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Not Last Night but the Night Before

Books Reviewed:

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

The title page shows the nameless boy protagonist sitting meditatively on a flight of stairs. What is he thinking about? The page turn shows a gift wrapped parcel, and then on the next page, we are into the story as the boy runs to open the half-door over which peer three black cats in party clothes. Each subsequent page-opening shows in a framed image on the right-hand side, various familiar nursery rhyme and storybook characters arriving through the door, accompanied by the refrain 'Not last night but the night before?'

On the left page-opening, the arrivals dash into the house bearing more gifts. What is going on? Eventually the knocking ceases and a colourful double-page spread invites the reader to join all the characters in a birthday party for a thrilled boy.

McNaughton's rhyme has a traditional beat, easily recognised by young listeners, and great for reading aloud; allied with Chichester Clark's graphic visual storytelling, some delightfully entertaining interaction with the spirited party-throwers is created. And, on the final page, a vignette shows a group of late arrivals knocking on the door, after the boy has spread his gifts on the floor and fallen asleep. As for the late-comers, they link beautifully with the first caller, bringing the reader right back to the start.

Young readers, who should be familiar with the rhymes and stories referenced to get the most from the book, will surely be entranced by this well-crafted piece of picture book making.

Running Order:

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