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Farm Boy

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This is an extremely beautiful book. It is beautiful in its presentation, layout and design (by Janet James) and, strikingly, in the clearly sympathetic relationship between text and illustrations: its end-papers, in the form of reproductions of rural advertisements from the post-World War One years, provide an attractive and appropriate frame for both. In terms of structure, the technique is that of the story within the story, a device which here has the effect of reinforcing the central themes of family, continuity and tradition. 'I come from a family of farmers going back generations and generations,' reveals our principal narrator, by way of introduction to the three 'farm boys' whose interweaving stories we are privileged to share. While the various voices of the different generations blend effortlessly, cumulatively providing an evocative, humorous and nostalgic picture of English (Devon) country life over some eighty years, the contribution which stands out most dramatically is the one given verbatim in Grandpa's own idiom, a remarkable feat of Morpurgo recreation. If there are such things as contemporary classics then this, surely, is one of them.

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