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It?s Only Stanley

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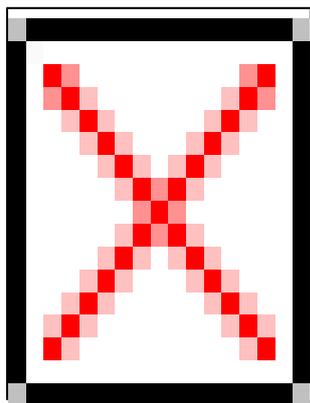
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5



It?s bedtime and the Wimbledon's are trying to sleep, but it?s noisy in the house tonight and poor old Dad has to investigate every disturbance. Whatever is Stanley the dog up to? He wakes Mum by howling at the moon. Then Dad finds him down in the basement, hammering the oil tank. A buzzing noise that?s irritating Wanda is traced to Stanley, who?s busy with the old TV, and the smell that?s sickening Willie turns out to be Stanley making catfish stew. By the time baby Wylie alerts them to splashing (Stanley?s clearing the bathroom drain) the whole family is awake. And that?s when a huge KAPOW sends them flying ? literally. Stanley?s in the attic, and they?re heading for the MOON?.

For a couple of spreads, Stanley?s behaviour seems fairly standard for a dog ? lying on the porch, howling at the moon. Finding him hammering the boiler is a step into different territory: one that Walter Wimbledon fails to grasp. In that page-turn, the course of the book is set as Stanley?s determination and resourcefulness are displayed for all (except the Wimbledon's) to see?. and the cause of all this industry? A pink Moon-poodle? It seems that Stanley is in love - and as soon as we reach the final page, we want to read again to spot the clues. The house always did look rather tall and thin! And doesn?t that fuzzy image on the old TV look poodle-shaped?

Jon Agee?s rhyming text sets a brisk pace in this immensely enjoyable picturebook, but it?s the interaction between words and pictures (and deadpan humour) that really makes this book sing.

Bold cartoon-style lines, dramatic layouts and expressive characters carry us, helter-skelter, through the action, but there are gentler pleasures, too. Agee's subdued palette evokes an atmosphere of reluctant night-time wakefulness that will be familiar to many readers, and Stanley's disregard for conventional pet behaviour is quietly hilarious. And watch out for the silent cat!

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