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# The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The original's extraordinary gallery of characters and a fabulous story are a treat awaiting new readers. This version adds enticing extras with the wild assortment of Hughes's illustrations, the grand look of the book itself and the feel of its crisp pages. It might seem straightforward to lift the core story out of classic old novels but it is hard to pull off. Cutting the lengthy digressions about architecture and the weighty musings of the original while telling the whole story, beyond the Disney happy ending and Quasimodo's SAS style sweeping rescue of Esmeralda, are good tactics in making Hugo's actual novel newly accessible. Needle has good experience of making lively versions of classics and the story re-emerges into exotic life: the grotesque hunchback full of fine feeling and sensitivity which makes him painfully aware of his awfulness; the twisted piety of Claude Frollo, fired into dreadful passion by Esmeralda; the wonderful dancing girl herself and her deep love for the gorgeous and hollow Captain Phoebus; the crazed mother mourning her long lost daughter. The promise of the high level of production and Hughes's quirky, flashing lines, cartoons, lettering and artefacts and the silver and black pages and photographs are a good match for a great story. The telling itself, crucially, takes time to gather pace, and the sentences sometimes lack energy and style in the stripping away of the original's luxuriance but the original breaks out, full of dramas and shifts of emotion: the torturing of Esmeralda's foot, the heart-rending reunion, the battle at Notre Dame, flames and hot lead. What a treat of a story.

Running Order:

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