



## The Exiles at Home

*Hilary McKay*

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## **The Exiles at Home** Hilary McKay

When Ruth Conroy decides to sponsor a child in Africa, she is unprepared for the difficulties involved in finding GBP10 a month. So she enlists the help of her sisters - Phoebe, Naomi and Rachel - who are only too eager to dream up hare-brained fund-raising schemes. Undisciplined baby-sitters, unhygienic caterers or fraudulent pavement artists, their hilarious projects never fail to cause chaos and mayhem.

## **The Exiles at Home Details**

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Author : Hilary McKay

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### **Melissa McShane says**

This story just cracks me up. Sisters Ruth, Naomi, Rachel and Phoebe get into trouble once again, this time by "adopting" an African boy and pledging ten pounds a month for his schooling. Though it's Ruth who makes the initial commitment, all the sisters gradually get sucked in and pull the most amazing stunts to earn enough money each month. I think my favorite one is when Rachel and Phoebe decide to sell extra lunches at their school, sandwiches made in a shed and occasionally contaminated with dog hair. I couldn't stop thinking--doesn't their mother notice that she's running out of bread three times as fast? But then my own son had a scheme of selling soda pop in the lunchroom, fifty cents each, and it was all so entrepreneurial.... Anyway, the girls are delightful as ever, and the ending is sweet and touching if slightly unbelievable; it made me cry a little.

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### **Carolynne says**

If you liked *\_The Story of the Treasure Seekers\_* by E Nesbit, you will like this book. Ruth, the oldest of a family of four girls, is captivated by an ad for an agency which supports young schoolchildren in Africa. She impulsively spends her entire Christmas gift money on the first month's support for a child, who turns out to be an endearingly grateful little Kenyan boy named Joseck. She enlists her sister Naomi in helping her (which for complicated reasons has to be kept secret from everyone else, but almost every plan they come up with ends in chaos and confusion. It is almost unflaggingly funny or touching--often both.

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### **Kristi says**

**Description:** If you thought this foursome spelled trouble before, consider the situation when the four Conroy girls suddenly find themselves in dire need of ten pounds a month for a good (but somewhat devious) cause. It's as crazy a story as you'll ever run across; robbing post offices, selling sandwiches made in a dog kennel, searching for buried treasure... oh, and yes, it's a secret. Meaning that throughout the riotous year that this book recounts, Ruth, Naomi, Rachel, and Pheobe dare not explain just exactly why they took such drastic measures to come up with this all-important money.

**Concerns:** Well, as with the first book, the whole plot is to follow the escapades and misadventures of a quartet of the most rascally little girls you'll ever come across. Think lots of naughtiness. No swearing, though; and if it's any consolation (eh), they at least have a good motive in this go-round.

**Summary:** Could I step in for a minute here, and say that this is funny? This is funny. McKay's trick of wording is exquisitely mischievous. It's so perfect. Personally, I love the sled. The horribleness of their Easter candy is enough to make me queasy myself. And Pheobe's tragic hopeful line, "Give me five pounds?" at the end of the book makes me laugh in spite of myself. A guilty pleasure!

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### **Kaethe says**

The cover says "earnest", and also "heartfelt", maybe even "moving". What it doesn't say is "funny". It's the British Penderwicks, not a problem novel about a parent off at war. But just for fun, feel free to share what the cover image makes you think the book will be about.

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Library copy

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### **Saq\_reads says**

It's a comedy and a drama book, I loved the fact that it made me feel that the family that was in the book wasn't imaginary it's just the type of family that I would want in a book. I would want to read the whole series but I don't really mind that much. It's the type of book that I really would recommend to drama and comedy lovers.

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### **Linda says**

Hilary McKay invented four quirky sisters who individually try their parents' patience in this Exiles series. The English sisters sponsor a boy in Africa and must come up with 10 pounds every month to support him in school. Where do 4 children repeatedly acquire 10 pounds? Hilariously, I must say! My hardcover book has a different cover than the one shown. There were no other choices.

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### **Dahlia says**

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omg soo lustig!!!

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### **Jess says**

Oh, I love the Exiles. It gets a bit hard to keep the names straight (is this just me?) but I adore the way McKay knows the way kids think and feel. She manages to put it down on paper in a way that's sympathetic but also celebrates the innate hilarity of childhood.

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### **Eva says**

This book so far eclipsed the first one I'd almost recommend reading it first except that you'd be disappointed when you went back and read the first. I was in stitches the entire way through. All the best parts of E. Nesbit's books without the generous helping of secondhand embarrassment.

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### **Sue says**

This was a great book! Sequel to 'The Exiles', which I quite enjoyed, this is a great story of a somewhat bohemian family with four daughters aged from six up to thirteen. Life is chaotic in their household, and they're usually late for everything.

The story begins during the Christmas holidays, and snow. Rachel asks for - and is given - a sledge, which becomes her favourite possession. All too quickly school term begins; on the first morning, they're not just disorganised and late - Ruth and Naomi, the two older girls, have forgotten their books, their lunches and their PE kit. Then Ruth realises that she's still wearing her pyjama jacket with her school skirt...

It's not slapstick, although occasionally it approaches that state. It's a wonderful, warm-hearted, delightful family tale of generosity and inventiveness; of girls who are given a great deal of freedom, but who care about responsibility and commitments. They are not a wealthy family, so, when Ruth - in a moment of craziness - commits ten pounds a month to supporting a small boy in Africa, she and her sisters determine to continue this support all year, even though they have to discover new and unusual ways to earn what is, to them, quite a significant amount of money.

Written in 1993, this book reads almost like one of the beloved books from my childhood, set in a rather more trusting period when children could go out and about by themselves and there few concerns about getting to know strangers so long as they were sensible.

Definitely recommended to anyone from the age of about six or seven and upwards. Including adults.

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### **Julie says**

Is it fair to give it a star if I didn't make it through it? If I can get through a book, I automatically give it at least 2. but if I try at least three times to read and can't get hooked, I say it's no good.

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### **Hirondelle says**

I don't remember the last book which made me laugh out loud so loud (maybe vintage Wodehouse, maybe). Perhaps my sense of humour is twisted but I found it hilarious. And moving.

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### **Bethany says**

If the Penderwicks were slightly psychologically disturbed I think they would be very much like the Exiles. :P

I enjoyed this book just as much as the first! The incredible and odd antics of these girls made me laugh out loud several times. They remind me of mischievous children such as the Bastables (*The Story of the Treasure Seekers* and *The Wouldbegoods*) or various families from Noel Streatfeild's lesser known children's books.

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### **Miz Lizzie says**

Ruth impulsively uses her Christmas money to sign up to sponsor a child in Africa for a year. Now, she must come up with ten pounds a month and she is perennially short of cash. She lied about her age on the application and is terrified of letting her parents know what she has gotten herself into. Her sisters come to her aid, engaging in a number of inventive and harebrained schemes to raise money. They get help from unexpected quarters as their obsession with Africa grows with each letter they receive from the boy they are sponsoring.

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### **Sherry Mackay says**

So much fun. Such crazy characters. And lots of heart.

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