



Penguin and Pinecone

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Book

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When Penguin finds a small, brown pinecone shivering in the snow, it is the beginning of a friendship that is to be life-long, unusual though it is. Penguin knits a woolly scarf for his new friend, and they enjoy all sorts of games together. But when Grandpa Penguin explains to Penguin that Pinecone will never thrive in such a cold and snowy environment, Penguin takes his friend on the long journey to find a pine forest. There, he leaves him, telling him, 'You will always be in my heart.' Some years later, Penguin decides to see how his friend is getting on, only to discover that Pinecone has become a strong tree. The friends are delighted to see each other once more, and their play resumes. On the way home from this journey, Penguin meets a female penguin and together they create a whole forest of pine trees, all decked out in knitted garments of one sort or another. The theme of this story is that 'when you give love, it grows and grows'. While the text is possibly a tad saccharine for this reviewer, the illustrations make up for it. Given lots of background space (either white or in muted colours), the little penguin and his pinecone friend stand out in all their simplicity, and much of the story is told through the medium of picture. Simple and sophisticated at the same time, they have an almost tactile pleasure. If the story is slightly peculiar, the illustrations are a *tour de force*.

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