



Josh and Jaz have three mums | Morris and the Bundle of Worries | Picnic in the Park | Spark learns to fly

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NewsChoice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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These four picture books from BAAF have specific themes useful in helping children with particular life problems. Josh and Jaz have two adoptive mums at home and a birth mother as well and they must cope with a school assignment about making a family tree. In **Picnic in the Park** we meet Jason who is having a fifth birthday party with lots of different sorts of families attending ? one-parent families, adoptive families, same-sex parents, black families, a family with a child in a wheelchair, etc. Spark is a small dragon and he and his younger sister Flame are abused so badly by their once loving parents that they must go into care and be fostered. Morris Mole has so many worries and concerns that he needs help from a friendly Nightingale who plays the therapist role.

BAAF and other charities often publish books for children that deal with explicit dilemmas that children face, and these fulfil needs that mainstream publishers can't or won't address. While the four books reviewed here are of variable quality, the fact is that children themselves are not critics. While we as adult readers are rightly looking for the best in children's literature, children are not. And a child who has been abused, for instance, may well find Spark's problems with anger management and hurt of real help. A child with parents of the same sex will relate to Josh and Jaz whether the text and illustrations are of the first quality or not. Sometimes didactic, the books nevertheless do fill a purpose, and children will respond to them.

Morris and the Bundle of Worries is a different production altogether. Both text and illustrations tell a moving story of a shy animal with a big problem, and while it is aimed at children who need counselling, the emphasis here is on talking about one's worries, and that can apply to anyone. This is a book for a wider audience.

BAAF is to be congratulated on their efforts. While their production values may not be those of mainstream publishers, they are producing books that will be of real value to children in particular circumstances.

Running Order:

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Links:

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