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Tidy

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

A rhyming text and witty illustrations introduce us to badger, Pete, whose penchant for keeping the forest and his various animal friends spick and span appears, to begin with, largely laudable. However, the wicked looking stainless steel secateurs with which he is cutting off flowers whose colours 'didn't quite match?', should warn us that this is an animal whose scouring and scrubbing may lead to a drastic minimalist solution to nature's inherent untidiness. Autumn is the catalyst and, faced with all those falling leaves, Badger gets to work. We see the result in a shocking double page spread: a mountain of black bin bags dwarves the starkly naked trees. But Badger doesn't stop there. The trees look 'bare and scrappy?', so he digs them up. A flood follows: cue for double page spread with what looks very convincingly like a lot of real mud in which Pete wallows with his red bucket and mop. What Pete does next is very drastic indeed and, although he initially declares it 'practically perfect?', it causes him, thankfully, to rethink his whole approach to his surroundings. This humorous ecological fable features a typical Gravett touch as slip cover, book cover and endpaper are cut through to show badger putting leaves in a waste basket as if in a slightly distant woodland glade. But, otherwise, she relies on the use of colour and page design to put the story across in a series of striking images in which colour is gradually banished from the forest only to return when Pete realises the error of his ways. Whether or not Pete is a totally reformed character remains open to question, however, as, in another typical Gravett touch, he is found hoovering up the British Library catalogue record information on the back page.

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