



Bertolt

Jacques Goldstyn

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Bertolt Details

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Author : Jacques Goldstyn

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From Reader Review Bertolt for online ebook

Conor says

C-yute.

Jane says

A cute story about a boy who likes to be on his own and the tree he loves to climb. Beautiful, simply yet effectively coloured illustrations. Charming

David Schaafsma says

I decided to read all seven of the books Maria Popova (on twitter) says were the loveliest picture books of 2017:

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2017/12...>

This is the fifth of seven, Bertolt—funny that as a literary type guy, I would think it might be about Bertolt Brecht (wrong!). It is a book about an imaginative (which is not to say imaginary, though this is fiction) boy whose best friend is an old (at least 172-years-old!) oak tree named Bertolt. It's a book about a solitary kid, and his imagination (obviously), the construction of a relationship, and then, more surprisingly, it's about loss and grief, but I won't ruin that surprise for you with any specifics.

Goldstyn did the story with subtly (which here means the opposite of LOUD and bold primary) colored and drawn illustrations to match the gently whimsical and reflective themes.

Just at the point I thought it was going on too long for its subject and theme, it suddenly and to my relief STOPPED talking altogether (became silent or wordless) all the way to the end, letting the images speak even more profoundly, which I found both simple and a little bit astonishing (in how the boy speaks to/recovers from/honors his loss).

Andrew Greenlaw-Houldsworth says

What a sweet tale about a kid who plays alone, and likes it that way. Brilliant book for the loners who might not know it's okay to play alone. It's also a poignant story about loss, and how we cope. Awesome book.

Tasha says

Told in the voice of a young boy who is different from the others around him. He doesn't mind wearing

different colored gloves after he can't find his lost one. He enjoys being alone most of the time, unlike the others in his town. His favorite place to be alone is in a huge oak tree that is named Bertolt. The boy spends his days up in Bertolt's branches, weathering storms together, making friends with the animals and birds that live in the tree. The boy looks forward to spring when Bertolt's leaves will return and become a splendid green shelter again. But when the other trees burst into flower and leaf, Bertolt doesn't. Eventually, the boy must admit that Bertolt is dead, but what does one do when a tree dies? The boy figures out exactly the right thing.

This is a story of an introverted child who doesn't mind being on his own one bit. As a fellow introvert, I love seeing the depiction of a child who isn't longing to be included but instead finds real pleasure in his time spent alone. It's a story of independence and imagination, showing that quiet time alone can lead to creative solutions even when you have lost something you love. The book is touching, warm and celebratory.

The illustrations are lovely with the huge sweeping oak tree filling the page, the branches thick and strong, the leaves aglow with green and light. The fine-lined images capture the boy almost dwarfed by the space around him and yet eagerly also a vital part of the scene. His acorn cap speaks to his connection to nature and set him apart from the people around him as well.

A lovely look at introversion, imagination and the power of being different and embracing it. Appropriate for ages 5-7.

Nancy Kotkin says

A quiet boy loves spending time alone in nature, especially within the branches of a giant oak tree that functions as the boy's best friend. The heartwarming ending picks up an important theme and symbol from the beginning, strengthening the story's structure.

The subdued palette of the folksy drawings complements the story's themes. The boy's acorn hat deepens his characterization.

This book fills an important niche for kids who are introverts, loners, and/or nature lovers. And kids who aren't can take away the important messages of being your own person regardless of what others think and the power of solitary contemplation.

Sean Cox-marcellin says

Quirky and (literally) colorful. Breezes by tough problems with calm defiant buoyancy.

Lynn says

Although it probably won't work as a group read aloud due to the small size and tiny details in the illustrations, but, for those youngsters who are loners, yeah!!!!

Too many times we make introverts think there is something wrong with them and that they, "need to play

with others." This book will encourage even extroverts to try some time alone, enjoying nature!

Meredith says

Some real winners in the village. (Maybe their behavior inspired the boy to become a thief at the end?) Also, do his parents know that he is hanging out in a tree during storms? I know this book is supposed to be a quiet philosophical inspirational thing, but it made me cranky.

Finally, note to the proofreaders: the font changes on the page that says "I know what to do when a cat or a bird dies. But what should I do for Bertolt?"

KimberlyRose says

Huh. That was the exact thing I said when I realized the last page was indeed the last page. I had to check, make sure. Huh.

I loved the idea of a hero in a children's book who embraces--loves!--living a daily solitary existence. I appreciated the talent of the wispy, potentially expressive line art, even though it did nothing for me personally. I loved the idea of watching the world, of matching value for the life of nature--a tree--to the life of things more commonly valued--people, pets.

But it just didn't do much for me. It was flat. And somewhat mundane in wording. Nothing really outstandingly beautiful, no stop-and-think phrases.

Lori says

This surprised me. The illustrations are really great. The story is sweet. Kindness. Individuality. Loss. So much all wrapped into one.

Garrett says

Not very often does a book manage to pull off being charming. This book was sweet, smart, funny and charmed me into loving not only the book as a whole, but also into wishing that the main character was a serialized cartoon and could have more adventures. A book I read in a sitting and handed directly to my eleven-year-old.

Elizabeth A says

I'm slowly making my way through The 7 Loveliest Children's Books of 2017 as selected by brainpickings. You can see the list here: <https://www.brainpickings.org/2017/12...>

This is the second picture book on the list that I've read and it's simply lovely. It's not often that I see stories about kids who like to be alone and enjoy their own company, so this was a delight. This is the story about a little boy and a tree he named Bertolt. The art is sketchy and cute, and I was was amused and touched by the antics of the kid in this story. I loved how the themes of being different, the desire for solitude, and the connection with nature are explored in this little story. This would be a wonderful read aloud story for all the littles in your life.

Tranylle says

My kids LOVE this book. It's been read at least twice a day since we picked it up from the library. It's about a little boy who describes himself as a loner. People aren't always nice to those who are different, but he doesn't mind. He has fun by himself. There's a wordless page showing what he does alone (Rowan asks every time how he plays chess by himself lol). But his favorite thing to do is climb his tree Bertolt. His favorite time of year is spring, when the leaves become a maze. When the boy realizes that Bertolt has died, he comes up with a solution to save him from becoming toothpicks. I found it weird that the last few pages didn't come with any words, but my kids loved these pages, filling them in for us and cheering for the boy. We talked about whether or not the boy's plan would work long term.

I really liked the message that you should embrace your differences despite what others think or say. It also dealt with dealing with the death of something you love.

My kids are going to be very sad when we have to return this to the library.

Jillian Heise says

A quiet story to share with introverts in your classroom. Lovely, soft illustrations. Would pair well with Wishtree or Sequoia.
