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Torn Pages

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Chores fill Lydia's days as she tends for her young siblings, Joe and Kesi. Their mother has just died of AIDS, and times are hard. Their tiny plot of land is arid and the seedlings refuse to grow; Joe and Kesi's schooling is at risk; and their grandmother is increasingly hostile while the one person who does help out seems to have ulterior motives. Lonely, and with no time to grieve, Lydia finds solace in a notebook that her mother compiled for her just before her death. Filled with cherished memories and advice, its purpose is to help guide the young girl through the dark days. As the young family's situation deteriorates, this memory book is the only thing that keeps Lydia going.

Set in southern Africa, the story flows beautifully, the first-person narrative ensuring the reader's emotional involvement with Lydia, who reveals herself as a fully rounded character, responsible and vulnerable, steadfast and childish, but whose ability to look beyond reality eventually wins through. Excerpts from the memory book punctuate the narrative, a confirmation of the power of words in determining and shaping reality. Though tragic, the story is about strength of character and the will to succeed rather than ravaged lives.

Running Order:

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