something you call it in your head. I do this SO often, so the sentiment shocked me.

You could clearly see the emotions of the young girl, from sad, to bored, to intrigued, to in love, to sad, to bittersweet and hopeful. It was so well illustrated in the gorgeous work. The muted colors make you wish you were right there in the ocean with her.

I love that she talks about how her brother actually knows things and builds him up. Many kids books say things like "my stupid brother" or "they think they know everything", but it was a nice little point to show how she cared about what he had to say.

This book transcended a children's book, much like The Little Prince did, and swelled in my heart. What a child may get out of it and what the parent will get out of it may be very different things. However one thing is sure, both will be moved.

Elaine says

This is a relatively simple story, beautifully told and illustrated. It would be ideal to read on a beach next to a sea or ocean but engenders that feeling even when you're some distance away. The descriptions are succinct, yet simple and emotive, taking the reader on a journey with the characters. It is easy to empathise with the little girl and to feel how her view of the ocean changes from resentful to love during the course of her holiday. The illustrations are pastel shades but so evocative enhancing the whole experience. This is a brilliant book and one I have no hesitation at all in highly recommending.

Sometimes children resent the holiday plans made for them by their parents. In this enchanting story that is very true for the young girl in the story who would much rather stay in the city with her friends rather than go on holiday to the Pacific Ocean (- when she was younger she thought it was the Specific Ocean until her brother corrected her!) Initially she believes their holiday is boring but, after swimming in the sea with her Mum and brother she starts to experience it in a new way, learning to love the ocean more as each day passes and witnessing its moods, colours and life.

Parents and teachers could also use this book to prompt discussions about how sometimes the things we assume we'll dislike can turn out to be something we really appreciate. It could also reassure wary children that sometimes visiting different places can be a positive experience, that change isn't necessarily a bad thing. The descriptive language used is inspirational and could be used as a brilliant stimulus for creative writing. The art work throughout the book portrays the emotional attitudes of the characters and the atmosphere of the story superbly making it a great starting point before children explore their own creations. Definitely a book worth making shelf room for, delightful and endearing.

Thanks to the authors, publisher and NetGalley, too for letting me read an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Kailey (BooksforMKs) says

This sweetly quiet story of a little girl who slowly falls in love with the Pacific Ocean brought me a sense of wonder! At the beginning the girl is reluctant to get in the water, but she gradually comes to love playing in and around the ocean. Her dreamy observations and imaginings around the seaside are just lovely, and bring the reader immediately into the story. You can taste that salt air and feel the waves pulling at your feet!

The writing is absolutely brilliant! Every word is tailored perfectly for that sentence to say exactly what it should, but it never feels forced or like it's trying too hard. Each sentence flows to the next with the rhythm of ocean waves.

The words are so rich and vibrant too! "Grumping down the path" perfectly describes a child walking grumpily, even though "grumping" is not actually a word, I think. No matter, because it is just the RIGHT word, whether it exists or not. There are perfect words like that on every page of this book!

What a delight it would be to read this book aloud! The sounds of the words roll off the tongue and down the lips like drops of water splashing off a wave... "Shine, shimmer, gleam, glow..." and with four words, I can see the seashore in my mind's eye.

I love that the girl mistakenly calls it the "specific ocean" instead of the "pacific ocean", but decides that the former name is more appropriate after all. I have heard kids say it wrong all the time, so it rings true and touches my heart. Details like that are what make this book so special!

The illustrations fit the story like a glove. Calming colors and smooth lines leave me feeling soothed and dreamy. Warmth and light shine from every page!

There is magic in this book! Undeniably, this is a masterpiece of children's literature.

Disclaimer: I received this book from the publisher in exchange for a free and honest review. The opinions stated here are my own true thoughts, and are not influenced by anyone.

Christine Turner says

In this gently told picture book, a young girl is unhappy about having to leave the city for a family vacation on the Pacific Ocean (which she used to call the Specific Ocean). As the days pass, however, she is drawn to spend more time in and near the water, feeling moved by its beauty and rhythms. 'The ocean does its own thing, rolling backward and forward. Wash, swash, splash, hush. There is no late or hurry or racing in ocean time.' By the end of the vacation, the girl has grown to love the ocean and now feels reluctant to leave it behind. But as she soon realizes, it doesn't ever have to leave her. ?Calm. Blue. Ruffled. Gray. Playful. Green. Mysterious. Black. Foggy. Silver. Roaring. White. No matter where I am, this specific ocean will be with me.'

Author Kyo Maclear has written a sweet and evocative love story about the magic and wonder of the ocean. Katty Maurey's softly drawn illustrations maintain the poetic feel of the text, while bringing to life the imagery of the seaside, adding a wonderful richness to the pages. This book would make a lyrical read-aloud that could lull young children into an appreciation for the peaceful joy found in nature. It also presents a compelling emotional component to why conserving our natural spaces is important, and would work well

for any classroom science discussion on the environment or on the ocean as a habitat and ecosystem.

Eve says

I am a pretty enthusiastic fan of Kyo Maclear's children's books. I was sure her earlier books—Julia, Child and Virginia Wolf—would be hard to live up to when I read that she had another book in the works. Of course, I was wrong.

In The Specific Ocean, a young girl is not excited about spending the summer away from home with her family in a vacation house by the Pacific Ocean. When she finally succumbs to the ocean's charm, she tries to imagine ways to take it back home with her.

Kyo's books are always subtle but elegantly crafted. Even though she uses a different illustrator for each book (in this case it was Katty Maury), it never fails that the drawings are always perfectly paired with the storyline. I don't own a copy yet, but I'm sure I'll remedy that soon. It's my hope to continue collecting her books; they are great to revisit!

Jason says

Wow. Predictable in the best possible way. The transformation of the girl's attitude towards the ocean is spellbinding and feels like an accurate portrait of how someone falls in love with something like the ocean.

Robin says

Quiet story for old souls. Highly recommended for ages 5-7.
