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Too Small Tola

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Tola, the 'small but mighty' eponymous main character of this short chapter book by Atinuke, lives in Lagos with her family including her sister Moji, brother Dapo and her 'very very bossy Grandmummy'. The book features three separate stories detailing the adventures of Tola and these other central characters.

Each tale depicts Tola's unwavering inner strength despite her small stature. In the first story Tola's stamina and endurance is tested when she has to help Grandmummy carry the shopping back home from the market, in the next she has to face the local bully and in the final tale she comes to the aid of Mr Abdul when his tailoring business is under threat after his road traffic accident.

Each delightful story is told with vivid description, aided by the vibrant illustrations of Onyinye Iwu. In addition to the enjoyable plots, which will appeal any young reader, one of the greatest successes of the book is how it subtly depicts the urbanisation of Lagos and the contrast between the rich and poor. Long queues of people waiting with buckets and jerry cans for the water pump which serves the block of flats in which Tola lives contrasts starkly with the Lamborghini and Porsche parked outside the home of characters we meet in the final story.

Stand-out characters such as Grandmummy and Mrs Shaky-Shaky, are depicted with real warmth and affection. With their strict but warm temperaments, along with the quiet wisdom acquired with age and experience, the reader can understand their influence on Tola and how they have helped shape her determined, spirited and kind personality.

There is a distinct rhythm and style to the stories which echo Atinuke's traditional oral storytelling prowess. A real joy to read, **Too Small Tola** will appeal to readers of all ages.

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