

[PDF] Monkey Island

Paula Fox, Rosemary Davies - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Monkey Island

Author: Paula Fox, Rosemary Davies

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Fox (*The Village by the Sea*) has written a quietly terrifying, wholly compelling novel about the urban homeless, filtered through the experience of an 11-year-old boy. Clay's middle-class existence begins to shred when his art-director father loses his job and, eventually, his connection to his wife and child. He leaves without a word one day, and Clay and his pregnant mother end up in a welfare hotel, a place "where people in trouble waited for something better--or worse--to happen to them." And happen it does, for Clay's mother soon disappears as well, and Clay takes to the streets, to be befriended by two homeless men and reunited with his mother only after great tribulation. Once again Fox displays her remarkable ability to render life as seen by a sensitive child who has bumped up against harsh circumstances. Her understanding of Clay is keenly empathic and intuitive, and it seems near-total: she is as finely attuned to the small, surprising eddies of his thoughts as to their larger and more obvious stream. It is precisely this attention to the quiet, easily lost insight that gives her account its veracity and force. For example,

one night Clay and a friend break into a church basement, and Clay spies a bulletin board. He is "faintly surprised. I can read, he thought"--a small jolt that shows us just how far from the world of school and homework he has traveled. Fox neither preaches about nor attempts to soften the stark realities of the life that is, temporarily, thrust upon Clay. Clear-eyed and unblinking as ever, she shows us the grit, misery and despair of the homeless, along with occasional qualified, but nonetheless powerful redemptive moments--the sharing of an apple or kind word by those with little to spare; for Clay, the bright smile of his newborn sister. Ages 10-up.

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From School Library Journal Grade 5-7-- Eleven-year-old Clay Garrity's family had been what most people would consider an average family--until the magazine his father worked for went out of business and he couldn't find another job over the next year. Clay then experienced the gradual decline from that normal existence to one of abandonment by his father, the move to a welfare hotel and, at the beginning of the story, the disappearance of his mother who, with the added burden of a difficult pregnancy, is unable to cope with the daily struggle for survival. Clay eventually comes to a small park scornfully called "Monkey Island" for the homeless who live there. Here he is taken in by two men who share the wooden crate that offers them some shelter from the cold November winds. These three become a sort of family, holding on to some sense of humanity in a brutal and brutalizing world. For all of its harshness, Monkey Island is also a romanticized view of the world. Although Clay is not spared the hunger, fear, illness, and squalor of the streets, there is still a distancing from the more immediate types of violence that exist there. He is always on the edge of such danger, but no incidents actually touch him. In the end, it is pneumonia that brings him back into the social services system. After ten days in the hospital, the boy is placed in a foster home and shortly thereafter is reunited with his mother and baby sister in a conclusion that readers desire but that may strain credibility. This is a carefully crafted, thoughtful book, and one in which the flow of language both sustains a mood of apprehension and encourages readers to consider carefully the plight of the homeless, recognizing unique human beings among the nameless, faceless masses most of us have learned not to see. --Kay E. Vandergrift, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

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