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Bat Loves the Night

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

I would not want to change a single word or image in this beautifully produced picture book. It takes the young listener or reader of up to about age seven or eight years into the world of a pipistrelle bat, following its activities through one night. Like other Walker information stories it provides two kinds of text: narrative in large print and interesting and relevant information bites in smaller, lighter print. So, for instance, the poetic narrative tells how the bat 'shakes he thistledown fur' as she unfurls her wings to fly into the night from the roof hole. The information bites on the same pages tell us the pipistrelle is 'no bigger than your thumb' and has four extra-long fingers to support the skin of the wing - just the sort of detail to interest the very young. The text appeals to our senses - the bat flaps her wings 'with a sound like a tiny umbrella opening', captures 'moon-dust slippery' insects and has 'coat-hanger feet'. The difficult concept of echolocation is explained by using sight imagery to illuminate sound - 'she beams her voice around her like a torch, and the echoes come singing back'. Children will be fascinated to learn how the bat captures a moth by netting it with a wing tip and scooping it into her mouth. There is nothing cosy about this description - the bat bites hard and the moth's wings 'fall away, like the wrappers from a toffee'. Fox-Davies' illustrations perfectly reveal the creature's movements as she journeys through the night-time landscape. The picture of the return of the adult bat at dawn to the roof space where the batlings 'like velvet scraps' are clustered has great imaginative appeal.

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