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Zoo Girl

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Using a minimum of words (only 19) and a riot of pattern and colour, this lively picture book introduces us to a lonely little girl who has no family and lives in a children's home. While the home is seen to be forbidding and institutional, the carer who looks after the children is loving and caring and the other children are happy. But this one child is not. During a zoo visit she is inadvertently left behind but finds friends galore. The animals love her, and after a joyous play time with them all, she falls asleep cuddled amongst the tigers. Discovered by the zoo keepers who are a childless couple, the little girl finds her home and her family with them ? and lots of friends. She is a child with special needs who has found those needs fulfilled in a special way. You don't need to accept that a child would hardly be playing with polar bears and tigers to understand that each child is different and each family is different and that the important thing is matching one with the other.

It is the pictures that tell this story. Absolutely full of detail, with even the grass, the walls and the sky full of distinct and subtle pattern, the expressive faces of the people and animals, the richness of colour, and the poignancy of the story add up to an outstanding picture book. While it will be very useful for children with unusual families, particularly those adopted, all children will respond to the need for love and acceptance and be happy that the little girl has found her special place.

Rebecca Elliott has already written about her own two children in two earlier books, and this story goes further to prove she is a new talent to be reckoned with.

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