

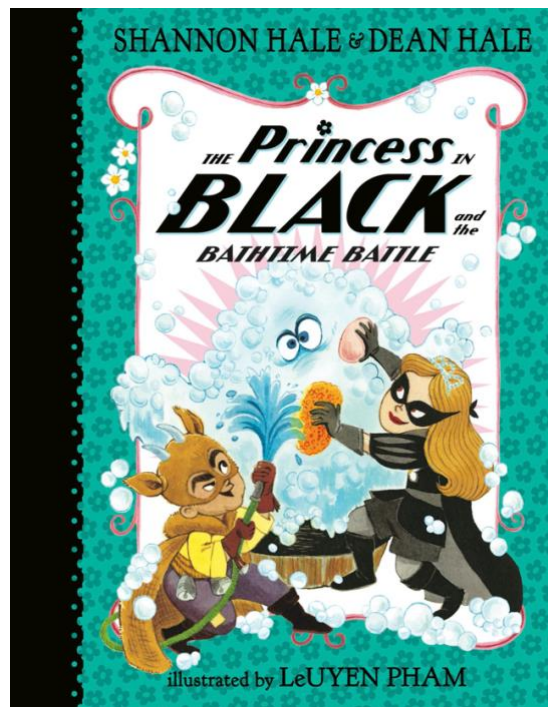
# JOLLE@UGA<sup>®</sup>

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

## Review of *The Princess in Black and the Bathtime Battle* Written by Shannon Hale & Dean Hale, Illustrated by LeUyen Pham

**Adult/Educator Reviewer:** Abby Kindelsperger  
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

**Student Reviewers:** Mira Kindelsperger, 1st grade



Hale, S., Hale, D., & Pham, L. (Illustrator). (2019). *The princess in black and the bathtime battle*. Candlewick Press.

ISBN: 978-1-5362-0221-2

### Adult Review: Abby Kindelsperger

*The Princess in Black and the Bathtime Battle* is the seventh book in the popular illustrated by Shannon and Dean Hale. These illustrated early chapter books feature a princess with a secret monster-fighting hero identity. The story begins like many of the others in the series, with Princess Magnolia sneaking into her undercover hero disguise and racing to the goat pasture to battle a monster. This time, however, the issue is not a monster trying to eat goats but, instead, a horrible smell. This book differs from the previous six because her ninja-like moves do not work against this foe. It takes creativity and a whole team of masked heroes to defeat the stink. Princess Magnolia also learns that fanning the stink away rather than actually solving the problem, simply passes the smell on to other kingdoms. This is a lesson that leaders of all ages need to remember.

Over the course of *The Princess in Black* series, two of Magnolia's friends are also revealed to have secret identities. This book, however, takes the message of teamwork much further, as all of the princess' friends previously introduced appear in masked hero form to overcome the smelly challenge together. As I watch my six-year-old daughter navigate social dynamics in which all of her friends want to be the leader (or hero) all of the time, I see the importance of reinforcing collaboration in the early elementary grades.

Since children of this age are naturally self-centered, the reminder that other people also have secret talents and interests can foster social awareness and possibly empathy. It is also worth noting that this group of friends includes one male, and the illustrations portray the friends as ethnically diverse.

This book works well as a read-aloud for young readers or a first chapter book. I started reading the series to my daughter in preschool, and she was proud to read this one to me (note that it's considered around second grade level). I expect that, like her, many early elementary readers would find the stinky plot humorous. The illustrations of pets disguised as "faithful [hero] companions," such as a reindeer called Notamoose dressed as a giant bunny, also elicit giggles. Hale and Hale successfully combine popular interests of princesses, superheroes, and dress-up without falling into traditional tropes of gender roles.

### Student Review: Mira Kindelsperger

I think this book is best for everyone to read because it has girls and a boy saving the world together. I recommend this book because there are cute surprises along the way. I like the ending.