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Joseph

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Not on Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Joseph is a picture book retelling of the Old Testament story of Joseph, son of Jacob. It is a family drama, surging with intense emotions and replete with adventure, exotic locations and violent action, and some sex too. If such a story were offered in a modern setting it is unlikely that it would be considered a fit subject for younger readers. Indeed, tamer stories for older readers have been called into question. However, tradition and temporal distance seem to temper the reaction of moral guardians to tales such as this, allowing Fienberg and Gamble to offer their fine interpretation of the story of a young man who was hated by his jealous brothers. The racier aspects of the story are toned down: all Potiphar's wife demands is a kiss. But when Joseph is sold into slavery in Egypt and his blood stained coat returned to Jacob, Fienberg's text captures the agony of the old man: 'He was like a river flooding its banks, fed by a river of sorrow.' Gamble's Jacob, alone clutching the bloodied garment, leaves no doubt about the love and the grief of the bereaved father for his lost son. Each page carries at least one illustration, executed in warm earthy tones, sometimes set against deep, subdued blues and greens, which convey the feeling of heat and dryness, and also of places and times when the interpretation of dreams was taken seriously by the highest in the land. This is an outstanding example of how to breathe new life into an old story.

Running Order:

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