

A Heartwarming New Children's Book Teaches Kids the Power of Friendship, Courage, and Belonging

Set in the magical True Dreams Forest of Hawaii, debut author Melissa Stoppiello introduces Baboy, a curious kunekune piglet whose journey from lost to found will capture the hearts of young readers and parents alike.



Makawao, Hawaii Oct 19, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - Melissa Stoppiello is a debut author who is making a new form of children's story come to life. The first book of the True Dreams Forest series, *Adventures of Baboy*, is the story of an adventure of a kunekune piglet, Baboy, who is wandering in the densely populated enchanted forest in Hawaii. The story is written for readers between 7 and 10 years old; the story starts with a crisis, Baboy is separated from his family, and he is alone in the forest. It is not the power of a hero that helps him to survive, but the boldness to get in touch, and the unexpected friendships that will come to his help. The book will be available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, and Goodreads.

About the Book

When a swollen river sweeps little Baboy away from his family, he lands in the vast, wondrous True Dreams Forest with no map and no plan. His first instinct is to run. That impulse brings him directly into the experience he was most afraid of: a pitbull puppy named Ilani.

The next thing is the main part of the entire narration. Baboy and Ilani become best friends, not enemies. Both of them simply remind each other that looks are misleading most of the time, and that doing the right thing is a tougher endeavor than any other. They enter the forest further, recruiting an unforgettable band of friends along their journey: Kaimana the Hawaiian monk seal, sage old Honu Kai the sea turtle, form-shifting Jackson the chameleon, and the grandiose Alalā crow.

Pule Pueo, a kind and wise owl, is looking over their heads, and his simple wisdom is almost everywhere in every chapter. His point is the same: bravery is to do what scares you, it is more real to ask someone to help you, and no one is really lost, as long as they have love.

The novel is immersed in the scenes, sounds, and ambience of Hawaii. It features the endangered monk seal and green sea turtle, using them to show how fragile nature is. Because these animals are at risk, the book is a great way for families to start talking about taking care of the environment and our duty to protect it.

Why Parents Will Love This Book

Children pick up more from stories than adults sometimes realize. Adventures of Baboy layers in lessons that parents will genuinely want their kids sitting with: how to move through fear by making a connection, why fairness and teamwork hold a group together, what it looks like to be a real friend, and why asking for help is one of the bravest things a person can do.

Stopiello wrote this book to be read together. Each chapter invites parents and children to talk about the choices the characters make, connect those choices to their own lives, and learn from the Fun Facts woven into the narrative about Hawaii's remarkable native wildlife. It is the kind of book that opens a door, and the conversations that walk through it can genuinely shift how a child sees herself and the world.

The characters reflect something real. Baboy and Ilani are both judged before they are known, a situation many children recognize from their own lives. The story handles it gently but without softening the truth: the friends who look past the surface are the ones worth finding.

"I hope children are encouraged and inspired to dream big and take steps to get there. It does not matter what your background or circumstances are; life, like time, is always evolving. I hope for each reader that their path and life journey ahead is built on solid ground, and that it grows and thrives into the best version of themselves, evolving into the life they have always dreamed of. Learning lessons along the way will help them get there sooner, and having a positive support system makes the journey a comforting and fun adventure."

-- Melissa Stopiello, Author

About the Author

Melissa Stopiello is a storyteller shaped by the spirit of Hawaii. She was born and raised on Oahu, has lived in Australia, Los Angeles, and Nice, France, and eventually found her way back to the place that has always mattered most: Maui. She has wanted to write a children's book since she was a child herself, falling in love with the worlds of Aesop, Dr. Seuss, and Charles Schulz.

Her path to this book is as personal as the story itself. The name "Baboy," meaning pig in Filipino, was a word her grandparents brought with them when they immigrated from the Philippines to Hawaii with

nothing but courage and hope. Their willingness to leave behind everything familiar and build something new in a new place runs through every page of this series.

Melissa is a living kidney donor, a Lions Club International member, a lover of animals and thrift stores, and a self-described choco-holic. Her life, shaped by a blended multicultural family, has taught her the book's deepest truth: you cannot always choose the family you are born into, but you can absolutely choose the family you keep.

She lives on Maui with her three dogs and her zebra finches, and she writes her stories beneath brilliant Hawaiian skies.

A Story the World Needs Right Now

When Melissa returned to Hawaii after twenty years in Los Angeles, she looked at the islands with fresh eyes. What she found moved her. The natural world she had grown up loving, its native animals, its ancient trees, its easy generosity, is changing in ways that are hard to ignore. She wrote this series as a love letter to the islands and as a quiet call to action for the generation that will inherit them.

Beyond conservation, she writes because the world needs more joy. More stories that remind us, at any age, that kindness is still possible, that connection is always worth the risk, and that true dreams really can come true, one small step at a time.

Book Details

Title: *Adventures of Baboy*

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Available on: [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#) and [Author's Website](#)

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