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The Boy Who Climbed into the Moon

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Following **My Dad's a Birdman**, David Almond and Polly Dunbar take to the skies again for the benefit of younger readers, only with a ladder rather than wings. Almond's previous books all twist between reality and fantasy. In this book, a humorous vindication of the unlimited power of imagination, even the impossible can be realised. The limits of reality are not so much breached as disappear entirely; and I am not sure that's a good thing. Paul, out of boredom, decides he will touch the sky. He gets the lift to the top of the block of flats and there he meets Mabel, or possibly her twin sister Molly, who encourages him to voice and test his idea that the moon is a hole in the sky, a notion which astonishes him even as he speaks it. The story relies on quirky characters and impossible situations to create a sense of wonder. But, for me, they don't lift off the page in the way that they should and Polly Dunbar's illustrations don't seem to be able to offer much of a boost. We are told that Paul is a withdrawn boy who doesn't get on well at school and it follows that the realisation of this unlikely adventure should be both a personal affirmation and a way of connecting to other people's impossible dreams. But there is little emotional driving force in the story. It only seems to take us, rung by rung, from one improbable character and situation to another, whose loss of bearings in a real world makes them difficult to connect with, and which are not funny or crazy enough to work purely on that level. This is a beautifully produced book, by an immensely talented author and illustrator, and it is perhaps the immensity of my expectations that make it a disappointment.

Running Order:

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