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Aubrey and the Terrible Yoot

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Aubrey is a larger than life hero. He is brave and bold, but he is about to be tested by the deadliest enemy ever ? the Terrible Yoot. One day his father, Jim, falls under the spell of the Terrible Yoot. Everything changes as the spell takes hold. Jim becomes extremely sad. He is so sad that he can no longer get out of bed in the mornings. Aubrey and his mother become very worried, so Aubrey sets out to find the Yoot, break the spell and make his father well again. Aubrey starts his quest by seeking help from the wisest animal that he can think of ? an owl. He is then aided by various woodland creatures that live in Rushing Wood near to his house, including a squirrel called Hoppy and a heron called Ardea. However, Aubrey realises that he cannot defeat the Yoot and time is running out to save his father.

This clever book mixes myth, fable and modern family life to create a vivid story that is not only full of magic but also looks sympathetically at complex issues such as depression. It shows the impact depression can have on a family, and the fact that people suffering from depression can become desperate enough to attempt suicide. The story does not shy away from this difficult topic, but describes it in a gentle and age-appropriate way, engendering understanding rather than fear. By creating an imaginative fantasy world where talking animals help people, the book makes the subject of depression seem less threatening, and conveys the possibility that even if it cannot be completely defeated it can be controlled.

The illustrations of the woodland animals also help to reassure the reader. They are detailed and accurate, and form a nice counterpoint to the more impressionistic pictures of Aubrey and his family. This is an enjoyable book that deals with important issues not often covered in writing for this age range.

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