



The Last Tree

Books Reviewed:

[The Last Tree](#) [1]

Issue:

[241](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Carey Fluker Hunt](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

If you were looking for a place to settle after a long journey, would you choose the desert, the forest or the mountain-top? Emily Haworth-Booth's characters feel instantly at home in the dappled light beneath the forest canopy and spend all summer playing on its mossy floor. With the Autumn, though, comes colder weather, and that's when the trouble starts.

What begins as well-intentioned carelessness soon becomes profoundly destructive. Branches are cut to fuel fires and trees are felled to build shelters ? but every action causes unexpected repercussions and soon the villagers are running to catch up with themselves as they struggle to compensate for their impact on the environment.

There's not enough shade? Chop down trees to build more porches. A cold wind is blowing? Fell the remaining trees to build a wall?.

Little by little, the forest disappears, until only one tree is left, and even that is under threat. Families send their children ?beyond the wall? to fell the last tree and fetch more wood. How the tree survives and thrives - and how the children help their parents restore what has been lost ? is an enjoyable and timely lesson in environmental action and awareness.

Like **The King Who Banned the Dark**, Emily Haworth-Booth's first critically-acclaimed picturebook, **The Last Tree** uses graphic-novel techniques to explore complex political and environmental themes in a lively and accessible way. If **The Last Tree** feels more overtly didactic than its predecessor, that may not be an issue for children who see young people taking action and want to be part of the solution, not the problem.

Soft pencil-crayon drawings in a limited palette have the energetic line and storytelling quality of children's own artwork, and Haworth-Booth's characters inhabit these pages with urgency and vigour. Their ?haunting eco tale? has something important to say and a stylish way of saying it, and will find a welcome place on many shelves.

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