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Wisp: A Story of Hope

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~~Editors Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Idris's home is surrounded by barbed wire, a place where people have retreated into themselves. When the Wisp arrives, blown in on the wind, it is only Idris who sees it and feels its need - a need to unlock the memories of the people who have forgotten about life. This need is expressed as 'Once.....?' But it is not just the adults who need a Wisp to open their minds - the Wisp comes to Idris but here the word is 'Someday...' as it unlocks his dreams and hopes.

Fraillon's text is both direct and poetic. There is no explanation for what a 'Wisp?' might be, yet there is no difficulty in understanding what is and what it represents. Her vocabulary - words such as 'gentled?' 'rememberings?' could easily have become whimsical. Instead Baker-Smith's illustrations bridge the gap between the real world and the metaphysical - the world of memory and imagination, of hope and promise. His bold saturated colours full of shadow and light make us see what Fraillon expresses in her words. The effect is visually powerful, rich 'almost too rich except that within the spreads his draughtsmanship provides a necessary tension. It is a fine line that has been negotiated successfully. There is no miracle at the end; Idris is still in his camp, rather it is a story about humanity and human need; a need not confined to material support but one requiring something more intangible - memories to create the stories and songs that express the self, keeping the spirit alive, hope to visualise a 'someday?' - a promise of a future. Everyone needs a Wisp.

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