



# INDEPENDENT BOOK REVIEW

A CELEBRATION OF SMALL PRESS AND SELF-PUBLISHED BOOKS



## ***Race Car Kid***

By Gregory McNealy

Genre: Juvenile Fiction/ Ages 6-8

Reviewed by Samantha Hui

**A fun & meaningful book about how racing isn't just a game—it's a fight for freedom.**

Gregory McNealy's *Race Car Kid* is a vibrant and heartfelt tale that explores themes of resilience, freedom, and the importance of doing what's right.

Aimed at younger readers, particularly those in elementary school, the story balances playful fantasy with emotional depth. With a ten-year-old protagonist and a length of just over 60 pages, the book is designed to be digestible for children, especially those easing into independent reading. McNealy's story offers a whimsical escape while also encouraging kids to think about courage, identity, and the value of family.

***"The legend of a driver that drove at the speed of lightning. The one without fear, fear of anything or anybody. A driver with the reflexes of a cat, the vision of a hawk, and the will of a lion."***

The story follows RC, a bright ten-year-old who was orphaned early in life but raised by loving adoptive parents. He shares a close bond with his adoptive father, especially through their after school racing game where they pretend to be co-racecar drivers.

As RC starts playing on the school football team, he begins to doze off in class, prompting concern from his parents. One day, he drifts into a vivid dream and finds himself in a colorful, cartoon-like realm built entirely around racing called the "Dream World."

This fantastical world features terrain for every kind of race and vehicles that have amazing capabilities such as flying, leaping, and driving underwater amongst other things. RC embarks on an urgent quest where the outcome of a high-stakes race will

determine the freedom of Dream World. Along the way, he uncovers the hidden secrets of Dream World and surprising truths about his past.

***“Some want to take our right to come here and race away. They think of themselves as the upper elite and us as a virus that plagues the Dream World.”***

The book is fast-paced and a great match for this age-range. McNealy does an excellent job of tapping into the excitement and curiosity of a young reader, making RC’s dreams feel real and thrilling. The concept of entering a cartoon world through dreams is especially fun, sparking the imagination and adding a playful twist to the adventure. The inclusion of illustrations helps bring this world to life, giving readers a sense of what RC experiences when he transitions into a cartoon world, offering visual support for young readers, and enhancing the overall reading experience.

***“We race for our freedom and to be treated as equals in this world, and we will have it. Every race, we race to win.”***

The story’s concept is bursting with creative potential, but due to the short length, some of that potential gets underexplored. The transitions between scenes move quickly, which can make it hard to fully grasp the emotional stakes or appreciate the richness of the dream environment.

*Race Car Kid* is going to be a well-loved book for kids who like racing, cartoons, or stories about bravery and self-discovery. For parents or educators looking for a chapter book that entertains while offering important life lessons, McNealy’s book is a great pick. It invites readers to dream big, stay resilient, and always do the right thing even in the wildest of worlds.