



[Home](#) > Those Messy Hempels

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# Those Messy Hempels

Books Reviewed:

[Those Messy Hempels](#) [1]

Issue:

[149](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Valerie Coghlan](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Every (normal) family will identify with the Hempels: mother, father (presumably) and two young children. We are never actually introduced to the characters as individuals. Instead they move as a unit through the pages, cleaning, tidying, sorting different rooms in their house and all the time searching for a missing whisk needed to make a cake. This element of narrative distancing blends well with the sophisticated, stylised artwork. Perspectives are flattened giving a wide-range view of each site of chaos before and after it is restored to order. In each room an object belonging to another room is found, leading the family into the next locus of their whirlwind ordering of its contents. The pages are borderless, incorporating the viewer into the activity and compelling an examination of the household detritus strewn about. Even the garden receives attention when a rake is found in the bathroom. Text on each page-opening ends with a question about the true home for the stray object, further encouraging a turning of the pages and an involvement with the search for the missing whisk. And of course the whisk is found and this seemingly endlessly energetic family make their cake and settle down to eat it in their once more messy kitchen. A superb picture book with something for all the family.

Running Order:

51

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[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/those-messy-hempels>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/149>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/valerie-coghlan>