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An injured magpie and a one-eyed dog live happily together in the forest, until a jealous fox arrives to teach them what it means to be alone.

Fox Details

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Author : Margaret Wild , Ron Brooks

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From Reader Review Fox for online ebook

Linden says

This book is incredibly haunting, and is so genuinely devastating that it does not quite feel like it should be for children at all. It is unsettling and cruel and I love it.

Adele says

This is a picture book, but it is not for children. The style of both the text and the illustrations is very dark and creepy. The story itself is bleak and depressing. I would summarize the theme of this story as "the struggle for love to survive in the face of evil resulting from damage done by a harsh and unfair world"

Fjóla says

Beware that this book may not be for everyone, and make sure to read it first before you show it to your sensitive child, but this is a book that is so emotionally charged that it left me speechless.

This simple wilderness story about the friendship between a magpie who can't fly and a one-eyed dog is powerful and touching. The full spread pictures, that are at times warm and at times stark, are edgy and bring out the atmosphere of the desert. The rawness of the pictures and the book design fit the crude story perfectly.

The story begins with a tender description of the dog and the bird's first encounter. The well meaning dog and the beaten bird develop a strong bond, so strong they're in fact one. Until fox comes along. You can tell he spells trouble "... with his haunted eyes and rich red coat. He flickers through the trees like a tongue of fire, and Magpie trembles." Yet, Dog, who always sees the good in everything, is welcoming. "He belongs nowhere," [Magpie] says. "he loves no one." But Dog says, "He's all right. Let him be." When fox first tries to come between them, Magpie says, "I will never leave Dog. I am his missing eye and he is my wings." Of course he eventually gives in to the deceptive fox's sweet talk. But then, the story takes a turn that I was not expecting. It's a master stroke! The fox doesn't really want the bird in itself, he's much more devious than that. The last three page spreads are filled with heartbreak, and while beautiful, these pages were tough on both me and my child.

Luckily, the story is open ended, which makes it bearable. My four year old opted for an optimistic ending, while the adult will know that the magpie doesn't really stand a chance. My son typically steers away from ugly things and thus, understandably, did not care to repeat the reading of the story. As for me however, the story dwells with me in a way where I can't get it out of my mind.

I rarely come across something so well crafted, as this story is. But then, on top of all this, while I was expecting simply a story about a fox, I couldn't help but picture the Dog as the embodiment of everything that's good in the world, while the Fox was the essence of evil. And then, we're the Magpie, I guess, wavering between being faithful to our engagements and falling for temptations. What a unique book!

karen says

i am glad i am the only one to have rated this book (although i know dana and greg read it with me on the subway yesterday, so i know they have been tainted, too.) the description above is what is printed on the book, which is scary enough, but i think what they really wanted to put as its description is "help o help this lady is threatening us and if we don't publish her crazy-assed book she is going to remove the toes of our children - call the police!!!" i used to work in publishing and even though it was an academic press, we would still get the occasional scrawled-in-crayon manuscripts that i had to read and ultimately reject, and i was afraid one of those authors would find me and stab me with a burnt sienna. i cant even imagine what this book looked like when it was submitted. the end product is a fantastically dark story that no child should have read to it unless you are conducting sleep-deprivation experiments. it is written in serial-killer scrawl, with the words all over the page at wonky angles, the drawings are hectic and scratchy and terrifying and of course i give it five stars because i absolutely loved it. but is clearly the work of a diseased mind. (i just noticed this is an australian book. i understand it now. this is the kind of children's story nick cave was raised on. this book is exactly how to make a nick cave. and now i have come around - go read this to your kids; make more little dour nick caves for me)

p.s. - it turns out there was a goodreads.com glitch - i was in no way the first person to rate this - now i feel like a fool.

Carrie Berry says

A dynamic book.

Mischenko says

To see this review and to learn more about Margaret Wild please visit www.readrantrockandroll.com

Fox by Margaret Wild is a story about a dog and a bird with disabilities. They become friends and help each other until a jealous fox enters the story to teach them a lesson about what it's truly like to be alone.

This is a story about friendship and betrayal. It's quite dark and is best suited for older children that can cope with the abrupt ending and powerful message.

It's thought-provoking and a good discussion book for groups.

Update: After the first time reading this I rated it 3 stars because I didn't really like the abrupt ending, but it sends an important message that doesn't take children long to figure out. Another aspect that I had a hard time with was the story's text which is sketched and scattered all around the pages and difficult for kids to read at times. I loved the sketched illustrations by Ron Brooks.

My personal opinion is that this is a book that's best read to children by a teacher or parent which eliminates the issue with the text and allows discussion after.

Greg says

This might be the best children's book ever, but maybe it's not appropriate for most children. It's bleak and dark, sociopathic in it's layout, the moral of the story is not like anything one would expect in a book for kids. It's what a crazed lunatic all bent out of shape by existentialism might have written. Or maybe something that Beckett would have penned if he had decided that he wanted to scar children with his writings. I don't know what to say but I am in awe of this book. Everyone should read this.

On a slight aside, I just had an idea for a children's picture book based roughly around a Beckett novel. A child (or an animal of some kind, maybe a dolphin) is left hopefully immobilized laying in a big mound of pig shit, and he thinks back about how everyone he loved really didn't care for him, and how he has been left here to die alone in shit, unable to make it to the water (if it's a dolphin) only a few feet away from him. Caldecott here I come once again!!

Beatrice Fox says

Such an artistic book for a children's book. I don't see this that often. The text is actually done in a find of scribbled handwriting sometimes on the edges of the page running along it instead of proper. A book of chaos really but it's wonderful. The art seems all chalk I think and REALLY REALLY GOOD chalk. The injured magpie forms a wonderful bond with the old half-blind dog...and each help each other in life. And then the villainous fox comes upon them. And he is one of the most sinister villains I've seen in a book adult or child in a long time. And the drawings of him go with the creepy descriptions of the actions...how he is always watching the magpie and she is frightened....his sleek elegant tail fills the page and is punctuated by his dark red eyes....always watching. When it ends I want more. There are definite morals within but it never says them. It doesn't have to. And it reads stronger without a big lecture about it. We've all had times in our lives when we've been the dog or been the magpie. And that fox reminds us of what happens when we make those kinds of decisions. And afterward we must pay the consequences....and then still go on living....back to the long journey to the cave....

Jonathan Peto says

The characters have names like Dog, Magpie and Fox. The story is simple and potent and should hit a nerve. I read it to a class of fourth graders and will reread it again. There is so much to contemplate. It is a great story for writing about fiction. Some reviewers loved it but questioned whether it was appropriate for children. Like life, it is!

Ellie Labbett says

'Fox' is quite an unsettling and unnerving read about the undoing of a companionship between a magpie and a dog, who join together to overcome their misfortunes. This is quite a cold story, which may be why I

enjoyed it - I think it is necessary for children to be exposed to something outside of the realms of comfort. It is certainly not a straight forward story, with very complex characterisation which I think would be important to dissect with children, looking at motives and reasoning behind actions.

A very intriguing presentation of a picture book, with the illustrations having an almost parched, aging feel, which to me makes the story appear timeless and one that had maybe been passed down through families.

Phoebe Ledster says

The partnership between Margaret Wild's writing and Ron Brooks' illustrations is beyond mesmerising. Wild's beautiful words add such depth and mystery to the characters that I ended up feeling immense sympathy for the book's antagonist- the Fox. On the other hand, Brooks has a fascinating style that presents the loneliness, rage and bitterness in the Fox, the kind nature of the Dog and the desperation of the Magpie. This would be fantastic to explore with children, looking at the relationships between the characters, how the vocabulary has been used to convey raw emotions and focusing on one of the book's main themes: loneliness. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and would highly recommend it! The book is described as being a rich story for both adults and children and it certainly is.

Jena Gardner says

My new favorite picture book! The illustrations are fantastic and the ambiguity in the text led my fifth grade class to have a fantastic discussion and they wrote furiously in their literature response journals. Love love love it.

Elizabeth says

Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks have conspired to make "Fox" disturbing, strange, and thought provoking. The text, the pictures, the themes – there is no comfort in any of these. The cover warns you that danger is approaching - with the bright orange color, the sharp line drawings, and Fox's profound yellow stare. Fox is as evil a character as I have ever seen in a children's book – not evil born of greed or selfishness like Red Riding Hood's wolf, but evil born of a desire to damage something precious, to cause desolation, to bring others to the place of emptiness and despair where Fox's own heart lies. I am unsure if I would read this book to primary level students. I notice that it is a book selected for the writing trait of ideas, and I can imagine that, in a writing class of intermediate or junior high students, this book would generate endless ideas for discussion and writing.

Hayley Swanson says

THIS BOOK. I don't even have the words to describe the feelings this book made me feel.

Dog rescues Magpie, whose wing has been burned. She can never fly again, but Dog is determined to show her life can still be good. Steadfast, eternally loyal, Dog runs with Magpie and acts as her wings, while she acts as his missing eye. Magpie is almost able to forget her loss. Almost.

When Fox comes along with an offer too enticing to pass up, Magpie finds herself alone and far from her friend. She learns a painful and powerful lesson about loyalty, for her betrayal has cost herself and her dearest friend of each other.

The book ends suddenly, before you want it to end, on a melancholic note with a glimmer of hope. The art in this book, done in mixed media, is phenomenal. Every page is a work of art, with the words facing different directions on the page and the colors dark, bold, paint thickly applied.

I honestly gasped aloud at what Fox did at the end, and I felt so overwhelmed with emotion throughout the entire book. It seems simple, but it is not; it is wonderful, it is art, and it is heart-wrenching, with a powerful message about what it means to be a true friend.

Sana says

I had to read this in order to help my little sister figure out the theme of this book and I'm SO glad I read it.

Such a beautiful little book about a friendship between Dog and Magpie and how they help each other and rely on each other because of their disabilities.

Also, that plot twist was so freaking good and I love love loved that ending. It was also extremely short (took me legit 5 minutes) and can help your reading challenge!

What a dark little book with a deep meaning.
