The Pasta Detectives

Books Reviewed:
The Pasta Detectives [1]

Issue:
183 [2]

Reviewer:
Anne Faundez [3]

New Talent:
off

Editors Choice:
off

Media type:
Book

BfK Rating:
4

Rico begins his diary just as the summer holidays get underway. He's been encouraged to do this by his teacher, who believes that writing may help him to make sense of the world. For Rico is no ordinary child: he can only navigate life when it moves in a straight line, otherwise alarm bells sound within his head. Just as he starts to write, he receives news that the kidnapper - the subject of much rumour and unease these last few months - is once again on the move. This, combined with the fact that he notices an odd piece of pasta on the pavement and shadowy shadows in the next-door building, triggers his imagination - and his diary soon fills with an outpouring of thoughts, feelings and descriptions of real-life happenings.

As an only child, with a working mother and no friends his age, he spends much of his time with his neighbours. But then, out of the blue, he meets Oscar, for whom he feels instant friendship. Oscar is his antithesis - he's clever, exceptionally so. They agree to meet the next day. But when Oscar fails to turn up, Rico's disappointment turns to anger, and then fear for his safety. Turning detective, he sets out and resolves the jigsaw of Oscar's disappearance.

The story is set in contemporary Berlin amid playgrounds, apartment blocks and derelict buildings, which provide background atmosphere to the mystery. The characters are real, varied and engaging. Rico is affable and imaginative, aware of his limitations but also his strengths. He's in stark contrast to the gifted Oscar. Yet they both see the world from similar perspectives and are regarded as 'different' by their peers. The first-person narrative is funny and rambling, moving the adventure forward while providing insights into Rico's life. We enter his emotional world, share his perceptions of everyday behaviour and actions - and even come to recognise the absurdities of everyday language. Quirky and amusing, this is an enjoyable read.

Running Order:
33

Source URL (retrieved on Jun '19): http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/183/childrens-books/reviews/the-pasta-detectives

Links: